

FERGUS McCaffrey, NEW YORK

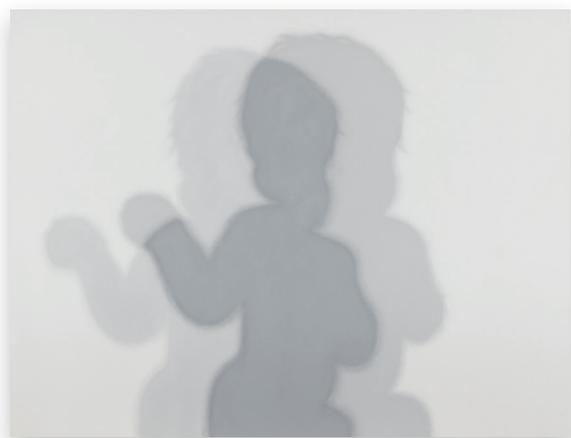
JIRO TAKAMATSU: FROM SHADOW TO COMPOUND

NOVEMBER 3, 2016–JANUARY 7, 2017

OPENING RECEPTION: NOVEMBER 3, 6:00–8:00 PM

Fergus McCaffrey is proud to present its third solo exhibition of Jiro Takamatsu (1936–1998), featuring paintings, sculptures, photographs, text works, and drawings dating from 1966 to 1978.

Perhaps the most influential artist working in Japan during the 1960s and 1970s, Jiro Takamatsu altered the evolution of visual art in Japan as an artist, theorist, and teacher. As a cofounder of the legendary collective Hi Red Center in 1963 and the central inspiration for Mono-Ha, Takamatsu dominated Japanese artistic discourse during these years.



His work would be incomprehensible without acknowledging the discourse and aesthetic precedents of Surrealism and Minimalism, as well as his background in the Anti-Art and Neo-Dada movements. A contrarian by nature, Takamatsu challenged the prevailing orthodoxy of paintings purged of representation and sculptures that emphasized truth to materials and the anti-illusional.

Takamatsu had studied painting at the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music but had become disillusioned by its limitations. Thus when he began making *Shadow* paintings in 1964, he was searching for a new foundation to reimagine the practice. Key to this reappraisal was Pliny's story of the origin of painting with the tracing of a shadow, and Takamatsu began making intriguing visual puzzles with single or multiple cast shadows of people and objects (often distorted) in gray paint on white wooden supports and canvases. In most cases, the person or object casting the shadow is missing, creating a pictorial and narrative absence. The *Shadow* paintings are wide open to interpretation in all manner of formal, psychological, and sociopolitical terms.

In 1966, Takamatsu began to explore the visual fiction of perspectival depth and a parallel interrogation of sculptural forms. *Perspective Painting* (1967) simultaneously affirms and denies its own coherence, as the rules of perspective are played against each other on the same panel. In sculpture, the distortion and deconstruction of the cube and the grid yielded further innovations. *Cube 6 + 3* (1968) negates the materiality of a blue wooden cube through the addition of red perspective lines that from one viewing point suggests the cube is transparent. To create *Slack of Net* (1968–69), he inserted excess rope throughout a square grid, to create a soft sculpture that sagged and yielded to gravity. Takamatsu attacked *Oneness of Plaster* (1970–71) and *Oneness of Concrete* (1971) with a chisel, challenging and fracturing the symbolic authority of these high modernist forms. His *Compound* series followed, addressing multiple forms in combination, emphasizing the physical interaction created between them. In works such as *Compound* (1972), he took utilitarian objects—such as a ladder and a brick—and removed their functionality to create a new abstract relationship between the two elements. He also created complex compounds of the same or similar materials, such as *Compound No. 747* (1976), opening up three-dimensional structures and connecting them to the underlying lines and planes of the surrounding space.

Fergus McCaffrey

514 West 26th Street, New York, NY 10001
Tel +1 212 988 2200 Fax +1 212 988 2250 fergusmccaffrey.com



Takamatsu participated in the Bienal de São Paulo in 1973 with a new project he called *Photograph of Photograph*. He commissioned a professional photographer to rephotograph pictures from his family album in compositions that he had arranged. Each photograph was rephotographed from an acute angle to articulate deep shadows and bleached-out highlights and to make plain the worn and abraded dog-eared corners and dents in the photographic emulsion. These beautiful and haunting images pose more questions than they reveal answers, and they make us aware of photography's materiality, history, and internal narratives.

Takamatsu represented Japan at the 1968 Venice Biennale, winning the Carlo Cardazzo Prize, and exhibited at the 1969 Biennale de Paris. Between 1968 and 1972, he taught at Tama Art University, Tokyo. His work has been the subject of numerous retrospectives, including at the National Museum of Art, Osaka (1999 and 2015); Chiba City Museum of Art (2000); Fuchu Art Museum, Tokyo (2004); Kitakyushu Municipal Museum of Art (2004); and National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (2014).

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated monograph with an in-depth essay by the independent curator and writer Douglas Fogle.

ABOUT FERGUS McCAFFREY

Founded in 2006, Fergus McCaffrey is internationally recognized for its groundbreaking role in promoting the work of postwar Japanese artists such as Sadamasa Motonaga, Natsuyuki Nakanishi, and Kazuo Shiraga. The gallery also exhibits the work of emerging and seminal Western artists such as Jack Early, Birgit Jürgenssen, Richard Nonas, and Sigmar Polke.

Images:

1. *Shadow (Double Shadow of a Baby)*, 1969/97. Acrylic on canvas, 85⁷/₈ x 114¹/₂ inches (218.2 x 290.9 cm)
© The Estate of Takamatsu Jirō; Courtesy of Yumiko Chiba Associates, Tokyo, and Fergus McCaffrey, New York
2. *Photograph of Photograph*, 1973. Gelatin silver print, 20 x 15¹/₂ inches (50.8 x 39.4 cm)
© The Estate of Takamatsu Jirō; Courtesy of Yumiko Chiba Associates, Tokyo, and Fergus McCaffrey, New York

For press inquiries, please contact: Alexandra von Stumberg McCaffrey
Tel +1 212 988 2200 Email alexandra@fergusmccaffrey.com

Stay connected with the gallery via Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter with the hashtags #FMJiroTakamatsu, #FMNewYork, and #FergusMcCaffrey.

Fergus McCaffrey

514 West 26th Street, New York, NY 10001
Tel +1 212 988 2200 Fax +1 212 988 2250 fergusmccaffrey.com