

University Art Collection and Business-Academia Collaboration*

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University of Tsukuba dates back to its foundation as the Normal School at the heart of Tokyo in 1872. 101 years after its establishing, the university made a new start in the Tsukuba Science City that has 45 public scientific research institutes. Among Japan's national universities, the University of Tsukuba is the only one with a full-scale art school (figs. 1-5). Also is there an established curatorship course, which is a training program covering the main requirements for obtaining a curator qualification, and actually large number of curators for museums and other research institutions have come from this course. Even though, the University of Tsukuba still have no organization for university museum.

UTAC, University of Tsukuba Art Collection

Under such circumstances, the University of Tsukuba has some 600 pieces of artworks collection, namely the University of Tsukuba Art Collection, abbreviated acronym UTAC.⁽¹⁾ Since 1997, the Institute of Art and Design (now reorganized as Faculty of Art and Design) has acquired more than 400 pieces from sources, such as gifts from current and retired faculty members and students and ex-students, and these pieces have been kept in a room like a storage within the research building.

In addition to these materials, from 2005 through 2010, the university authorities have received the donation of some 200 artworks from his private collection of the Tokyo resident entrepreneur Mr. ISHII Akira, whose enterprise made a financial endowment to the library-management graduate course. The so-called Ishii Collection consists some 100 Japanese and European modern paintings and works on paper, and other 100 early modern Asian porcelains.⁽²⁾ A well-design storage was established solely for this collection in the common building of the undergraduate school of art and design in 2006. The storage is now in a temperature and humidity highly controlled environment (figs. 6 and 7). A dedicated exhibition room was opened in 2007 within the University of Tsukuba Gallery in the University Hall.

The Faculty of Art and Design (hereinafter, abbreviated as FAD), University of Tsukuba, has a working group for UTAC management.⁽³⁾ The group members are composed of mainly art historians with experience working as a curator. FAD considers UTAC as a scholarly artistic resource and has been seeking to utilize the art collection effectively as a symbol of

research, educational outcomes and business-academia collaboration.

Symposia and workshops on UTAC are organized mainly from an art historical point of view (figs. 8 and 9). Art works from UTAC has been loaned to art museums inside and outside Japan (figs. 10 and 11). One of the full-scale exhibitions of the Ishii Collection was held in April through June 2011 at the Ibaraki Ceramic Art Museum, Kasama.⁽⁴⁾ The exhibition cheered the disaster victim affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake occurred on March 11, 2011.

UT Art Street

Also, UT Art Street, namely a linking of exhibition venues on campus, acts in the most important way to showcase UTAC from inside and outside the university.⁽⁵⁾ UT Art Street aims to introduce the research results and educational outcomes by faculty members and undergraduate and graduate students as well. Those venues include the institute buildings, the foyer of the library and even the gateway to the university president's office, as well as the Ishii Collection's permanent exhibition at the University of Tsukuba Gallery in the University Hall and others.

University of Tsukuba Gallery on the central area of campus contains the permanent exhibition room for the Ishii Collection (figs. 12 and 13). UT Art Space showcases mainly the research results of faculty members (let say established artists and/or designers), also the temporary exhibition of the Ishii Collection (figs. 14 and 15). UT Faculty of Art and Design Gallery is in the faculty building to show some selected artworks from UTAC, and award-winning students' artworks after the degree show every year as well (figs. 16 and 17).

Business-Academia Collaboration with UTAC

FAD has been continuing to extend UT Art Street project to off campus. One of the leading local commercial enterprise is greatly interested in the university sports and art linking business. The company set up a studio in order to exhibit art students' works in 2016, while investing in the artificial turf field for football and others. FAD works with this company to organize a variety of exhibitions and educational workshops each year.

In the year of 2017, the author has made a contact with the person in charge of business-academia collaboration of a bank, the biggest leading local company. The University of Tsukuba signed a contract with the bank to use a part of their premises in the branch building near by the university free of charge in order showcasing the UTAC (fig. 18). Then in the following year, FAD drew up a contract with another local bank, because they have a well-designed gallery space for public use in their main building. Now we can use a small space within their premises free of charge as a permanent satellite gallery for UTAC.

