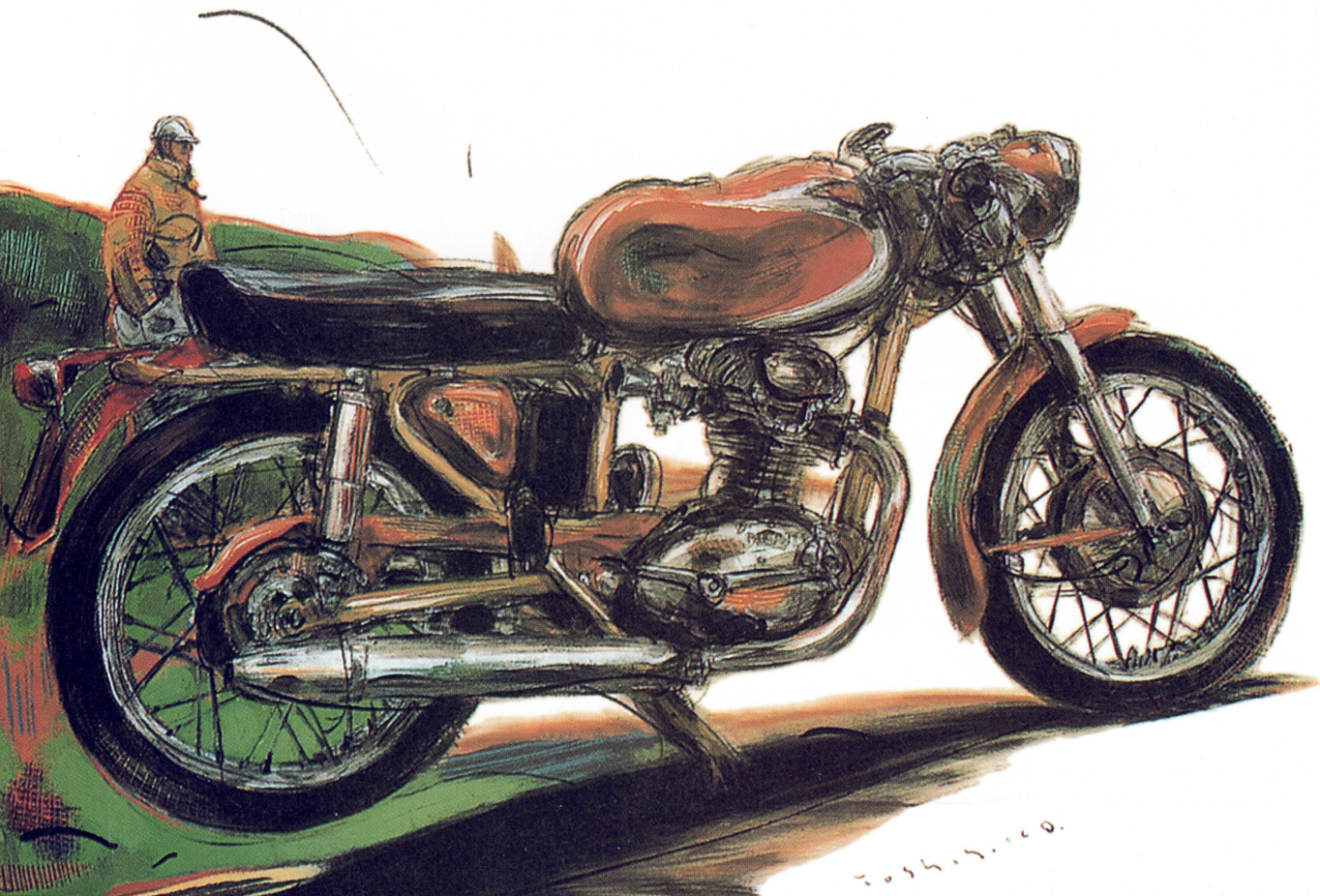
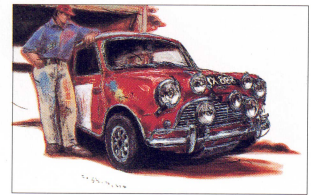
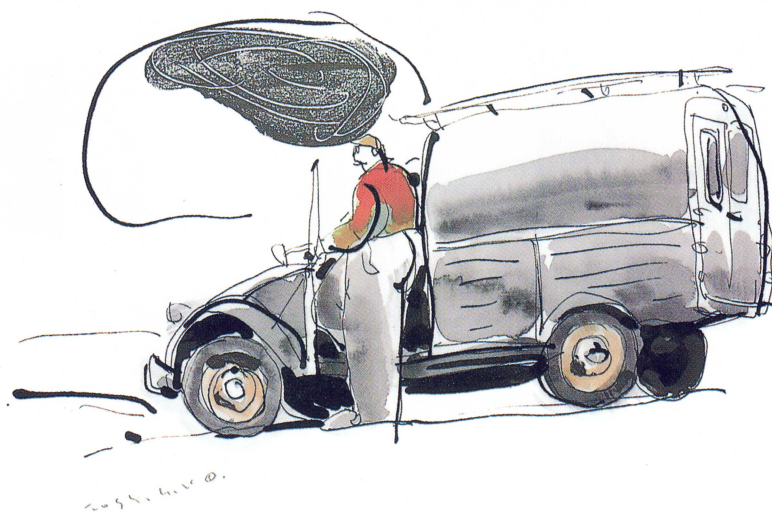
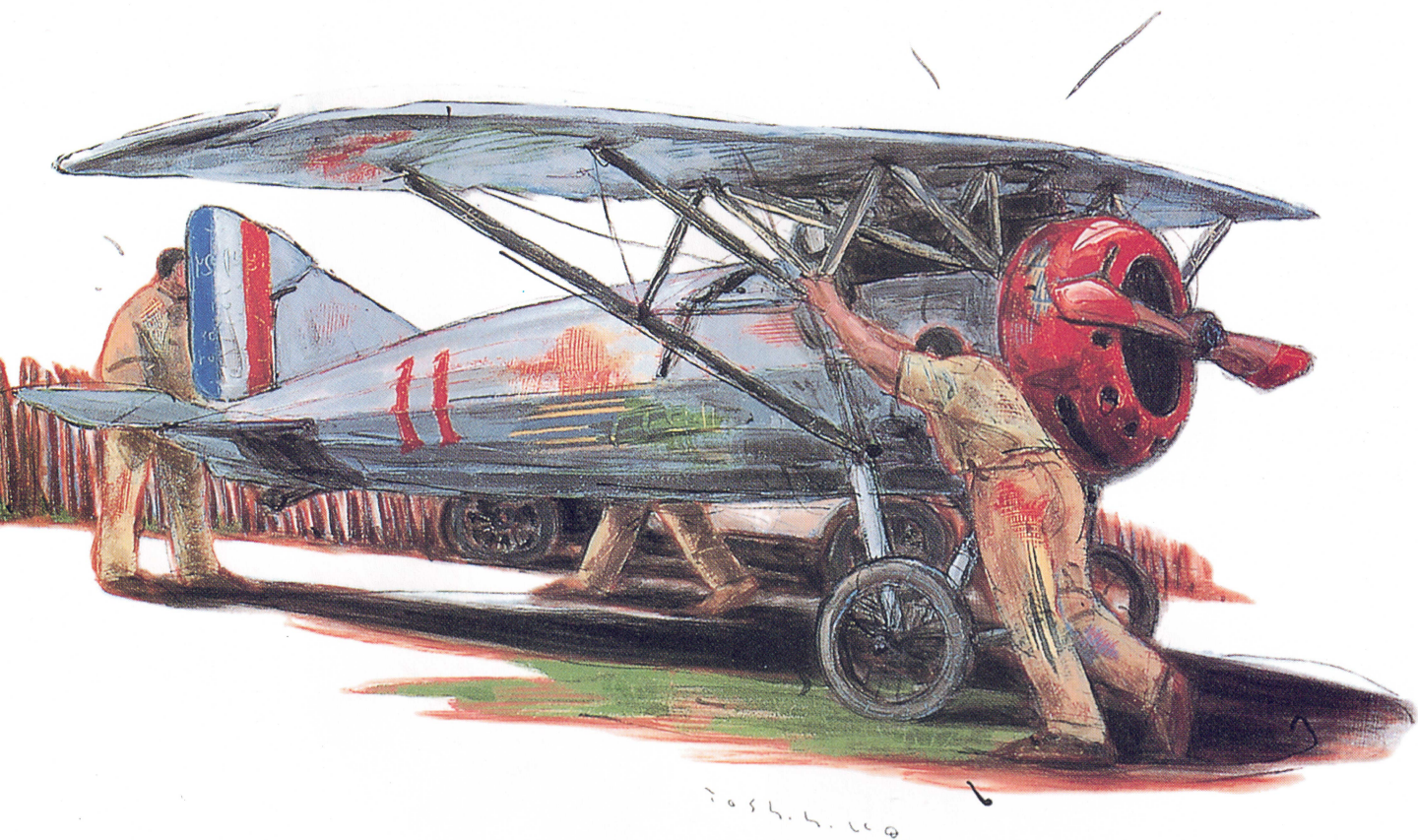


*I'd rather run my hands over a car than drive it." Toshihiko Ando, leading car illustrator, has captured all the major oil companies and a collection of auto-related corporations and magazines with images that are loose, sensuous, and often grimy. Pressed, he defines his appeal as a matter of technique; by scouring and scratching down to the base colors, he says, "I'm trying to imply weight. That's what I like about cars." □ So unlike anything US auto and oil industries would tolerate, let alone commission, Ando's pastel, acrylic, and auto paint originals, which sell for thousands of dollars at solo exhibitions in trendy Tokyo galleries, are clearly recognizable in his work for Idemitsu, Nisseki, Mitsubishi, Canon, Victor, Bridgestone, and