

## Acts and Works of ANDO Eisaku

In closing, we try to compare Ando and GUTAI artists.

What do “acts” mean to Ando?

He strikes and carves raw timbers and scrap wood to create his works. He considers the acts of striking an axe to wood as a form of communication with the wood to draw out the energy inside it, rather than simply a process of creation. The sounds of the axe striking wood are music to him, and collaborations with singers and dancers are also important actions that constitute Ando’s art.

Furthermore, the countless axe blade marks on the surfaces of his carvings (Figure 9) are recognized as traces where his consciousness accessed the flow of energy in the wood. He said that creation is a unique way for humans to show their presence. Based on this thought, he showcased that art is not created in surplus when people live financially comfortable lives, but rather that humans create art to live, and it is a gift for being alive.

On the other hand, GUTAI artists explored the connection between bodies and materials in different ways, creating paintings as materials incarnated by acts. GUTAI artists experienced World War II, and Ando experienced the Great East Japan Earthquake. We can say that both experiences of catastrophes made these artists more sensitive to the uncertainty of human existence. GUTAI’s art, which draws out human consciousness into physical embodiment, and Ando’s carvings, which draw out the life energy of wood, both effectively use materials and retain marks of action in their artworks. In an era when people feel instability in life, both GUTAI artists’ and Ando’s artworks make people feel the power of materials and acts; therefore, we can receive them as messages expressing human presence in this world.