

Fergus McCaffrey presents
Post-War Italy and Japan: The Avant-garde Years at Art Basel 2015

June 18-21, 2015
 Hall 2.0, Booth D3

Fergus McCaffrey, New York / St. Barth is pleased to announce its participation in the 2015 edition of Art Basel and in Unlimited.

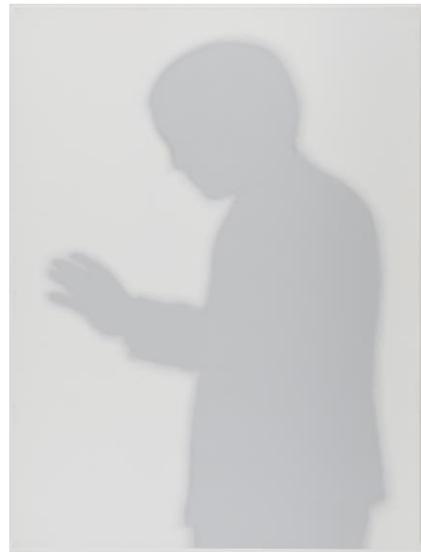
In keeping with the gallery's advocacy of Post-War Japanese art, Fergus McCaffrey will present a selection of masterworks dated from the 1950s through to the 1970s, juxtaposed with important works by Italian avant-garde from the same period. The booth will serve to underscore the thematic affinities and conceptual strategies of the diverse artists on view.



The aesthetic revolution that occurred in both Italy and Japan in the aftermath of World War II played itself out in painting, sculpture, photography, and film. As totalitarian regimes were swept away, traditional cultural assumptions were challenged and overturned to unleash a torrent of creative innovation. A diverse body of work resulted, which responded radically to the metaphysical and corporeal scars of the war, the new-found freedom of expression, the advent of consumer culture, industrial re-development, and social alienation.

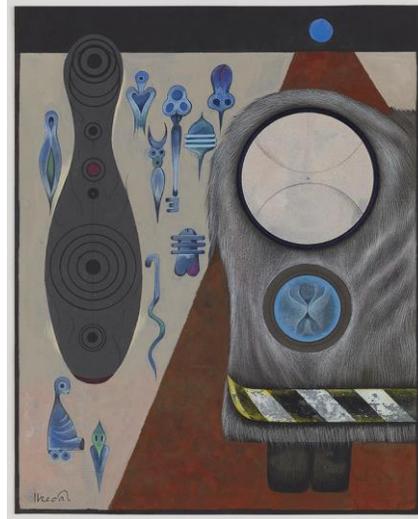
This presentation will highlight and examine the affinities between some of the most prominent artists from Japan and Italy, including Kazuo Shiraga, Michelangelo

Pistoletto, Natsuyuki Nakanishi, Yayoi Kusama, Jiro Takamatsu and Mario Schifano.



On a formal level, the juxtaposition of Jiro Takamatsu's (1936-1998) *Shadow* painting from 1997 and Michelangelo Pistoletto's (b. 1933) *Dono di Mercurio allo Specchio*, 1971–92 is indicative of parallel dialogues being engaged in both Japan and Italy during the 1960s and 1970s. Post-minimalism often implicates the body of the spectator in the work in a debate about absence and presence. Contrasting approaches are played out in Pistoletto's mirrored works in which a reflection of the viewer is present and in Takamatsu's shadows paintings where the shadow of the spectator appears, but the source of the painted shadow does not. The differing psychological, mythical, and material implications of shadows and reflections are well-known.

Moving away from formalism, we find Pop Art and politics contrasted in two works from 1967; Mario Schifano's (1934–1998) *Coca-Cola* and Tatsuo Ikeda's (b.1928) *Toy World*. One would be hard pressed to find such contrasting figures as Ikeda, the surviving Kamikaze pilot, and Schifano, the glamorous Italian playboy, yet their works reveal a common tension and uneasy acceptance of American popular culture. Ikeda's drawing is characteristically surrealist involving a furry American style car that has forced colorful amoeba-like forms to the side of the road. Schifano's drippy rendition of the *Coca-Cola* logo has a hand-painted warmth that stands in contrast to the mechanized American variants of Pop Art. His work appears less of an embrace and more of a political protest in the form of a defaced sign from a political demonstration.



About Fergus McCaffrey

Founded in 2006, Fergus McCaffrey is internationally recognized for its groundbreaking role promoting the work of post-war Japanese artists, as well as a quality roster of select contemporary European and American artists. Fergus McCaffrey's rigorous, thoughtful approach is marked by a commitment to discovery, often presenting the work of artists previously unrepresented or misrepresented. Dublin-born founder Fergus McCaffrey has been instrumental in introducing post-war Japanese art to a Western market, including Natsuyuki Nakanishi, and Gutai artists Sadamasa Motonaga and Kazuo Shiraga. The gallery also exhibits the work of seminal Western artists, including Andy Warhol, Birgit Jürgenssen, William Scott, Richard Nonas, Gary Rough, Jack Early and Sigmar Polke.

Images:

- 1: Michelangelo Pistoletto, *Dono di Mercurio allo Specchio*, 1971-92.
Bronze statue and mirror, Statue: 57 3/4 x 18 x 20 7/8 inches (146.7 x 45.7 x 53 cm)
Mirror: 90 1/8 x 47 1/4 inches (228.9 x 120 cm), Edition of 4
- 2: Jiro Takamatsu, *Shadow (Shadow of Akira Ikeda)*, 1989/97. Acrylic on canvas, 114 1/2 x 85 7/8 inches (291 x 218 cm)
- 3: (Left) Mario Schifano, *Untitled*, 1967-69, Enamel on paper on canvas, 39 3/4 x 41 3/4 inches (101 x 106 cm)
- 4: (Right) Tatsuo Ikeda, *Toy World*, 1967, Watercolor, ink on paper, 15.71 x 12.56 inches (40 x 32 cm)

For press inquiries, please contact:

Alexandra von Stumberg: +1.212.988.2200 / alexandra@fergusmccaffrey.com

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