

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Parergon: Japanese Art of the 1980s and 1990s
Curated by Mika Yoshitake

Blum & Poe, Los Angeles

Part I: February 14-March 23, 2019; Public opening: Thursday, February 14, 6-8pm

Part II: April 6-May 19, 2019; Public opening: Saturday, April 6, 6-8pm

Nonaka Hill, Los Angeles

February 17-April 6, 2019; Public opening: Sunday, February 17, 3-6pm

Blum & Poe is pleased to announce the second installment of *Parergon: Japanese Art of the 1980s and 1990s*, a selected survey exhibition curated by Mika Yoshitake. Focusing on the themes of retro-futurism, noir, satire, and simulation, as well as those that probe national boundaries, the show is presented in two parts at Blum & Poe in Los Angeles. Works from over twenty-five artists including EYE, Kenjiro Okazaki, Mariko Mori, Kodai Nakahara, Masato Nakamura, Yukinori Yanagi, Kenji Yanobe, and Tadanori Yokoo feature media spanning painting, sculpture, performance, noise, video, and photography. A catalogue will be published for the occasion, with artist testimonials and new scholarship by Yoshitake and David Novak, award-winning author of *Japanoise: Music at the Edge of Circulation* (Duke University Press Books, 2013).

Part II of *Parergon* expands on the thematic territories explored in Part I, with seminal installations and sculptures from the era and performances by renowned figures of noise, sound, and electro-acoustic music genres. Kenji Yanobe's *Tanking Machine (Rebirth)* (2019) is a darkly humorous, interactive, sci-fi sculpture first presented in 1989 that addresses the ever-present reality of nuclear crisis through a retro-futurist narrative. Influential multimedia artist, Kodai Nakahara's bizarre installations of figurine-like marble stones and brightly, suspended spheres reflect a humorous take on sculpture's "post-medium" condition. As an intellectual and artist, Kenjiro Okazaki's practice engages with theories of perception through interdisciplinary genres spanning architecture, literary theory, painting, reliefs, sculpture, robotics, and dance. Trained in both Japan and the U.S., Yukinori Yanagi's large-scale and site-specific installations interrogate the politics of institutional borders and boundaries often drawing from semiotic systems of symbolic imagery. Psychedelic '60s graphic designer Tadanori Yokoo revisits strategies of historical pastiche with his figurative noir paintings that hang alongside his cut-canvas portraits of Dada figures, as well as ceramic depictions of spiritual mediums. Finally, a dedicated Japanese noise archive of photography, journals, and vinyl records from Tokyo's experimental underground will also be featured on the second floor giving historical context to the live performances.

The exhibition title makes reference to the gallery in Tokyo (Gallery Parergon, 1981-1987) that introduced many artists associated with the New Wave phenomenon, its name attributed to Jacques Derrida's essay from 1978 which questioned the "framework" of art, influential to artists and critics during the period. *Parergon* brings together some of the most enigmatic works that were first generated during a rich two-decade period that are pivotal to the way we perceive and understand contemporary Japanese art today. In the aftermath of the conceptual reconsideration of the object and relationality spearheaded by Mono-ha in the 1970s, this era opened up new critical engagements with language and medium where artists explored expansions in installation, performance, and experimental multi-genre practices.

When the U.S. and Europe were witnessing a return to Expressionism alongside a postmodern aesthetic of simulacra and deconstruction characterized by the Pictures generation, this zeitgeist of cultural capitalism was instead manifest under Japan's unique social and geo-political conditions resulting from the rise and burst of the bubble economy. Artists began to explore subversive artistic languages and integrate underground subcultures into their practice using a variety of media, ranging from experimentations in electro-acoustic music, geopolitical and conceptual photography, and appropriations of

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advertisement culture. Others addressed the internalization of historical avant-garde and modernist aesthetics that were filtered through a new poetics of form, space, and language.

In the post-1989 Hirohito era, politics of gender, nuclear crisis, and critique of nationalism are especially poignant among artists from the Kansai region. This period also witnesses the rise of art collectives in the mid-90s and their darkly humorous performances and conceptual practices that reevaluated the history of Japan's postwar avant-garde. These events reflect on a subculture generated out of a profoundly unique "infantile capitalism," anticipating the explosive rise of the Neo-Pop generation.

