

## Fergus McCaffrey, New York

### Hitoshi Nomura

September 10–October 24, 2015

Fergus McCaffrey is very pleased to announce an exhibition of sculptures, sound works, and photographs by the important Japanese artist Hitoshi Nomura.

Nomura's exhibition at the gallery coincides with *For a New World to Come: Experiments in Japanese Art and Photography, 1968–1979* at both the Japan Society (October 9–January 10) and Grey Art Gallery at New York University (September 11–December 5). This critically acclaimed exhibition establishes Nomura as a pioneer in the field of conceptual photography in Japan and reveals his relentless investigation of the interplay between art and science.

From the late 1960s, Nomura started his exploration of the concepts of space and time and their effects on the nature of matter. Works such as *Tardiology* (1968–69) and *Dry Ice* (1969) represented a radical reconceptualization of photography, sculpture, and performance by recording the dematerialization of sculptural form and making visible the passage of time. Fergus McCaffrey's 2010 exhibition *Hitoshi Nomura: Marking Time* and accompanying publication, *Hitoshi Nomura: Early Works*, introduced these works in the West.

In the late 1970s, Nomura began studying planetary motion and the meanings and rituals that humankind has developed in response to the rhythm of the universe over millennia. Culturally, these cyclical patterns have inspired sculpture, music, and ritual, and Nomura's artistic practice reveals fresh representations of these universal rhythms. Four works from the upcoming 2015 exhibition highlight the central themes of Nomura's work from this period.



The origin of life on Earth is due to the presence of oxygen in the atmosphere, which was first generated by cyanobacteria 3.5 billion years ago. The bacteria also produced rock-like coral forms called stromatolites, and Nomura photographed these in 1992. Having already explored the sculptural properties of oxygen in a solid state in *Dry Ice* (1969), he created *Oxygen: Three Thousand Five Hundred Million Years of Life* (1992), which represents a second encounter with the material that helped define the trajectory of Nomura's sculptural practice. It reveals the artist moving beyond formal concerns to engage the origins of life. The sculpture *Time Arrow: Oxygen –183° C* (1993) is related in presenting oxygen in liquid form, revealing the life-giving beauty of its turquoise splendor.

Much of the originality of Nomura's art comes from a fundamental questioning of why his artistic practice should be limited to working only with the visual part of the radio wave spectrum. *COWARA* (1987) is an early extension of the spectral parameters of art making, in which Nomura uses a terrestrial antenna to capture electromagnetic waves emitted from the universe and then converts them into sound through amplifiers and speakers. *COWARA* is a further development of Nomura's 'Moon'score



photoworks (1974–present), in which chance visual and musical compositions are captured photographically and then transcribed as musical scores, revealing a thought-provoking melody.

Our concepts of time and seasons are based on the planetary motions of Earth around the sun and the moon around Earth. In the early 1980s, Nomura began photographically recording the length of daytime from a fixed vantage point. The extreme brightness of the sun burned a convex or concave line in the photographic emulsion, depending on the time of the year, and Nomura became interested in understanding what pattern of motion the sun would

make if observed from the same location over the course of an entire year. This combined sculpture/photographic work, *The Sun on Latitude 35 N: Toyonaka*, took twenty-four years to complete (1986–2010) and reveals another interplanetary rhythm that shapes the patterns of our daily lives.

### **About Fergus McCaffrey**

Founded in 2006, Fergus McCaffrey is internationally recognized for its groundbreaking role in promoting the work of postwar 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 postwar Japanese art to a Western market: works by Gutai artists Sadamasa Motonaga and Kazuo Shiraga; Hi-Red Center members Jiro Takamatsu and Natsuyuki Nakanishi; and Noriyuki Haraguchi and Hitoshi Nomura from the Mono-Ha era. The gallery also exhibits the work of emerging and seminal Western artists such as Jack Early, Marcia Hafif, Birgit Jürgenssen, Richard Nonas, Sigmar Polke, Gary Rough, William Scott, and Andy Warhol.

Fergus McCaffrey opened a second gallery location on the Caribbean island of St. Barthélemy in November 2014.

#### **Images:**

1. Hitoshi Nomura, *Time Arrow: Oxygen –183° C*, 1993. Three Dewar flasks with liquid oxygen, each 19¾ x 8¼ inches (50.2 x 21 cm). © Hitoshi Nomura; Courtesy of Fergus McCaffrey, New York / St. Barth
2. Installation view of *COWARA (Cosmic Waves & Radiation)*, 1987, at Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, Aichi, 2001. Electromagnetic wave, horn speaker, and mixed media, 118⅞ x 157½ x 137¾ inches (300 x 400 x 350 cm). © Hitoshi Nomura; Courtesy of Fergus McCaffrey, New York / St. Barth

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