The purpose of collaboration with those companies is to let the community know about the presence of our art school and art and design institute through UTAC installation and to expect the reaction to research and educational outcomes. Those satellite galleries will invite residents to university expertise in the fields of art and design. UTAC is a symbol of university expertise in the fields of art and design, and a symbol of business-academia collaboration in the community.

In closing, the author should like to show the potential of social contribution and government-academia collaboration using UTAC. What can be envisaged to make the Art Street another symbol of government-academia collaboration, is to stretch it to the regional airport operated by the prefectural government and open another satellite gallery there. As is well known, every airport has high security and air conditioning. Realization is not so easy, but it could be an ideal museum at the gateway to the global activities of the University of Tsukuba. But in any case, all that is necessary to let the UTAC management and UT Art Street projects run smoothly and effectively, is indeed the university museum organization and its dedicated staff.

* This essay is shortened the oral manuscript entitled "Art Collection as Scholarly Resource and Business-Academia Collaboration", that was presented on an occasion of "UMAC 2019. University Museums and Collections as Cultural Hubs: The Future of Tradition", the 25th General Conference of International Council of Museum (ICOM), International Committee for University Museums and Collections (September 05, 2019. Kyoto University of Foreign Studies). Its peer-reviewed abstract has been published in *University Museums and Collections Journal* 11-1 (2019), p. 105 [http://umac.icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/UMACJ_11-1_2019.pdf].

Notes

- (1) On the fixed asset ledger of University of Tsukuba, we find more than 1400 of property categorized as "tangible = fine arts". While hundreds of artworks and reproductive *objets d'art* are under the management of various faculties and/or departments, it could be noteworthy that other hundreds of human models for medical training are categorized as "tangible = fine arts". It is interesting that the such human model is registered as "tangible=fine arts", because there seems to be a historical background that shows how the concept of "*bijutsu* (fine arts)" has been formed since the Meiji era.
- (2) The inventory catalogues of the Ishii Collection are as per the followings: TERAKADO Rintaro (ed.), *The Ishii Collection, University of Tsukuba, vol. 1: Paintings, Drawings, and Prints*, Institute of Art & Design, University of Tsukuba, 2011; Curatorial Dept., Ibaraki Ceramic Art Museum and TERAKADO Rintaro (eds.), *The Ishii Collection, University of Tsukuba, vol. 2: Ceramics, Lacquerwares and Glassware*, Institute of Art & Design, University of Tsukuba, 2011. Also is it possible to access the online catalogue: <https://www.geijutsu.tsukuba.ac.jp/ishii-en/>.
- (3) The working group is based on the project "Establishment of A. R. T. [Art Resources in Tsukuba]: Strategic Display and Utilization of University Art Resources", which was run by the university research grant 2008-2010. The project was directed by Prof. OMOGA Toshiharu (now professor emeritus) as a research representative. It aimed to make the university art collection and the exhibition facilities to utilize in order contributing socially to the local community and using effectively them for education and research. The research on "Utilization of Art Resources in University" has been followed by also Prof. Omuka from 2011 through 2018 with the Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. See <https://www.geijutsu.tsukuba.ac.jp/artresources/subject>.
- (4) The exhibition was co-organized by the Ibaraki Ceramic Art Museum, Kasama and the University of Tsukuba, and held at the museum from April 28 to June 19. It was planned to start in the end of March, but was delayed due to the earthquake.
- (5) The idea of not only connecting exhibition venues but also making the entire campus an art museum, is considered in the following research for instance: Thomas A. Gaines, *The Campus as a Work of Art*, Westport: Praeger Publ., 1991. The research is, however, relatively from the perspective of environmental design that embodies the "ideal campus" and is not necessarily intended to regard the campus as a medium for communicating research and study outcome.



