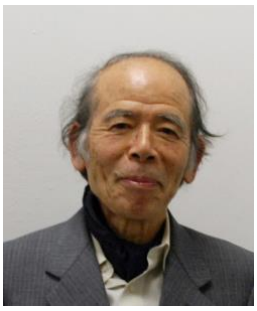
TATSUO IKEDA, 1928–2020

It is with profound sadness that we announce the death of Tatsuo Ikeda (1928–2020).

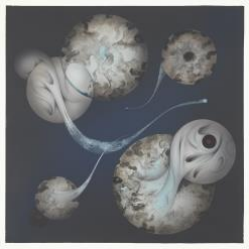


The acclaimed Japanese artist, whose career-long engagement with universal themes of conflict, nationalism, genesis, and transformation, inspired and emboldened an entire generation of Japanese artists, passed away last month at the age of ninety-two.

Born in Saga Prefecture, Japan, in 1928, the course of Ikeda's early life was dramatically altered by the ongoing intensity of World War II, culminating in his service as a kamikaze pilot at the age of fifteen. Spared by the ending of World War II, in 1948, Ikeda moved to Tokyo and attended Tama Art University where he became engaged in Taro Okamoto and Kiyoteru Hanada's Avant-garde Art Study Group.

Pursuing a strong anti-war position, the artist created expressive realist drawings that fused reportage and satire. His early work depicted the heartlessness of society in the age of automation and questioned the role of individual responsibility and free will after feeling betrayed by his government, and the political and cultural machinery of interpersonal and international conflict. Ikeda organized the artists and writers group, NON, and his reportage-style drawings from this period exposed domestic and international political corruption, eventually developing into monstrous portraits and grotesque creatures that reveal the dark side of human nature.

In the 1960s, the artist produced several series of works inspired by a wide range of motifs, such as masks (*Hundred Masks*), toys (*Toy World*), and anatomical images (*Dissection Archaeology*). During the following decade, harboring a profound fascination with space and time, he carried out conceptual long-term performances, *Asama – Ararat Olive's Ring Plan* and *Brahma Tower,* in which he tried to experience an unimaginable perpetual time. In his series, *Brahman,* which he began in 1973, the artist found release from social causes to embrace a state of eternal truth and bliss occupied by genderless embryonic forms in infinite space. Narrating his own story of genesis, the artist turned his attention inward, exploring the metaphysical bonds that underlie and unify the universe—defining his paintings as a "wormhole connecting the inner and outer worlds."



Ikeda continued exploring further artistic possibilities, creating assemblage and relief works made with found objects, and handscrolls depicting the flow of time, as well as a series of paintings, *Phases of Fields,* about universal gravitation. In addition to visual art, Ikeda was a critically celebrated writer; and his work has been exhibited extensively in Japan and abroad. Major solo and group exhibitions include Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Japan

(2018); Nerima Art Museum, Tokyo (2018, 1997); The Warehouse, Dallas (2017); Fergus McCaffrey, New York, St. Barth (2017, 2015); Museum of Modern Art, New York (2012–13);

Yamanashi Prefectural Museum of Art (2010–11). The artist was also featured in the documentary film, *ANPO: Art X War* (2010), directed by Linda Hoaglund.

An exhibition of the artist's work is currently on-view, by appointment, in *Tatsuo Ikeda & Philippe Parreno: Field Phase* at Fergus McCaffrey New York.

For inquires or press requests, please contact:
Tel.: +1 (212) 988-2200
Email: press@fergusmccaffrey.com

Images:

1. Portrait of the Artist © Gallery 58, Tokyo
2. Tatsuo Ikeda, *LOVE*, 1955. Ink on paper, 11 3/8 x 14 3/4 inches (29 x 37.5 cm) © Tatsuo Ikeda; The Economou Collection, Athens
3. Tatsuo Ikeda, *Untitled*, 1958. Watercolor and ink on paper, 15 1/2 x 12 inches (39.5 x 30.5 cm) © Tatsuo Ikeda; The Rachofsky Collection, Dallas
4. Tatsuo Ikeda, *Dissection Archeology: A Machine*, 1969. Ink and watercolor on paper, 16 1/2 x 12 5/8 inches (42 x 32 cm) © Tatsuo Ikeda
5. Tatsuo Ikeda, *BRAHMAN: Chapter 3: Floating Sphere-3*, 1978. Acrylic on paper, 15 1/2 x 15 1/2 inches (39.5 x 39.5 cm) © Tatsuo Ikeda
6. Installation image of *Tatsuo Ikeda & Philippe Parreno: Field Phase* at Fergus McCaffrey, New York, November 2020