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DAICON IV OPENING ANIMATION 《DAICON IV プロモーション》は、1983年に大阪で開催された第22回日本SF大会開会式で上映されたアニメ作品で、製作はアマチュア・グループのDAICONフィルム。同じ年に大阪で開催された1981年のSF大会で発表された《DAICON III プロモーション》の脚本に当たる。なお、DAICON(ダイコン)は「大阪コンベンション」の愛称だ。

日本SF大会は、まだ日本で「おそらく」という概念が確立していない時代から開催されていた。おそらくが作るおそらくのための組織であるイベントだ。現在も日本SF大会は定期的に開催中で、おそらくとSFは密接な関係にある。特撮やロボット・アニメなどおそらくが愛するジャンルの元ネタに《機動戦士ガンダム》(pl. 90)のように、ロバート・ハインラインの小説《スタートレック・トゥルーバース》(1959年)を元にしたというレベルで、完全に合体していると言っても過言ではない。当時おそらくというジャンルが確立されていたなかったため、子供文化的な特撮、アニメを見て育った心の渴みを満たす物がおそらくしかなかった、とも言えよう。

DAICONフィルムは、当時学生だった岡田斗司夫、武田康晴、藤野秀明、山崎博之、赤井孝美など、当時関西地区で学生をやっていた連中が集まって創設した。後にこのグループはガイナックスとしてプロのアニメーション制作会社の起業メンバーとなり、おそらくのアニメフィルム、《新世紀エヴァンゲリオン》(pl. 33)を制作するが、それはこのDAICON IVが開催されて12年が過ぎた1995年だ。

彼らがSF大会のために制作した短編アニメには、おそらくにアピールする特徴が二つあった。まず《ゴジラ》や《宇宙戦艦ヤマト》(pl. 7, 27)などサブカルチャー（おそらくにあたる文化）をふんだんに引用していること、そして、作業で仕上げた5分間のBミックスで制作されたアニメでありながら、自主映画の面をはるかに凌駕した過剰なクオリティであること。つまり面が巧い、音楽と完全に同期し
DAICON IV Opening Animation was first shown at the opening ceremony of the 22nd Japan SF Convention held in Osaka in 1983. Created by DAICON Film, a group of amateur animators, this five-minute 8mm film was a sequel to the group’s debut work, DAICON III Opening Animation, which premiered at the 1981 conference (also in Osaka). DAICON stands for “Osaka Convention,” using an alternate pronunciation (da) for the first character in “Osaka.”

The annual SF (science fiction) convention, inaugurated in 1962, remains an event by otaku for otaku, predating the term otaku itself, which did not enter public discourse until the late 1980s. Science fiction is intimately linked to otaku culture. The creators of such otaku-favored genres as “robot anime” and tokusatsu (special effects) films drew heavily on science fiction; the anime classic Mobile Suit Gundam (pl. 30), for example, was inspired by Robert Heinlein’s 1959 novel, Starship Troopers. Before the full emergence of otaku culture, fans of tokusatsu and anime TV series created for children could further satisfy their appetites only by turning to science fiction.

DAICON Film was formed by Toshio Okada, Yasuhiro Takeda, Hideaki Anno, Hiroyuki Yamaga, and Takami Akai (among others), who were then college students in the Osaka area. They subsequently formed the anime studio Gainax, which made its name with Neon Genesis Evangelion (pl. 33) in 1995, a landmark of otaku culture.

Their DAICON animations reveal two characteristics that appeal to otaku. First, they contain abundant references to elements of the subculture that would later be called otaku subculture, including Godzilla and Space Battleship Yamato (pls. 7, 27). Second, even though these hand-drawn, 8mm anime films are extremely short at five minutes each, they demonstrate an extraordinary artistic and technical level that exceeds expectations for independent films: not only is the quality of the animation high, but the DAICON animators were able to integrate the picture and the music seamlessly and deploy such sophisticated techniques as multiple exposures far more skillfully than “professionals.” Indeed, DAICON’s films, imbued with a tremendous amount of energy and the ambition of these amateur animators, jump-started the evolution of anime subculture into full-fledged otaku culture.