fig. 1
Cast court, 5C Bldg., University of Tsukuba

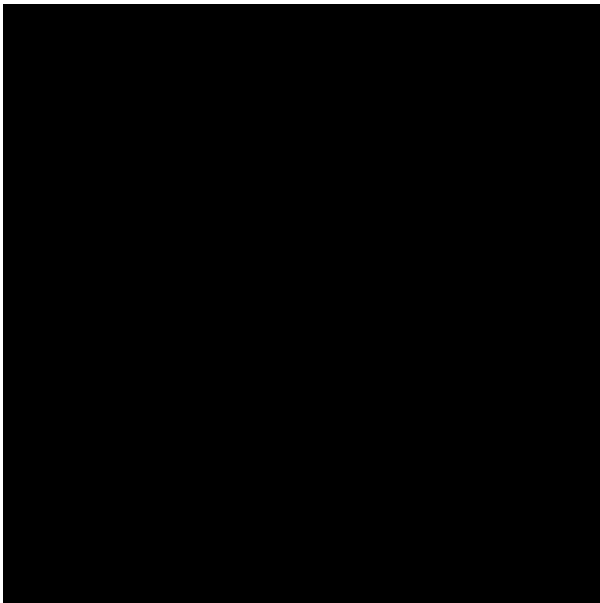


fig. 2
Student's work
(<https://www.geijutsu.tsukuba.ac.jp/school/kosei/craft/>)

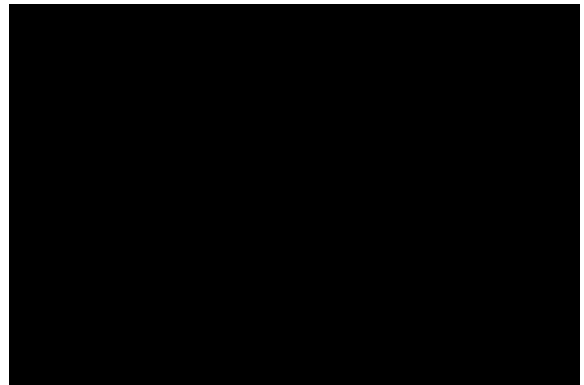


fig. 3
Student's work
(<https://www.geijutsu.tsukuba.ac.jp/school/kosei/pamm/>)

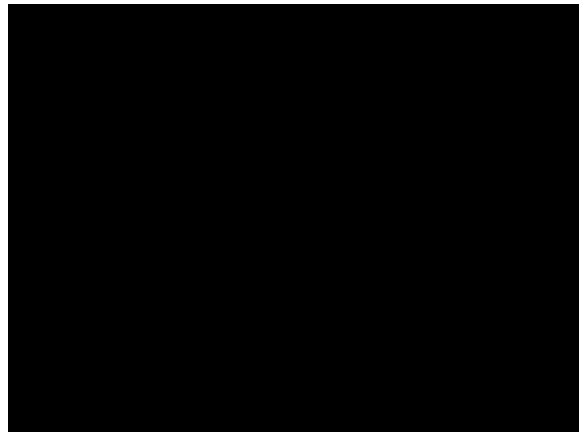


fig. 4
Ceramics studio
(photo: Courtesy of Prof. SAITO Toshiju)

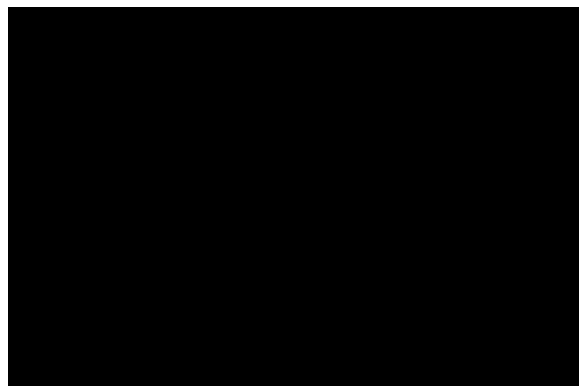


fig. 5
Student's work
(https://www.geijutsu.tsukuba.ac.jp/school/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2018/02/2016-26_0002.jpg)



