

Fergus McCaffrey features
Natsuyuki Nakanishi and Yayoi Kusama
at Art Basel in Hong Kong

March 15-17, 2015
Booth 3E03

In their fifth showing at Art Basel, Fergus McCaffrey is pleased to present a tandem exhibition of Natsuyuki Nakanishi and Yayoi Kusama. While of the same generation and country, the artists pursued divergent paths in their practice.

On view are some of Kusama's earliest works on paper which explore motifs taken from the artist's childhood dreams and hallucinations. The works on paper paint a surreal and sometimes dangerous psychological landscape. During this period Kusama moved to the United States and in 1958 landed in New York. Firmly establishing herself as a presence in the 1960's tumultuous art scene, she created performances, almost exhibitionist in nature, with nudity, polka dots and free love, adding to the zeitgeist of the 60's.

Almost simultaneously, halfway around the world, Nakanishi joined together with Jiro Takamatsu and Genpei Akasegawa to form the artist group Hi-Red Center that took to the streets of Tokyo, making social statements with their performances. One of the most well-known actions by the group, *Street Cleaning Event*, took place in Ginza during the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games. The group (with volunteers) literally cleaned the streets in white lab coats and facemasks, mocking the government's message to the people to present a clean city. Other actions were more surreal in nature incorporating actual studio produced sculptures on busy Tokyo metro trains and Nakanishi himself taking to the streets in rush hour, his face adorned with dozens of clothes pins. Like Kusama, Nakanishi's actions question cultural normativity and social values. Interestingly, while both artists were engaging in these public actions, both maintained studio practices, creating paintings formally similar, yet from conceptually different starting points.

With the sculpture *Walking on the Sea of Death, 1981*, which features prominently in the ABHK presentation, Kusama revisits a turning point in her practice. In 1963 she produced the first of many 'Boats.' In *Aggregation: 1000 Boats Show*, at the Gertude Stein Gallery in New York, she exhibited the boat along with 999 photographs that she used to wallpaper the gallery. This was a monumental leap for the artist, moving from producing two-dimensional, discrete works, to three-dimensional environments.

One sees this notion of 'accumulation' in the later works of Nakanishi, as individual canvases are used to create maze-like viewing spaces in which one's eyes leap fluidly from one canvas to another. However, unlike Kusama's 'Nets' and rooms, which purposefully try to keep the viewer's eye from landing in any one spot, Nakanishi guides the viewer and acts as a kind of mediator between the work of art and the spectator.

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 opened a second gallery location on the Caribbean island of St. Barthélemy in November 2014. The gallery's third location opens in Tokyo in 2015.

For press inquiries, please contact:

Katrina Weber Ashour: +1.212.627.1455 / katrina@fitzandco.com.

Stay connected with the gallery via Facebook, Instagram and Twitter with the hashtags #FMNatsuyukiNakanishi #FMABHK and #FergusMcCaffrey.