In the final sequence of DAICON IV Opening Animation, the theme of “destruction and regeneration” is imaginatively reinterpreted. The energetic flight through the sky of a girl in a bunny costume is followed by the explosion of what could only be described as an atomic bomb, which destroys everything. In a pink-hued blast, petals of cherry blossoms—Japan’s national flower—spread over the city, which is then burned to ashes, as trees die on the mountains and the earth is turned into a barren landscape. When the spaceship DAICON, a symbol for otaku floating in the sky, launches a powerful “otaku” beam, the earth is covered with green, as giant trees sprout instantly from the ground. The world is revived, becoming a place of life where people joyously gather together.

Finding something liberating in the devastating power of destruction, the DAICON animators announced their revolution in pictorial form, paying little heed to the conventions of political correctness that surround the atomic bombings in Japan.
Mr. (b. 1969) is something of an otaku. A genuine “lolicon” (Japanese shorthand for “Lolita complex,” and those possessing it), he is also a trash collector and an ex-biker. After failing the entrance exam for Tokyo University of Fine Arts and Music four years in a row, he studied art at Sōkei Art School in Tokyo (which has no entrance exam). Mr. is not even good at drawing manga-like pictures of lolicon subjects. To be blunt, he is a misfit and a lolicon.

Yet Mr. found a means of turning these negative elements into something positive when he decided to borrow the nickname “Mister” from Shigeo Nagashima, the superstar third-baseman of the post-war Yomiuri Giants. His new name, “Mr.,” intimates the artist’s determination to bear the burden of being Japanese (emulating the beloved sports icon), to position himself as an “artist-entertainer” (like Nagashima, who had a popular and prolific second career on TV), and to exploit his negative qualities (as so many Japanese comedians do).

This uniquely Japanese artist with a knack for entertainment initially created works from the trash he collected, following the examples set by Robert Rauschenberg’s assemblage Pop Art and the Italian avant-garde movement Arte Povera. Mr., however, practiced “poor art” simply because he was too impoverished to buy painting supplies. Airing out of sheer necessity, his junk art was still nothing more than an imitation of other artists’ work.

One day, Mr. decided to explore the imagery of lolicon girls through illustration, imbuing the subject with an ample dose of otaku fantasy. Drawing on the backs of convenience-store and supermarket receipts that he had been hoarding for ten years, he realized that this method somehow echoed Jonathan Borofsky’s “numbered drawings,” for both artists were attempting to enumerate the details of their reality. Mr. quickly went through all of the receipts, and this body of work helped him gain confidence in his art, prompting him to work with various materials. When he was dating a woman whose family owned a sushi restaurant, he borrowed a Japanese sword left by her late father, for use in his performances. Although this girl-friend is long gone, the sword has remained in Mr.’s hands. Highly private episodes like this inform his work, a fact that makes Mr. part of today’s otaku generation.

Mr. "Penyo-heryo" Myōyonmyô Edition (from a set of 4 sculptures) 『べににょへやみょみょみょ』版 (4体セットのうちの1体)
2004
FRP (fiber-reinforced polymer), acrylic, iron
419 x 328 x 134 cm (including base)
Contemporary Media Inc., Tokyo
Photo: Mokuyô Media
© 2004 Mr./Kaki Kor Co., Ltd. All Rights Reserved

Mr. "15 Minutes from Shiki-Station" BARDS152
2003
Acrylic on canvas
162 x 130.3 cm
Contemporary Media Inc., Tokyo
© (c) Mr./Kaki Kor Co., Ltd. All Rights Reserved
Chiho Aoshima (b. 1974) loved to draw from childhood. She would secretly fill notebooks with explicit images, each of which she destroyed after completion. When one of her notebooks was discovered by her parents, she was scolded and stopped drawing.

Aoshima never went to art school, but during her senior year majoring in economics at Hosei University in Tokyo, she discovered computer graphics while working at a part-time job. In a sense, she began her career in art by watching others work on computers. The merit of computer design lies in its flexibility. It is easy to modify a composition or colors and duplicate small components. Even an amateur can constantly review her work on the monitor, his or her ideas by her friends, and incorporate various changes afterwards. Computer-generated works have as many possibilities for output as the technologies available, which matches with time. Aoshima's works are frequently rendered in mural-size prints or more than thirty meters across; they can also be produced as chromogenic prints, a type of color print frequently used for photographs.

