

Interview



10 PICKS FROM INDEPENDENT NEW YORK 2015

By RACHEL SMALL

Hitoshi Nomura, *Time Arrow: Oxygen - 183 Degrees C°*, 1993. Three dewar flasks with liquid oxygen. Each: 19 3/4 x 8 1/4 in. Installation view at Independent New York. Photo: Courtesy of Fergus McCaffrey, New York.

For its booth at Independent, Fergus McCaffrey Gallery presented work by Japanese artist Hitoshi Nomura. These vessels seem innocuous at first, but at the fair they are holding liquid oxygen as it boils and evaporates in room temperature air. Periodically, the gallery owner himself wheels out a bulky metal tank of liquid oxygen, cooled to $-183\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ ($-297.4\text{ }^{\circ}\text{F}$), the temperature at which oxygen condenses to a liquid, and refills the flasks, which begin bubbling furiously. The concept builds on experiments with materiality Nomura began in the 1960s. "On a philosophical level, this is the origin of all life on the planet," says McCaffrey. "You never get to see it in this state. What you come to understand is that the blue of the sky and the blue of the ocean is coming from the presence of oxygen."