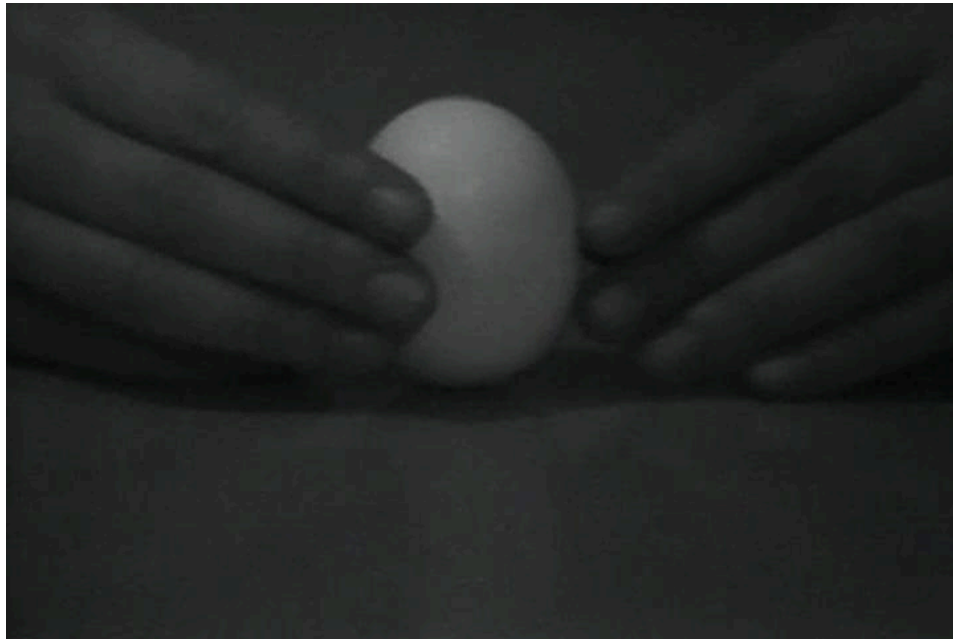


Statics of an Egg

Curated by Martin Germann

May 8–June 27, 2026
52 Walker Street, New York



Fujiko Nakaya, *Statics of an Egg*, 1973 (Still). © Fujiko Nakaya. Courtesy the artist

David Zwirner is pleased to present *Statics of an Egg*, an exhibition bringing together a selection of multimedia work by a group of Japanese-born artists, along with contributions from an earlier generation of pioneering artists whose practices have influenced and inspired these contemporary figures. Curated by Martin Germann, the exhibition features new and recent work by Ryoko Aoki, Masaya Chiba, Miho Dohi, Daisuke Fukunaga, Kenji Ide, Soshiro Matsubara, Yu Nishimura, Hikari Ono, Reina Sugihara, and Masanori Tomita. Interspersed throughout the presentation are works spanning the 1950s to the 1990s by Koji Enokura, Yutaka Matsuzawa, Natsuyuki Nakanishi, Fujiko Nakaya, and Isamu Wakabayashi. *Statics of an Egg* features a network of artistic peers—gathered by Nishimura and Ide in collaboration with Germann—who all share a deep-seated commitment to the exploration of material and formal realms where ideas condensate, structures unfold, and perception expands into liminal and uncharted territory.

The concept of gravity surfaces as a central theme in the exhibition: as a universal *physical* force shaping the behavior of matter in space; as a particular *psychological* weight marking the pull of memory, opacity, and shadow; and as a *cultural* touchstone connecting artistic practices across time, from the rapid economic changes of postwar Japan to the nation's sociopolitical realities today. Here, influence operates less as a linear narrative than as a form of attraction—a gravitational pull that engenders a

shared attentiveness to how things fall, accumulate, resist, and decay, thus allowing for an open-ended exploration of balance, atmosphere, and materiality.

