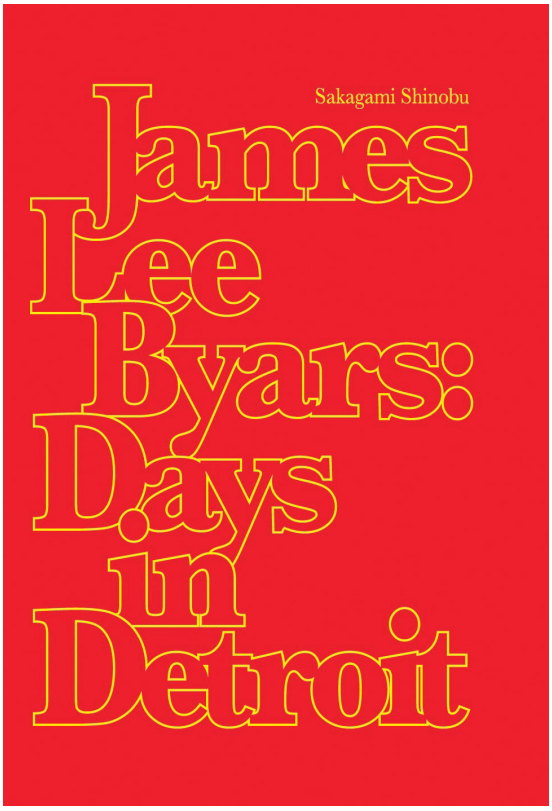
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Tel: +1 212 645 1111
Email: ussales@accartbooks.com
Web: https://www.accartbooks.com/us



James Lee Byars

Days in Detroit

Sakagami Shinobu

ISBN	9781953225207
Publisher	Floating World Editions
Binding	Hardback
Territory	USA & Canada
Size	5.98 in x 8.27 in
Pages	136 Pages
Illustrations	66 b&w
Price	$40.00

- A biographical prequel to the author's lauded *James Lee Byars: Days in Japan*
- Exhaustively researched by the foremost expert on Byars
- Details the artist's formative years
- Illuminates the influences on this enigmatic modern artist

Decades after the death of the artist and aesthetic heretic ***James Lee Byars***, episodes from his life have taken on the aura of urban legend. Born and raised in Detroit, he spent much of his adult life outside the United States. His first sojourn overseas was to Japan in 1958 at age twenty-six, and over the next ten years he traveled between Japan and the U.S. seven times. Later in life he spent several years in Europe, and died in Cairo in 1997.

Curator and art historian Sakagami Shinobu here traces Byars's formative years in Detroit, a period about which virtually nothing has been published. Extensive interviews with those who knew him do much to clarify facts about his early growth as an artist and to provide a picture of the environment that nurtured it. This companion book to the author's lauded *James Lee Byars: Days in Japan* illuminates a similarly crucial yet overlooked period in the artist's development.

Sakagami Shinobu is an art historian and curator. Born in Tokyo, she earned a master's degree at Kyoto City University of Arts. Since 2009 she has worked as a curator at the Yamazaki Mazak Museum of Art in Nagoya, Japan. As a historian she specializes in the prewar and postwar history of the avant-garde art movement in Kyoto. Her first book about the American artist James Lee Byars was published in English as *James Lee Byars: Days in Japan* (Floating World Editions, 2017). Her English-language essays include "Gazing on the Beauty of Nothingness" (in James Lee Byars, Pirelli HangarBicocca, 2024) and *On the Eighties: A Look at the New Wave of the 1980s* (Art Platform Japan, 2022).

Published 12th Aug 2024