

August 1, 2008  
For Immediate Release

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# **inkBoat Embarks on Major New International Collaboration with Butoh Master Ko Murobushi**

**Work Will Eventually Premiere at  
2010 SF International Arts Festival**

**Who: inkBoat & Ko Murobushi**

**What: Workshop Showing of *Crazy Cloud* (working title)**

**Where: NOHspace, 2840 Mariposa Street, San Francisco**

**When: Sunday September 14, 7:00pm**

**Tickets: \$10 General Admission**

**Box Office for Advance Purchase: [www.sfiarf.org](http://www.sfiarf.org) and 1-800-838-3006**

**For more information: 415-399-9554**

**August 1, San Francisco.** Bay Area based multi-disciplinary performance ensemble inkBoat, led by artistic director Shinichi Iova-Koga, will begin working with Japanese butoh master Ko Murobushi next month on a new project with a working title of *Crazy Cloud*. The initial stage of the project —a week long retreat at inkBoats's remote Northern California studio, inkGround, will take place from September 6-12 and culminate with the showing at NOHSpace in San Francisco on September 14, joined by Sherwood Chen and Dohee Lee.

*Crazy Cloud* will draw inspiration from the life and work of Ikkyu Sojun, a 15th century Zen monk/poet of unique and deep influence in Japan. Ikkyu is considered one of the most significant and eccentric figures in Zen Buddhism. The facts of his life have perhaps morphed into myth, but he remains a folk hero to many. He is renowned and respected for his irreverent and straightforward insights into life and the human experience. Ikkyu's

life and work was filled with contradictions, shining examples of the paradox that is Zen. Master of poetry, calligraphy and music, as well as vagabond and patron of brothels and bars, he was immersed in both “high” and “low” culture. He was sharply critical of formalistic religion and the false piety he perceived in the Buddhism of his time, yet attained a position of high stature in Daitoku-ji, a prestigious temple in Kyoto. In this man, polarities collided- the refined and the crass, the frank and the esoteric. His name roughly translates into “One Pause” signifying his moment of enlightenment that fell in the space between two crow calls. In contrast to this name, which conjures images of peace, is Ikkyu’s nickname, Crazy Cloud.

Iova-Koga, Murobushi and members of inkBoat will pull from the accounts of Ikkyu’s existence, which range from religious texts to a popular children’s manga series “Ikkyu-San,” as well as from his poetry. They will mine the extremes of his light and dark natures to create an evening length work.

Iova-Koga recounts: “When I hit a low point in life, a friend advised me that falling to the depths is the only way to reach anything higher. When I was later presented with Ikkyu’s book of poems, this sentiment came back to me. Ikkyu touches the gap between piss-drunk and wisdom. He didn’t act out of piety or duty or obligation, but pulled his fabric apart to understand its construction.

In 1996, I met Ko Murobushi in Rome and have since encountered him in various random locations. I remember him falling; he fell as if there was no ground to meet him. I tried to fall as he did. It’s a practice, falling. Will I flinch?”

Bay Area audiences are invited to witness the artists’ initial ideas for the work and to participate in the creative process by offering their feedback and ideas in a post-performance discussion with the artists.

*Crazy Cloud* will be co-produced by inkBoat, the US/Japan Cultural Trade Network (CTN) and the San Francisco International Arts Festival (SFIAF). The September showing is presented in association with Theatre of Yugen.

**inkBoat**

Since 1998, inkBoat, founded by Shinichi Iova-Koga, has worked together in various constellations. Each project calls for a new direction, a new way of working. Examples range from the fifteen-member ensemble work entitled *Cockroach* (2001) to the duet *Ame to Ame* (2004) to the seven-member work *c(H)ord* recently performed at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Theater (which included Dohee Lee, Dana Iova-Koga and Sherwood Chen, performers for the final version of *Crazy Cloud*).

Shinichi Iova-Koga is a time-based artist working in ephemeral expression, examining, dissecting and intentionally blurring the line between media to uproot stories contained within the body. He and his wife Dana Iova-Koga founded inkGround, a studio and farm in rural Northern California to continue the exploration of stories through the land, utilizing the surrounding forests, rivers and ocean-side as new media for the life/dance investigation.

**Ko Murobushi**

Ko Murobushi is one of the most acclaimed butoh artists in the world. Murobushi trained and performed for many years with Tatsumi Hijikata, the acknowledged founder of butoh. Murobushi was also a founding member of the ground breaking and renowned Dairakudakan Company. His influential group Ariadone introduced Europe to butoh in 1978. He continues to explore the discipline and develop as a solo performer. Currently based in Japan, he tours internationally throughout Europe and South America. In addition to his career as a performing artist, Murobushi also trained as a *yamabushi* (ascetic mountain priest) and has held a lifelong interest in Ikkyu.

**SFI AF**

SFI AF was established in September 2002 for the specific purpose of launching in San Francisco an annual, multi-disciplinary, multi-venue arts festival of international scope and appeal. To date, five festivals have been successfully implemented.

Rather than building a festival that is the sole responsibility of a single producer, SFI AF is dedicated to working with an array of San Francisco arts organizations to develop a

paradigm that utilizes the shared resources of multiple local presenters to reach mutually beneficial goals. In addition to direct responsibility for its own productions and programs, SFIAF provides coordination, administrative, fundraising and promotional support and overall leadership in presenting the festival. SFIAF's core values are based on principals of cultural and economic equity. In addition to working with larger institutions, SFIAF places a high priority on the participation of culturally diverse and smaller arts organizations that represent the City's broad demographics. Activating and supporting relationships between large and small organizations and individual artists is also a key component of SFIAF.

### **CTN**

CTN was founded by Kyoko Yoshida as an international project of Minneapolis based Arts Midwest in 2001 with a five year grant from the U.S./Japan Friendship Commission. Upon the completion of the five year term, Yoshida relocated the project to the Pacific rim city of San Francisco and began the process of establishing CTN as an independent 501(c)(3). The Mission of CTN is to design and deliver exemplary arts and cultural exchange programs in the United States and Japan; to build and share broad knowledge within the professional community about artistic resources and management practices of U.S. and Japan; to provide access to contextual understanding for the artistic works to enhance understanding and appreciation of audiences/participants; to facilitate strong working relationships between and among artistic professionals in the U.S. and Japan; and to provide translations, facilitations and coordination services to enable cross cultural projects to fulfill their potential.

### **Theatre of Yugen**

Theatre of Yugen, founded in 1978, is an experimental ensemble dedicated to the exploration of dramatic classics and the crafting of new works of world theater, stemming from a discipline of classical Japanese Noh drama and Kyogen comedy. Their venue, NOHspace, is also home to many Bay Area artists and performing groups through the NOHspace Presents series (formerly known as Yugen Presents). For more information on Theatre of Yugen's current season and history, please visit [www.theatreofyugen.org](http://www.theatreofyugen.org).

**Calendar Editors Please Note**

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