fig. 6
Technical practice for art history students



fig. 7
Technical practice for art history students

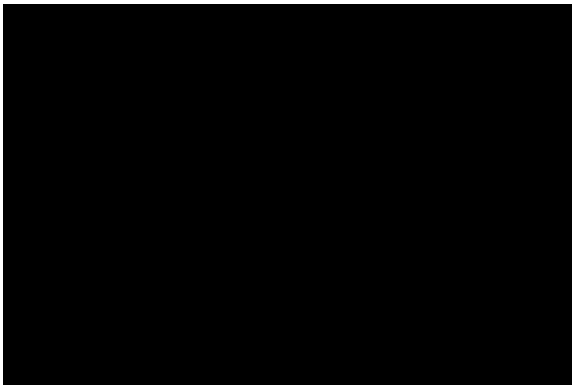


fig. 8
Symposium of the Ishii Collection

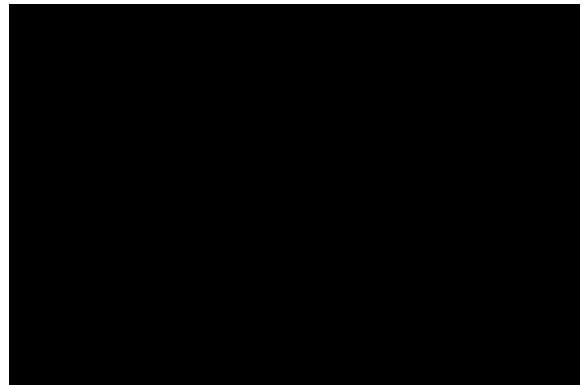


fig. 9
Workshop of the Ishii Collection

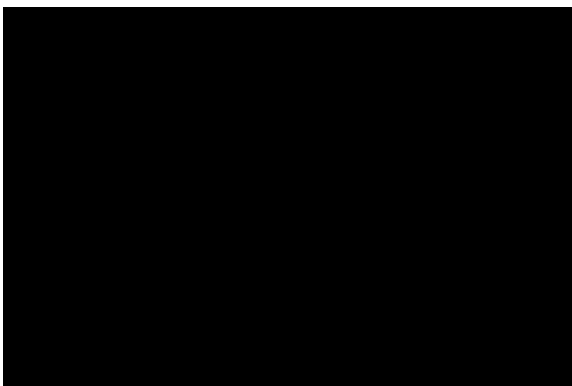


fig. 10
Art history students recording audio guide

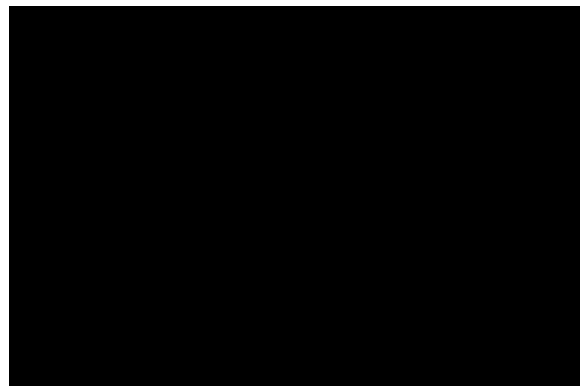


fig. 11
Art history student talking on exhibits at gallery



fig. 12
The Ishii Collection permanent exhibition, University of
Tsukuba Gallery, The University Hall



