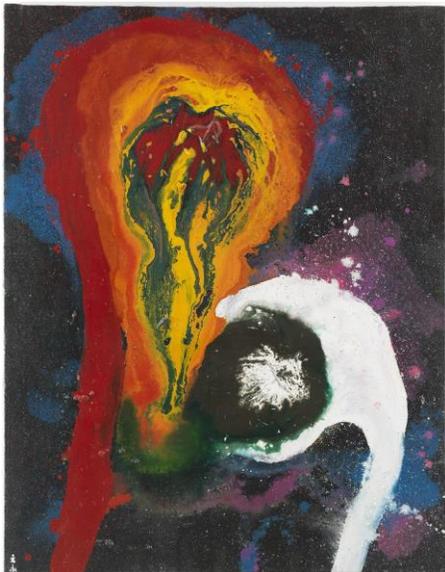


**TEFAF NEW YORK SPRING**  
**Fergus McCaffrey, Booth 38**  
**May 4 – 8, 2018**

In conjunction with the gallery's groundbreaking survey exhibition, ***Gutai: 1953 – 1959***, on view at Fergus McCaffrey's New York location until June 30<sup>th</sup>, the gallery is proud to present a selection of works by key Gutai members at Booth 38 of the European Fine Art Fair (TEFAF) from May 4 – 8, 2018. The works on view by Sadamasa Motonaga, Fujiko Shiraga, Kazuo Shiraga, Jiro Yoshihara and Toshio Yoshida encapsulate the renowned Japanese avant-garde collective's bold ideas, demonstrating the ways in which they forged an ethos of artistic experimentation, freedom, and individuality in the wake of the Second World War. Fergus McCaffrey's TEFAF presentation traces Gutai's development from its emergence in 1954 to its dissolution after founder Jiro Yoshihara's death.

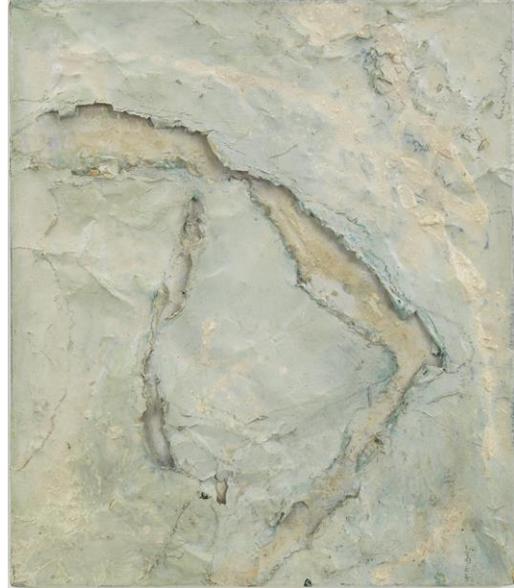


The members of Gutai were just young enough to avoid deployment in the Japanese military but were mature enough to fully understand the horrors of what had occurred. Like all members of their generation, they endured hardship and trauma, and as artists sought to reintegrate themselves into the world and express themselves by embracing what Gutai founder, Jiro Yoshihara, called “the scream of matter itself.” Using their bodies in active, direct relationship with their materials, the members of Gutai dissolved the barriers between art and life.

Gutai artists considered their processes of creation to be as essential as the resulting works, and their goal was to merge their bodies with the material world in unmediated, experiential encounters—as Yoshihara put it, not to change material, but to bring it to life. To break free from the conservatism of the past, Yoshihara urged his understudies to “do what

has never been done before.” With this emphasis on originality, the artists responded with a wide variety of paintings, sculpture, performances, and time-based interactive works that emphasized physicality and play, putting forth an aesthetic and political message of freedom.

Fujiko Shiraga’s *Untitled* (1959) is a multimedia work of glass, wax, paper on canvas, featuring layers of paper artfully ripped and torn in topographical sediments. Rupturing the picture plane to reveal surface upon surface, Fujiko Shiraga’s work delicately but forcefully effaces the possibility of representation and illusion. Motonaga’s *Sakuhin* (1962) presents a primordial, even cosmic, swirl of vibrant pigment and gestural dripped paint—clearly demonstrating the artist’s interest in Japanese *manga* and popular culture as well as the influence of critic and Gutai mentor Michel Tapié, who encouraged the artist toward energetic abstraction. Kazuo Shiraga’s *Untitled* (1964),



which is emblematic of the artist’s signature foot painting technique, uses his preferred Crimson Lake pigment in concert with earthy ochers to achieve a bloody, corporeal effect, speaking to wartime violence and the undeniable materiality of the body. The capstone of the booth, Yoshihara’s enigmatic 1971 oil painting, pictures a bold white circle upon black ground, tempting the viewer with the possibility of continuity, eternity, and perfection embodied in the symbol. Yoshihara’s canvas, though, stutters and strays to reveal traces of the artist’s hand, reintroducing the body and with it, the possibility of death, into the metaphysical world of forms.

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**Images:**

1. Kazuo Shiraga, *Untitled*, 1964. Oil on canvas, 38 1/4 x 51 1/4 inches (97 x 130.3 cm). © The Estate of Kazuo Shiraga
2. Sadamasa Motonaga, *Sakuhin*, 1962. Oil paint and synthetic resin on canvas, 45 5/8 x 35 1/16 inches (115.9 x 89.1 cm). © Motonaga Archive Research Institution Ltd.
3. Fujiko Shiraga, *Untitled*, 1959. Mixed media on canvas, 21 x 18 1/8 x 1 1/4 inches (53.3 x 46 x 3.3 cm). © The Estate of Fujiko Shiraga