



## Miyoko Ito: An Interview

### About this program:

In 1978 Video Data Bank (VDB) co-founders Lyn Blumenthal and Kate Horsfield conducted an in-depth conversation with the late abstract surrealist Miyoko Ito (1918-1983). We are pleased to make this interview, now part of VDB's *On Art and Artists* collection, available during the run of Ito's current retrospective *Heart of Hearts* (April 7<sup>th</sup>-May 6<sup>th</sup>) at Artists Space (NY).

This historical interview was edited in 2014 with the support of the Lyn Blumenthal Memorial Fund.

### About Miyoko Ito:

"People say my paintings are the act of creation, and they are. The paintings are very much a part of life, like breathing. It's very much do or die. I'm growing all the time. All those years of painting is the beginning all over again. It's so wonderful." – Miyoko Ito

Miyoko Ito was born in Berkeley (CA) to Japanese parents in 1918. As a young girl, she spent several years with her mother and sister in Japan, where she first experimented with calligraphy and painting. Ito followed in her father's footsteps by attending the University of California, Berkeley, where she studied watercolor



*Island in the Sun*, Miyoko Ito (1978)

under John Haley, Erle Loran, and Worth Ryder. Months before her graduation in 1942, Ito was sent to Tanforan, an internment camp south of San Francisco. Released years before her new husband, Ito briefly matriculated at Smith College (MA) before transferring to the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (IL), where she received a scholarship but never graduated. Although, like those of other Chicago artists, her efforts were highly susceptible to regionalization, Ito participated in the 1975 Whitney Biennial (NY) and was honored with a retrospective exhibition at the

Renaissance Society (Chicago) in 1980. She was represented by Phyllis Kind Gallery in Chicago and New York from the late 1960s through her death in 1983. Recent exhibitions include solo presentations at the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive; Adam Baumgold Gallery (NY), VeneKlasen/Werner (Germany), and No Vacancies, a group presentation at Marianne Boesky Gallery (NY).

## About the *On Art and Artists* collection:

*On Art and Artists* (OAA) is a unique collection of interviews and portraits of artists, musicians, performers, architects, theorists, and critics, spanning 1974 to the present. The OAA collection represents four decades of producing and acquiring interviews by the Video Data Bank, and features more than 400 available titles, of which at least half are interviews produced by the Video Data Bank and its co-founders Lyn Blumenthal and Kate Horsfield. In addition, the collection offers artist interviews produced by external producers and producing organizations – including Artists Television Network, Long Beach Museum of Art, and the University of Colorado – and experimental documentaries and portraits, many of them produced by other artists.

Over the last forty years the *On Art and Artists* collection has grown into an archive of considerable cultural and historical significance, comprised of interviews and portraits of some of the most noteworthy

contemporary practitioners and thinkers from the U.S. and beyond. Originally conceptualized as a tool by which to provide art students with insight into their chosen creative fields, and the methodologies and processes available to them, the OAA collection now stands as a compelling testimony for wider audiences as to what it means to be an artist.

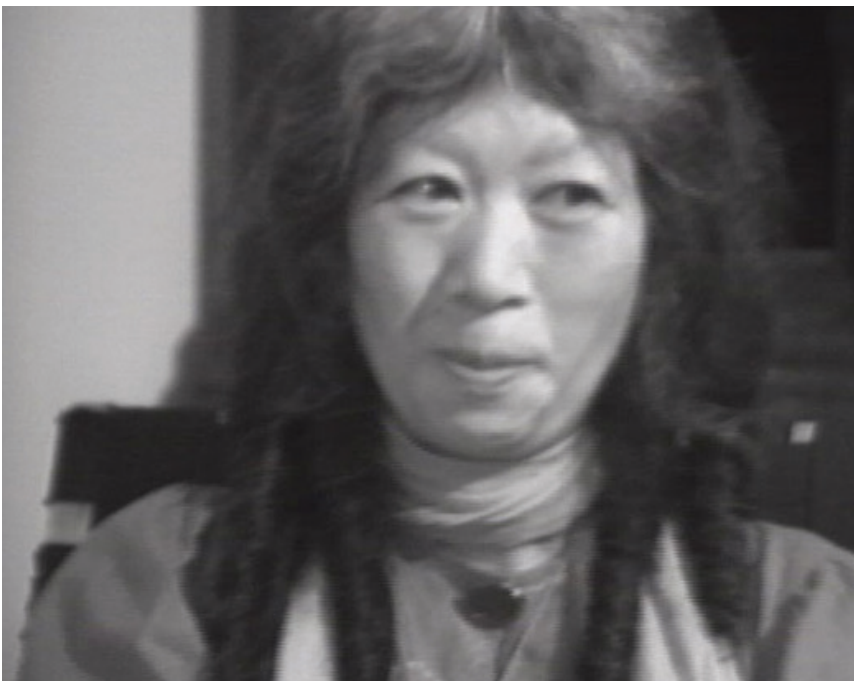
Recording interviews with artists has played a central role in the activities of the Video Data Bank since its founding, even while the resources were not always available to allow for editing and post-production. For the past several years VDB has been working to remedy this situation and to increase educational access to this significant body of work. With the assistance of funds from the Lyn Blumenthal Memorial Fund, many of the Blumenthal/Horsfield interviews, often unseen for decades, were finally digitized, preserved and edited. As part of an extensive and ongoing drive to preserve and digitize the entire collection, VDB has worked to make scores more of these unique interviews available through its distribution program.

From Abromović to Wodiczko, the *On Art and Artists* collection offers those interested in art history, contemporary practices and education a rare and rewarding study guide, offering insight into the lives, practices and methodologies of some of the most vital practitioners of our time.

## About VDB TV:

Launched in 2015, VDB TV is an innovative digital distribution project which provides free, online streaming access to curated programs of video and media art.

Sourced from the historically significant archives of the Video Data Bank, VDB TV includes work from early video pioneers active in the 1960s and 70s, through to emerging contemporary artists. VDB TV offers viewers across the United States and beyond access to rare video art, the opportunity to engage with programs conceived by a wide range of curators, and original writing, all while ensuring that artists are compensated for their work.



Miyoko Ito: *An Interview*, Blumenthal/Horsfield (1978)