fig. 14
UT Art Space exhibiting the Ishii Collection

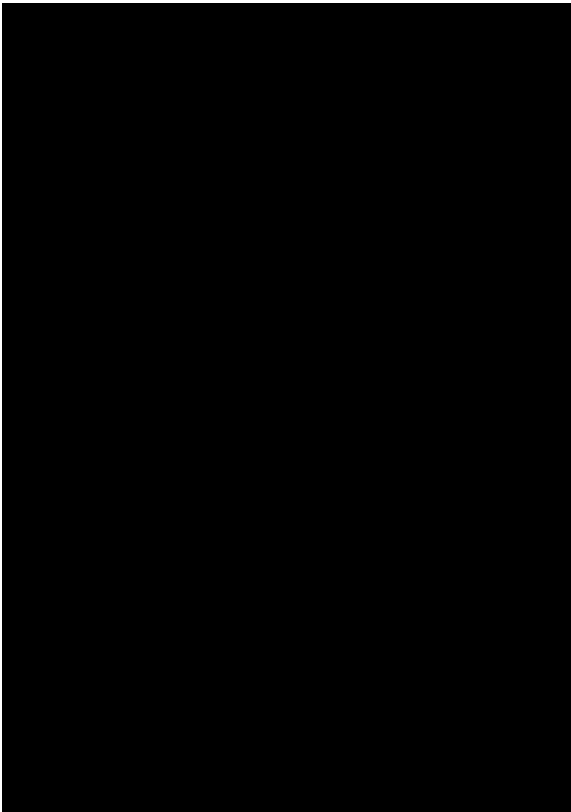


fig. 13
The Ishii Collection permanent exhibition poster

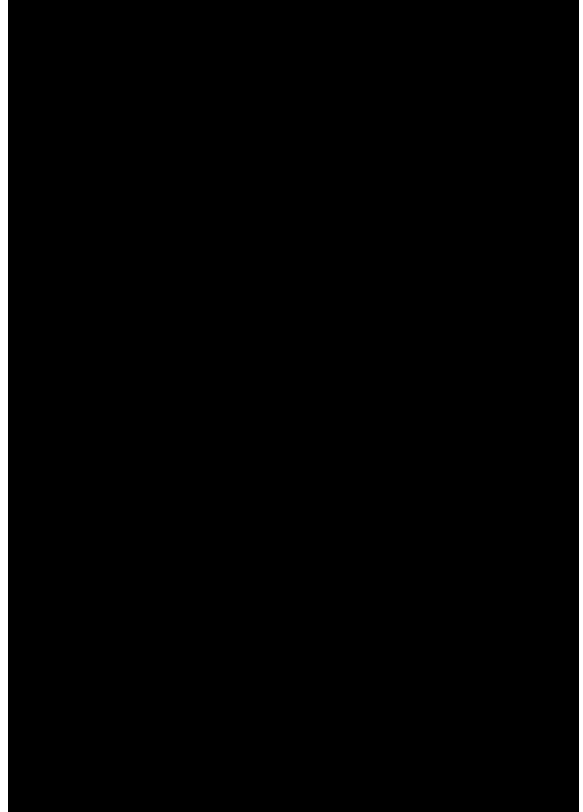


fig. 15
Poster for an exhibition, *Selected Works from the Ishii
Collection, University of Tsukuba Art Collection, "Tristan
Tzara, L'antifête and Three Artists"*, 2019.



fig. 16
UT Faculty of Art & Design Gallery showing Award-winning students' works



fig. 18
UTAC exposition in the branch building of a local bank

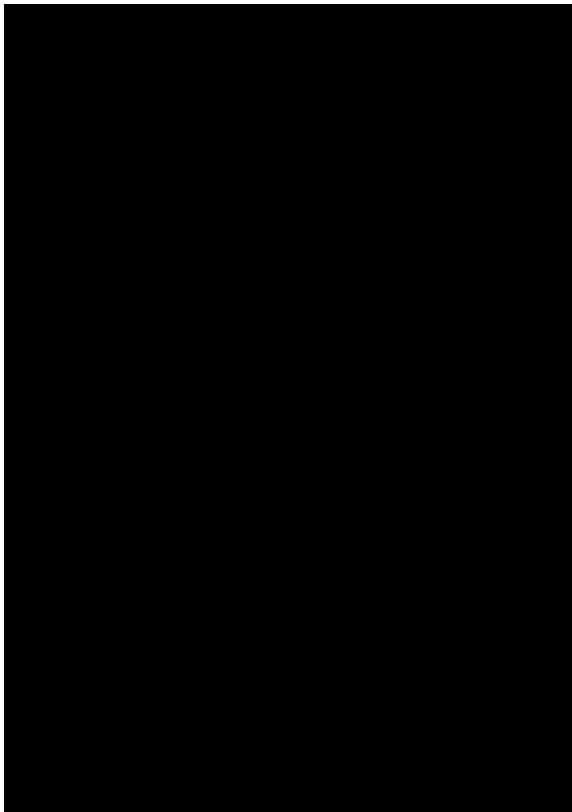


fig. 17
Poster for an exhibition *The Purchased Works from Degree Show 2019*