Yamaha. Though after training as a graphic designer he began as a fashion illustrator and has moved into sports and landscapes, Ando is favored for his illustrations of machines. Yet excepting the straight advertising work, he's seldom tied down to his subject, and even then his illustrations seem less a description of the machine than a whimsical musing on a scene that might—or might not—include it. In a recent job for Subaru, the company asked him to unscratch some of the scratchings because it was, after all, a campaign introducing a new car. As for the editorial work for Fi MAGAZINE, NAVI, and PLAYBOY, he says, "Sometimes the illustrations work with the text, by chance." □ The current fondness among art directors for Ando's drawings, with their implication of authenticity and age, even when the subject is a brand new car, is indicative of a larger ambiguity; the booming '80s are long gone, but the automobile remains in dreamland. Playing a role as a status symbol, physically attainable personality trait, or maybe a stand-in for a second home, the car is certainly not meant to be seen as simply a mode of transportation. Ando's drawings easily complement the so-Japanese TV ads that detail more carefully the landscapes driven through than the car driven. And they instill in the Western mind a sense that in Japan the product "CAR"—even if it's imported—is heavier as an idea than as an actual 2000 pound thing. ■ Maggie Kinser Saiki*





(Opposite, top) Piece for auto magazine *NAVI*. (Bottom) Solo exhibit, "Motorcycles," 1995. Pinpoint Gallery, Minami Aoyama, Tokyo. ■ (Above, top) Art for postcard. (Middle) Piece for solo exhibit concentrating on biplanes. (Bottom) Solo exhibit, "My Favorite Vehicles," 1991, Maya 2 Gallery, Kita Aoyama, Tokyo.