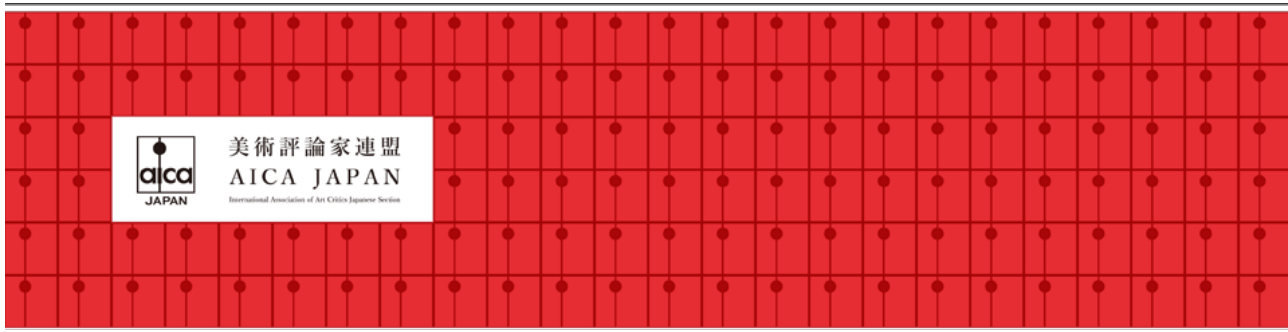


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## Background / In Defense of Freedom of Expression

### Background

AICA JAPAN was formed in 1954. It was preceded by a number of organizations, beginning with Bijutsu Mondai Kenkyukai (Arts Research Council) founded in 1940 in response to the new structure during World War II. Following the war, this council was reorganized and started anew as Bijutsu Hyoronka Kumiai (Association of Art Critics) in 1950, which was renamed Bijutsu Hyoronka Kurabu (Art Critics Club) in the following year. In 1954, it dissolved to form the new AICA JAPAN. AICA JAPAN was founded as the Japanese section of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA = Association Internationale des Critiques d'Art), which has the following background. In 1948 and 1949, two international congresses were held at UNESCO Headquarters where art critics, art historians, art educators, curators from museums of modern art and others were gathered. They included the likes of André Chastel, Pierre Courthion, and Lionello Venturi. They discussed their point of views concerning the vocation of art criticism, their responsibility in regard to artists and the public, and the particular nature of their contributions in relation to developments in the fields of art history. Following these international congresses, AICA was founded in 1950 to contribute to the further deepening of international cooperation in the fields of artistic and cultural development. In 1951, AICA was admitted to the rank of NGO. In 1952, during his trip to Europe, Soichi Tominaga was invited to attend the 4th General Assembly of AICA being held in Switzerland. Asked whether he would be interested in forming a Japanese section of AICA, Tominaga expressed Japan's intention to join AICA. This expression of intent subsequently led to the formation of AICA JAPAN, which had over 60 founding members. A key element underpinning the foundation of AICA JAPAN in the

1950s was the opening of two museums of modern art in Kamakura (1951) and Kyobashi (1952), setting the stage for the long-awaited emergence of a new type of art critics.

#### In Defense of Freedom of Expression (2016)

The basic principle of the Association of Art Critics is to honor the autonomy of artistic expression and criticism, to seek their unimpeded preservation, and for members to mutually support one another in the fulfillment of these goals. The Association will oppose and resist any unreasonable suppression from exterior forces against the autonomy of artistic expression and criticism, including enforced and arbitrary alterations of any given work (or demand thereof). All who engage in the practices of expression have the right to present them in public. Artistic expression and criticism are made public in order to open one's accomplishments to discussion (and it is only through public presentation that an open discussion of the evaluation of an expression becomes possible). Through such dialogical interaction, the quality of expressive or discursive activity must constantly be improved and its integrity preserved. An artistic expression, when publicly exhibited, should not be unnecessarily suppressed based on arbitrary differences of opinion or biased interpretations. Furthermore, it must never be preemptively inhibited based on fear for a yet unknown interpretation, or as a precautionary or deterrent measure. Artistic and critical activities involve autonomous judgment and criteria derived from these premises formed through a long and accumulated history of arguments. The activity of the Association is established upon such historical endowment, and has the preservation and support of this autonomy as its primary goal. \* It is the duty of each member of the Association of Art Critics to make perpetual effort to sustain such autonomy of expressive and critical activity. \* One of the main objectives of the International Association of Art Critics is stated as follows: "to defend impartially freedom of expression and thought and oppose arbitrary censorship." ] <http://aicainternational.org/en/background-objectives-of-aica/> Also, according to the website of AICA USA: "A statement against censorship was one of AICA's founding principles" <http://www.aicausa.org/about/aica-international> Appendix 1. If a given expression contains threat, intimidation, or defamation that endangers any individual's life, this expression must obviously be criticized as such. This is because such expression is not open to discussion, but is rather regarded as an imposition (unfalsifiable assertion) of a will to exclude. 2. Artistic expression and the act of criticism has the right to retain its autonomy (right of exercising self-scrutiny, adjustment, and alteration) in all phases pertaining to the process of creation. Such internal process following an autonomous logic must strictly be distinguished from unreasonable interpolation, alteration, suppression, or erasure through intervention of exterior authorities (censorship by arbitrary application of law, or imposition based on asymmetrical social relationships regarding position or interest). While we consistently protect the right for autonomous activity, we will not allow for the arbitrary intervention (censorship, interpolation) of external coercive powers to enter the process of creation.

[Remarks on the cancellation of After “Freedom of Expression?” at the Aichi Triennale 2019](#)

[Statement regarding the press report on the establishment of a Review Committee for the “Hiroshima Triennale 2020 in BINGO”](#)

[Statement regarding the decision by the Agency of Cultural Affairs to deliver the promised subsidy to the Aichi Triennale 2019](#)

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