



Taro Nettleton

## Exploring Japanese art histories at Art Basel Hong Kong

Insights, dedicated to art from the Asia-Pacific region, features artists whose works illuminate the plurality of Japanese art practices over the last sixty years

The unsettled relationship between what we see and understand is explored in **Yuko Mohri's** 2023 sound installation *Decomposition*, presented by **Yutaka Kikutake Gallery**. Electrodes are inserted into fruits to measure levels of moisture within. The collected data is used to generate sound, turning the process of decomposition into a method of automatic composition that evokes the avant-garde composer **John Cage** and his use of compositional elements such as radio programs and silence. Not to mention the history of European still life painting, illuminating the interior life of inanimate fruit and reflecting on the impermanence of life.



But the smell of Mohri's work might trigger another historical reference point in the right visitor. In 1963, the Yomiuri Independent Exhibition, the primary annual exhibition for the 1960s avant-garde, prohibited six types of works, two of which were 'works that emit loud or unpleasant sounds' and 'works that release unpleasant odors or are made of perishable material.' The stipulations were made in reaction to artwork submissions labeled by critic Yoshiaki Tono as 'Anti-Art', whose juxtapositions of contrasting materials and spatial interventions constituted an innovative critique of the spectacular culture that informed both avant-garde and mainstream cultural works of the 1960s. One year later, in 1964, the Yomiuri Exhibition was finally terminated, the same year Tokyo hosted the first Olympic Games to be held in Asia. With that, Insights at Art Basel Hong Kong comes full circle, providing an opportunity to take in the diverse range of developments that have populated the postwar Japanese art scene since that landmark year.