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The title of the exhibition devoted to the Japanese art of the present day is a beautiful one: "Senritsumirai – Future Perfect." "Future Perfect": these are words that make you think, that seem almost to cast a magic spell, hinting at something mysterious that may have existed in each of us, for just a little while or forever. It is not my job – someone else will take on the responsibility – to enter into the merits of the exhibition, which is a follow-up to the one on the photographic work of Nobuyoshi Araki, a Japanese artist whose images of flowers and above all of tormented or exultant bodies conveyed a view of life that is at once ironic and tragic. Perhaps it was because of this choice, difficult to accept because it required a totally free mind, that Araki has caused and continues to cause controversy; controversy, however, that is destined to fade into what has no more than the appearance of scandal. The fact is that for years Japanese culture has both attracted and alarmed me, owing to the always precarious balance that it maintains between past and future, wading through a present that in every sense (from cities to people's clothing) absorbs both of them. But above all it grips me, just as I was gripped by Akira Kurosawa's movie *Rashomon*, which won the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival in the fifties and which I saw later on, when the avant-garde cinema headed by Jean-Luc Godard and the directors of the Nouvelle Vague was already washing over the world: a wave that was to trigger an endless series of imitations that were not always in the same class. What struck me and still strikes me in Kurosawa's images is the clarity and intensity with which they express the very modern concern for uncovering the truth, a flickering of things and thoughts that slip through our fingers even when we are sure we have got a firm hold on them. From that time on, I have always been fascinated by everything that came out of Japan, in the cinema, in literature, in the theater, in art, because it was capable of going beyond a mere existential disquiet, beyond a vague feeling of wonder at the new scenarios of society that have lost their memories and launched themselves into the unbridled consumption of modernity. But there is one more reason: that Japanese research is remorseless and often surprising, so that judgments and prejudices have to be reexamined every time. Now, faced with the proposals of Senritsumirai, permeated by a future that comes from far away, I find myself adopting the same attitude of passionate interest. It is difficult, if not impossible, to talk about an exhibition that is still being set up, for what counts is the final "spectacle," even though the word spectacle does not really convey what I mean, as anyone knows who, on occasions like these, moving from room to room in our Center, finds him or herself on a journey, taking a route that turns into a personal movie. Senritsumirai concludes

the three and a half years in which I have been president of the Center. I cannot imagine a better way to bring things to an end and to say goodbye than an exhibition whose title includes the words “Future Perfect,” words borrowed from the musings of the great psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan: a reality with two faces, yesterday and tomorrow, with today ticking the hours away. Symbol of an insatiable thirst for truth, just like my – our – beloved Rashomon.

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