Aoshima's work is a cross between popular manga and traditional scroll paintings. She freely alters the sizes and colors of her characters, and repeatedly uses the same data for such background elements as trees. She does not favor complex techniques or art for spectacle, but focuses solely on finding the messages she wants to convey on the monitor as quickly as possible. Very few men appear in Aoshima's fantastic world, which are populated by female characters who are transformed into mountains and rivers, or disguised as animals or living creatures (especially insects, snakes, and reptiles) in the natural world.

Aoshima has discovered an unprecedented freedom of image production in a complete digital world. In her recent collaboration with fashion designer Issey Miyake, models were dressed printed with Aoshima's images in Miyake's runway show. Inspired by this sight, Aoshima became interested in the human figure and began creating figurative sculptures and monotypes.
青面十魔：幼少の頃を過ごすことが好きで、誰にも見せずに пед的な絵をノートに描き続けていた。生まれた時から、月明（1973年生まれ）は、ある日の夜を描き続けていたが、これが彼の生みの親のことを思い出させるのを止めるのを続けている。

月明は、大学の教授を務めていた教授が亡くなった。アルバートとデリーグナーは、その学生を訪ね、彼が描いた絵を見た。月明は、彼が描いた絵の中には、彼の生みの親のことを思い出させるものがあった。月明は、その絵を彼の生みの親のことを思い出させるのを続けている。

コンピューターを使った新しいスタイルのアートを制作するプレクション・リミットに、月明は同じように、月明が描いた絵の中には、彼の生みの親のことを思い出させるものがあった。月明は、その絵を彼の生みの親のことを思い出させるのを続けている。

月明は、その絵を彼の生みの親のことを思い出させるのを続けている。
Space Battleship Yamato originated as a TV anime series broadcast in Japan in 1974–75; it also aired in the U.S. as Star Blazers in 1979. The story is set in the year 2199, when Earth is attacked by Gamilus, an evil stellar empire. Nuclear pollution caused by the Gamilon bombing threatens to kill all remaining humans within a year. The desperate earthlings receive a message from the friendly planet Iscandar, 148,000 light years away: to save themselves, they must retrieve Iscandar's radiation neutralizer, "Cosmo Cleaner." Using the blueprint sent with the message, the embattled humans build a "Wave Motion Engine" capable of traveling beyond the speed of light, and install it on the sunken Japanese battleship Yamato—Japan's last hope in World War II—which they salvage from the dried seabed and refit for the mission to save their planet.

Above all, Yamato was instrumental in the rise of the new subculture of otaku. The series initially suffered low ratings, in part because its theme and setting were too complex for its intended audience of elementary-school children, and also because it was broadcast opposite Heidi, an immensely popular anime series. When the series was rerun, however, Yamato began to draw attention, prompting independent screenings. With the blockbuster success of the film version, released in 1977, Yamato marked a milestone in the history of animation, spawning sequels both on TV and on film. The young people who supported Yamato were the original otaku, or "adults unable to grow up."

Yamato also caused a paradigm shift in animation. Departing from the usual plot of "good vanquishes evil" so common in children's programming, it acknowledged the enemy's necessity in attacking Earth: the Gamilons must relocate, as their home planet is doomed to die. The highly realistic design of "mecha" (mechanical vessels and weapons)—also set the standard for the genre of "mecha-robot anime." Without Yamato there would have been no Gundam or Evangelion (pls. 30, 33). The ship's powerful weapon, "Wave Motion Gun," is one of the most iconic images of anime. The series also exerted a significant influence on Aum Shinrikyo (Aum Supreme Truth), a notorious religious cult that carried out arguably the worst terrorist attack in postwar Japanese history by dispersing deadly Sarin gas on the Tokyo subways in 1995. Aum produced a Yamato-like anime film for their proselytization efforts, and named their own air purifiers (which supposedly protected them from enemy attacks with poisonous gases and biological weapons) "Cosmo Cleaners." This fact alone demonstrates the profound impact made by Yamato on Japanese culture.