This exhibition is presented on the occasion of Blum & Poe's 25-year anniversary. *Parergon* commemorates a special facet of the gallery's history rooted in this very timeframe in Japan-with Tim Blum's early years as an art dealer and curator spent in Tokyo in the early '90s-and charts a bridge between the Japanese art historical territories the gallery has long championed. *Parergon* pursues the creative significance of the years between the milestones of Mono-ha and the Neo-Pop generation now synonymous with Takashi Murakami and Yoshitomo Nara.

Part I

Nobuyoshi Araki
Naoya Hatakeyama
Ryoji Ikeda
Yukie Ishikawa
Tatsuo Miyajima
Daido Moriyama
Kazumi Nakamura
Shinro Ohtake
Tsuyoshi Ozawa
Yutaka Takanashi
Noboru Tsubaki
Yukinori Yanagi

Part II

EYE
Keiji Haino
Yuki Kimura
Mariko Mori
Kodai Nakahara
Masato Nakamura
Kenjiro Okazaki
Otomo Yoshihide
Gin Satoh
Small Village Center
Katsumi Watanabe
Yukinori Yanagi
Kenji Yanobe
Tadanori Yokoo
YoshimiO / SAICOBAB

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Nonaka-Hill

Naoya Hatakeyama
Yukie Ishikawa
Kazuo Kadonaga
Daido Moriyama
Kazumi Nakamura
Hitoshi Tsukiji

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Public Programming

EYE

Saturday, April 6, 6-8pm
Blum & Poe, Los Angeles

Artist Roundtable with Kenjiro Okazaki, Yukinori Yanagi, Kenji Yanobe, and curator Mika Yoshitake

Sunday, April 7, 2-4pm
JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles

Keiji Haino

Sunday, April 7, 8pm
Zebulon, Los Angeles

Otomo Yoshihide & David Novak in Conversation

Saturday, May 4, 2-4pm
Blum & Poe, Los Angeles

SAICOBAB & Otomo Yoshihide

Saturday, May 4, 8pm
Zebulon, Los Angeles

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Mika Yoshitake unveils *Parergon* as Blum & Poe's Curator of Special Projects. Yoshitake's extensive scholarship on postwar Japanese art situates her in the unique position to pursue the significant shifts in artistic strategies since the 1960s and '70s that opened up an explosion of genres and subcultures in the 1980s and '90s. Yoshitake's experience has led her through a multitude of linked curatorial terrains, as project coordinator for the international tour of © *MURAKAMI* (2007-09), which originated at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA; curatorial liaison for *Lee Ufan: Marking Infinity* (2011) at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY; and organizing curator of *Yayoi Kusama: Infinity Mirrors* (2017-19), a six-venue North American tour, originating at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C. In 2012, she curated the AICA-USA award-winning exhibition, *Requiem for the Sun: The Art of Mono-ha* at Blum & Poe, Los Angeles, CA.

Yoshitake is Guest Curator at Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA working on a large-scale solo exhibition to be announced this year. She was Curator at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture

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Garden in Washington, D.C. from 2011-2018. At the Hirshhorn, she organized *Yayoi Kusama: Infinity Mirrors* (2017-19); *Shana Lutker: Le 'NEW' Monocle, Chapters 1-3* (2015-16); *Le Onde: Waves of Italian Influence* (2015); *Speculative Forms* (2014-15); *Days of Endless Time* (with Kelly Gordon) (2014-15); *Gravity's Edge* (2014); *Sitebound: Photography from the Collection* (2014); *Dark Matters* (with Melissa Ho) (2012); and coordinated *Ai Weiwei: According to What?* (2012-13). Mika earned her M.A. and Ph.D. in Art History from UCLA, which culminated in the exhibition and catalogue, *Requiem for the Sun: The Art of Mono-ha* (2012) at Blum & Poe. She served as guest curator for the 2014 International Artist-in-Residence program at Artpace San Antonio, San Antonio, TX. She most recently curated *Topologies* (May 14, 2018-April 13, 2019) at The Warehouse in Dallas, TX.