



Fergus McCaffrey, St. Barth

Tatsuo Ikeda

December 29, 2014–February 14, 2015

Fergus McCaffrey, St. Barth, is pleased to present an exhibition of works on paper created between 1958 and 2008 by the Japanese artist Tatsuo Ikeda. This is the artist's first exhibition at Fergus McCaffrey.

Ikeda was born in Imari, Saga, in 1928. During World War II, he was trained as a kamikaze pilot in the Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service, but by good fortune was never deployed. However, his wartime experience of seeing his fellow pilots being dispatched to their deaths in the name of their divine Emperor scarred Ikeda deeply and drove him to become an anti-authoritarian artist after the war ended in 1945.

Defeat turned Japan on its head, and the immediate post-war situation can best be described as surreal. The country's traumatized populace had suffered massively and lived undernourished in fire-bombed or atomically vaporized cities. Japan's mortal war-time enemy, the United States, was now the country's defender and guardian. Despite Japan's new pacifist constitution, the same Emperor Showa who led the country's aggressive imperialist militarism, still held the title of Emperor (although he lost his status as a living god). Ikeda strongly disagreed with the decision made by the politicians of the time to keep the Emperor in place, and expressed his negative feelings on this issue. His belief that the imperial regime should have ended in the aftermath of the Second World War was reflected in his artistic practice. Ikeda responded to the absurdity and contradictions of the situation by turning to and finding inspiration in Surrealist philosophy.

As Ikeda couldn't afford proper art supplies, his first drawings from the early 1950s were made with pen. Works from the 1950s feature delicately rendered images of traumatized, distorted, and mutated animal and human forms often tortured by mechanical devices. Critical and satirical works targeted the post-war politicians. During 1960s, Ikeda worked on the series *Oval Space*, in which he captured a dually focused world view, and also *Toy World*, that portrayed the world as a bizarre toy-like construction. In the 1970s, Ikeda added airbrush to his repertory to produce fantastically rendered works that address Hinduism, biological forms, and sexuality. Ikeda continues his visual innovation to this day at the great age of 86.

Ikeda's first solo exhibition was in 1954 at Yoseido Gallery in Ginza, Tokyo, and he has continued to work and exhibit actively for the last 60 years. His practice has evolved over time to include painting and sculpture; he also actively engages in theatrical works and film. Until recently, Ikeda's work was largely unknown in the West; however, he came to broader attention in the exhibition *Tokyo 1955-1970: A New Avant-Garde* at The Museum of Modern Art, New York (2012), which included his work prominently. He was also featured in the documentary film *ANPO* (2010), directed by Linda Hoaglund, which examined the relationship between the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, war, and art.

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.

Chelsea, NY based Fergus McCaffrey just opened a second gallery location on the Caribbean island of St. Barthélemy. The gallery's third location opens in Tokyo in 2015.

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Stay connected with the gallery via Facebook, Instagram and Twitter with the hashtags #FMTatsuolkeda and #FMStBarth.

Image: Tatsuo Ikeda, *Birds and Beasts Chronicle, an Extra Edition: Mask Bird*, 1958/2008, Pen, conté and watercolor on paper. 15 1/8 x 10 1/4 inches, 38.5 x 26 cm. © Tatsuo Ikeda, Courtesy Fergus McCaffrey, New York and St. Barth.