The show takes its title and conceptual point of departure from the film *Statics of an Egg* (1973) by video and conceptual art pioneer Fujiko Nakaya. The work relates to an essay written by the artist's father, the physicist Ukichiro Nakaya, refuting the traditional East Asian folk belief that eggs can only be made to stand upright on the first day of spring. In the film, the artist's hands are shown repeatedly attempting to balance an egg on a flat surface, with slight adjustments to angle, pressure, and point of contact each time—making gravity visible as a condition negotiated by the body through repetition, subtle humor, and sustained contemplation. The central subject of Nakaya's film is echoed in Natsuyuki Nakanishi's resin sculpture *Compact Object* (c. 1962–1968), in which numerous discarded wristwatch parts are packed inside a single ostrich-egg-shaped form. The resultant work visualizes the physical pressures placed upon the human body in the postwar era, as well as the detritus left behind from the trauma of years past.

The gravity of personal memory hovers through Kenji Ide's carefully constructed architectural arrangements. Primarily made from hand-carved lauan wood at a tabletop size, these works often incorporate found items that the artist collects from his surroundings. The fleeting nature of memory provides a structural logic to these poetic compositions, which Ide deliberately calls objects rather than sculptures; his work does not directly represent the past so much as make the viewer aware of its weight and duration, and of what it means for physical matter and psychological experience to persist—and become altered—through the passage of time.

Yu Nishimura's atmospheric portraits, landscapes, and genre scenes extend this sensibility into another register. Combining traditional oil and tempera techniques with impulses borrowed from postwar photography, his work collapses Western genres and frameworks of painting into a cinematographic field of touch. Marked by a spare yet multilayered compositional approach, Nishimura's practice espouses what his colleague Soshiro Matsubara calls a "quantum-technological" sensibility: that of an artist who came of age in the digital era.

Matsubara's own multimedia installations radiate a darkly seductive relationship with cultural heritage. His practice is anchored in a rejection of modernism, nourished instead by figures such as Tatsumi Hijikata, who founded Butoh, the avant-garde performance style that arose in Japan in the late 1950s. Shaped by his position as a Japanese artist working in Vienna, Matsubara's imagery fuses symbolist and surrealist motifs with a psychosexual wildness, navigating distance and desire between two cultural imaginaries. The paintings of Reina Sugihara propose alternative cross-border connections between twentieth-century European lineages such as Art Informel and the process-oriented, bodily nature of the Gutai movement. Considering the human body as a kind of scientific found object, Sugihara constructs her visceral compositions over time in an intense procedure of material accumulation.

Involving a similarly performance-adjacent approach, Masanori Tomita's paintings in resin, oil, and ink are built up over a period of months or even years until their intricate surfaces resemble geological or archaeological records. Occupying a space between painting and object, his work draws on the hyperactive visual language of manga as well as the decorative traditions of ancient Japanese art, bringing popular and archaic sources together into iconographic tableaux that record the organic stratification of time. Kyoto-based artist Ryoko Aoki creates luminous works on paper using

dot-patterned sheets from a vacant printing factory near her hometown. She incorporates snippets of collage and watercolor atop these unorthodox supports, coaxing out delicate intersections of form. In these complexly layered compositions, Aoki calls attention to the limits between the interior self and the external world.

Revealing echoes across time, with contemporary voices responding to resonant themes from the practices of their forebears, *Statics of an Egg* proposes an alternative temporality that examines how people, objects, and thoughts may be drawn to one another across geographic and chronological distance in an age of accelerated visibility and renewed demands for coherence. The works on view resist modernism's vertical aspiration—its desire to rupture from the past, and its inherent drive toward a certain Western schema of upward progress and spiritual transcendence—in favor of establishing profound horizontal relations and a sense of cumulative inward attention. Gravity, in this sense, is not collapse but continuity: a way of understanding how forms, memories, and influences settle into one another over time.

Statics of an Egg features work by the following artists:

Ryoko Aoki (b. 1973)
Masaya Chiba (b. 1980)
Miho Dohi (b. 1974)
Koji Enokura (1942–1995)
Daisuke Fukunaga (b. 1981)
Kenji Ide (b. 1981)
Soshiro Matsubara (b. 1980)
Yutaka Matsuzawa (1922–2006)
Natsuyuki Nakanishi (1935–2016)
Fujiko Nakaya (b. 1933)
Yu Nishimura (b. 1982)
Hikari Ono (b. 1990)
Reina Sugihara (b. 1988)
Masanori Tomita (b. 1989)
Isamu Wakabayashi (1936–2003)

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