

PRESS RELEASE

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Hitoshi Nomura: An Introduction

Photo works 1975–91

McCaffrey Fine Art, New York
September 12th–October 20th, 2006

Hitoshi Nomura: An Introduction is the first solo exhibition of the Japanese artist Hitoshi Nomura in the United States and presents an entirely unknown body of work that deserves wider recognition. This exhibition focuses on photo works made from 1975–91 and opens at McCaffrey Fine Art on September 12th, and continues until October 20th.

Nomura (b. 1945) like his contemporaries Michael Heizer (b. 1944), Chris Burden (b. 1946), and the late Gordon Matta-Clark (1943–1978) is a sculptor who pioneered the use of photography to document the often ephemeral, phenomenological, remotely located, and process oriented artworks of the late 1960's and early 1970's. The artist identified his working method in 1967 by turning away from the modeling of plastic form in favor of a rigorous observation of the passage of time, the fundamentals of matter, and the rhythm of the universe. Working now for almost 40 years, the artist has been described by Ken-ichi Iwaki, the Director of the National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto as a “Tuner” who adjusts our everyday sensibilities to experience fundamental phenomena.

From his earliest mature works Nomura demonstrates what Rosalind Krauss in discussing Richard Serra's contemporaneous performance works calls “the quality of relentless persistence of doing something over and over again without regarding success as any particular climax.” This is particularly evident in the artist's *'Moon' scores* which he first began to make in 1975. The waxing and waning of the moon has provided the foundation for the measurement of time for thousands of years. Focusing a camera on the moon Nomura began recording the location and phases of the moon using a hand-held telephoto lens and black and white film etched with lines of musical score. He began this nightly ritual after observing the relative movement of the moon through telephone cables and noticing a musicality in these chance compositions, which indicated to him larger rhythms in the structure of universe. The exhibition includes the first *'Moon' score* from December 19, 1975 and *'Moon' score* January 1st, 1980 played by a Quartet.

As early as 1969 Nomura began the use of technologies and materials more commonly associated with the science than art. Beuys' interest in alchemy shares little in common with the scientific practice we see used in *The Earth Rotation*, February 4th, 1979, 4:32–5:32 pm which elegantly refutes the Ptolemaic geo and egocentrism of human vision as revealed by Copernicus. Later in *The 1986 Pilgrim: The Return of Halley's Comet*, 1985–87, Nomura used sophisticated telescopes and computers to reveal sinuous lines of motion traced in the sky. Since 1993, Nomura work has built and raced solar

cars. Film footage of Nomura's remarkable 1999 solar car journey across the United States will be shown in anticipation of a subsequent exhibition.

In 1980 Nomura's attention came to focus on the sun. Making day-long exposures of the track of the sun through the sky, he observed the phenomenon of contrasting concave and convex lines of movement during the summer and winter solstices, and straight lines at other times of the year. Making daily exposures for five years, Nomura joined the lines of movement end-to-end to create the sculpture *The Sun on Lat. 35° N., 1982–87* a vast and intricate repeating pattern of infinity that maps the movement of the earth with respect to the sun, and explains our ability to predict the passage of seasons and growing cycles. The three *Analemmas* from 1991, each of which required one year to make, represent this phenomena in simplified form, becoming a symbol of endless recycling and regeneration.

Hitoshi Nomura was born in 1945 in Hyogo Prefecture, Japan. His work has been the subject of numerous museum solo exhibitions including: The National Museum of Modern Art, Osaka; Spiral Garden, Tokyo; The Metropolitan Museum of Photography, Tokyo; Art Tower Mito, Ibaraki; and the Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, Aichi. He is professor of the Graduate School of Kyoto City University of Fine Arts.

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