Notably, this landmark anime still relied on the idea of radiation as a key narrative device. Thirty years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Japanese experience of the atomic bombings was beginning to fade into the past, but the memory could not be forgotten.

**Plates 27a-c**

| Plate 27a | Space Battleship Yamato
<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title:</strong> Space Battleship Yamato <strong>Year:</strong> 1974–75 <strong>First series</strong> <strong>28-episode TV anime series</strong> <strong>Original concept and planning:</strong> Yoshinobu Nishizaki <strong>Director:</strong> Leiji (Reiji) Matsumoto <strong>Broadcast by:</strong> Yomiuri TV Network © 1997 Tohokushinsha Film Corporation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plate 27a</strong></td>
<td>Battleship Yamato on the exposed ocean floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plate 27b</strong></td>
<td>Yamato departing from Earth for the planet Iscandar © 1997 Tohokushinsha Film Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plate 27c</strong></td>
<td>The ship's powerful weapon, &quot;Wave Motion Gun&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Neon Genesis Evangelion, an anime masterpiece, began as a TV series written and directed by Hideaki Anno and produced by Gainax in 1995–96. The production company Gainax got its start as DAICON IV Opening Animation (pl. 2) in 1983, and its affiliate, the science-fiction store in 1995-96. The production company Gainax got its start as DAICON Film, a group of amateur animators who created DAICONIV Opening General Products; essentially a group of otaku elites, they were the feature-length anime The Wings of Honneamise (released in 1987). Evangelion became an explosive hit when it was first broadcast. Caught up in the cult-like fervor surrounding the work, fans willingly accepted the controversial and irregular release of the subsequent version to paying audiences in March 1997 and released the subsequent feature films attracted not only anime fans but also young culture-lovers and anime veterans who had outgrown otaku obsessions. Evangelion is an unsurpassed milestone in the history of otaku culture.

The story is set in 2015, fifteen years after the Second Impact, a deadly cataclysm of global magnitude that originated in Antarctica. The new city of Tokyo is suddenly attacked by "Angels," unidentified enemies that take various forms including biomechanical giants and a computer virus. NERV, a special U.N. agency charged with fighting the invaders, deploys Evangelions, all-purpose humanoid weapons piloted by three specially chosen fourteen-year-old kids (Shinji, Rei, and Asuka). A complex amalgam of science fiction and human drama in the form of robot anime, Evangelion showcased Gainax's skillful animation, along with Anno's bold use of white-on-black subtitle graphics and speedy, almost subliminal construction of action sequences. In many ways, Evangelion is a meta-otaku film, through which Anno, himself an otaku, strove to transcend the otaku tradition. This superbly crafted work was infused with intriguing, often cryptic terms and ideas adapted liberally from sources as disparate as Judeo-Christian mysticism, biology, and psychology. Such elements include the devastating weapon "Spear of Longinus" (derived from the legendary spear used to pierce the crucified Jesus) and the "AT (Absolute Terror) Field" (essentially, a mental barrier separating a person's ego from the outside world).

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While dutifully paying homage to the pop- and otaku-culture landmarks that preceded it, Evangelion pushed its depiction of the psychological and emotional struggles of the young motherless pilots to the extreme. The controversial final two episodes of the TV series, which unconventionally mix anime scenes with drawings and video footage, focus on Shinji, the central character among the pilots, and his painful search for what his life means both as a person and as an Evangelion pilot. With the purposeless Shinji's interior drama taking center stage, Evangelion is the endpoint of the series' gradual evolution of characters and the world around them as they strive to reconnect with themselves and with each other. The themes explored in Evangelion include the nature of identity, the impact of trauma, the struggle for meaning in a world that seems increasingly chaotic and inhospitable, and the role of art and creativity in the face of adversity. Through its intricate plot, complex characters, and thought-provoking themes, Evangelion stands as a testament to the enduring appeal of otaku culture and its ability to challenge and inspire audiences across generations.