

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Fergus McCaffrey at Art Basel Hong Kong 2017

TOSHIO YOSHIDA



“I have been familiar with Toshio Yoshida’s work from my very first encounters with the Gutai group. From the few examples that I saw in Japanese museum collections, I singled this man out as an exceptional artist, who’s aesthetically innovative Burn (1954) and Brushstroke (1955-56) paintings pre-dated Western avant-garde icons like Yves Klein and Robert Rauschenberg. Yet little was known about Yoshida’s work or the arc of his career.” Fergus McCaffrey

Now, twenty years since his death, it is an honor for Fergus McCaffrey gallery to be working with the Yoshida family and the great Gutai scholar Koichi Kawasaki to rectify this glaring lapse in art history. The gallery’s solo presentation of Toshio Yoshida at Art Basel Hong Kong provides the opportunity for the widest possible audience in Asia to encounter four decades of Yoshida’s breathtaking innovations. Fergus McCaffrey states that *“the Yoshida show is certain to be one of the highlights of Art Basel week in Hong Kong.”*

Toshio Yoshida was born in Kobe, Japan in 1928. Initially working at Miyazaki Kotsu,

a transit company, he left his position to participate in the Osaka-based Contemporary Art Discussion Group, known as Genbi, which was established in 1951. After viewing one of Yoshida's works in a Genbi museum exhibition in Kyoto, Jiro Yoshihara, the founder of the Gutai Art Association, was so impressed by his work that he consequently took Yoshida as his apprentice in 1953.

As part of the Gutai collective, Yoshida was a consistent and innovative participant, utilizing experimental techniques and materials to create a unique artistic vocabulary. While exhibiting in the historically significant *Second Gutai Art Exhibition* in 1958, Yoshida employed a new method to create several thousand dots simultaneously by pouring paint into a watering can and then dripping it on to canvas. Another example of his whimsical approach to his practice includes an installation Yoshida executed in 1968.

Personally considered one of his most memorable days in his artistic career, on July 29 he created a series of towers which emitted foam at the Cactus Park along the Nichinan Kaigan shore. This work, titled *FOAM-Y*, consisted of five meter high pillars resembling cacti with bubbles emerging from the top of the pillars which broke and lifted in the air according to the ocean wind's movement. These innovative techniques pre-date stylistic developments in Europe and America, and although his artistic vision was eclipsed during his lifetime, his work retrospectively stands shoulder to shoulder with the most innovative, visually splendid, and challenging works being made anywhere in the world between 1954 and the 1980s. Yoshida died in 1997.

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, Kazuo Shiraga, and Jiro Takamatsu. The gallery also exhibits the work of emerging and seminal Western artists such as Jack Early, Marcia Hafif, Birgit Jürgenssen, and Sigmar Polke.

Image:

TOSHIO YOSHIDA

Rope-Loop 163, WAFT-233, 1983

Acrylic and rope on canvas, on board

35 7/8 x 45 7/8 x 3 inches

(91.1 x 116.4 x 7.5 cm)

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