

Exhibition

June 6 - July 29, 2017
opening Tuesday June 6

Japanese conceptual photography from the 70's



Masaki NAKAYAMA, *Body scale, square*, 1978

Both galleries 1900-2000 and Christophe Gaillard are particularly proud to present «Japanese conceptual photography from the 70's», an exhibition devoted to this time of groundbreaking shift in the Japanese cultural landscape. Unfolding in the two gallery spaces, the exhibition focuses on the fundamental role of camera-based experiments in the practices of Japanese artists engaged in international conceptual art currents in the 1970's.

In the turmoil of the end of the 60's, Japanese artists, sensing that their traditional practices were no longer valid, began experimenting with the possibilities of camera-based practices, laying the foundations for contemporary art in Japan. The use of the camera was conceptually driven, reflecting international trends in contemporary art, including performance art, post-minimalism, and conceptualism. Artists were led to explore the flow of time and the intangibility of space through conceptual photographic series and installation or performance works. By doing so, they succeeded in challenging the constraints of boundaries while establishing photography as a progressive art form. By testing the limits of image and object in diverse ways, the artists featured in both exhibitions propelled the medium of photography to new conceptual peaks.

After several venues (Marianne Boesky Gallery, the Japan Society, the New York University and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston) it is now time to unveil in Europe a fundamental and astonishing breakdown in Asian but also international contemporary art.

Spanning the two galleries spaces, the exhibition displays 42 works by 6 artists - many of which are shown for the first time in French galleries : **Norio Imai, Kazuyo Kinoshita, Masafumi Maita, Kanji Wakae, Katsuro Yoshida** and **Masaki Nakayama**.

Norio IMAI (born in 1946) is the youngest member of Gutai. After the breakup of Gutai in 1972, Imai's work strengthens its conceptual tendencies. Shifting from his prior explorations of spatial expression through white forms towards an interest in non-material image projection, Imai begins experimenting with multifaceted visualizations of time, using photography to cut out moments of time, film to capture the flow of time, and video, with its capacity for simultaneous replay.

Kazuyo KINOSHITA (1939-1994) is one of the few women in conceptual art in the 1960's. She uses photography to confuse the eye, crumpling pieces of paper, coloring them, photographing them, and duplicating the colored marks on the final image.

Masaki NAKAYAMA (born in 1945) mainly creates installations based on photographic works where human form becomes an integral part of every sequence. He is a sculptor, using his own body as a decisive scale in the artwork.

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Kanji Wakae, 1975

The emphasis on materiality and on the viewer's experience relates **Masafumi MAITA** (1944-2009) to his peers. In his series 'Natural Line - Artificial Line' (1971), Maita creates a high contrast landscape that allows the viewer to appreciate the medium of the photograph itself. He disturbs the serene surface of water by silk screening on the photograph, achieving a purely objective work that successfully tackles the study of perspective and materiality present in the 1970's photography.

Kanji WAKAE (born in 1944) explores the relationship between various media - sculpture, drawing, installation, and photography. In his series 'Paints' (1973 - 73), Wakae explores the effects of repeated imagery through the use of halftone printing, printmaking, and photography. The effect is an analytical approach to the act of viewing and an investigation of the pairing of photography and painting.

Katsuro YOSHIDA (1943-1999) is one of the leading members of the Mono-ha movement, a Japanese group close to Fluxus, as well as conceptual and land art. He starts to make three dimensional works from 1968. In 1969, he first exhibits photomechanical silkscreen works. After that, he creates many three dimensional works recognized as Mono-ha in parallel with making silkscreen.

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