

Midway Contemporary Art

Yutaka Matsuzawa

November 9 –December 19, 2019

Co-curated by Alan Longino and Reiko Tomii

Yutaka Matsuzawa (1922 – 2006) was known as one of the leading figures of Japanese conceptual art. Born in Shimo Suwa, in central Japan, he studied architecture during the war, and upon witnessing the after effects of the firebombing of Tokyo in March 1945, he proclaimed upon his graduation from school that he wished to create an architecture of invisibility. Once he gave up architecture, he wrote poetry, made paintings, and worked as both an artist and teacher in his hometown. From the 1960s, and into the following decades, Matsuzawa began to develop a unique understanding of conceptual art that both elevated and transcended the typical notions of conceptual art in the western, euro-centric art worlds.

His work has been included in some of the most significant exhibitions in recent decades, such as *Global Conceptualism* in 1999 at the Queens Museum of Art in New York and *Century City* in 2001 at Tate Modern, London. But, it is only recently, in the past few years, that Matsuzawa's work has been given due focus, beginning in 2016 with Reiko Tomii's publication, *Radicalism in the Wilderness: International Contemporaneity and 1960s Art in Japan* (MIT Press)—which turned into an exhibition earlier in 2019 at the Japan Society, New York. Continuing this focus, this exhibition by Longino and Tomii is the first of its kind for the artist in the United States, having originated at Yale Union, Portland, and been recently on exhibition at Nonaka-Hill, Los Angeles. Following the exhibition at Midway, the presentation will travel to the John Young Museum of Art at the University of Hawai'i–Manoa.

Re-published alongside this exhibition, for the first time in nearly three decades and outside of Japan, is the artist's seminal publication, *Quantum Art Manifesto* (1988). Copies of this new publication, including a text by Reiko Tomii and foreword by Haruo Matsuzawa, are available at Midway.

Alan Longino is an art historian and curator from Biloxi, MS. His M.A. thesis in Art History from CUNY Hunter College (2017) focused on Yutaka Matsuzawa and the artist's concept of the event of telepathy within information as a source of image production. His writing has appeared in the *Haunt Journal of Art*, from UC Irvine.

Reiko Tomii is a New York-based scholar and curator who investigates post-1945 Japanese art as a vital element of world art history of modernisms. She organized exhibitions with Yutaka Matsuzawa until his death in 2006. Her book *Radicalism in the Wilderness: International Contemporaneity and 1960s Art in Japan* was published by MIT Press and won the 2017 Robert Motherwell Book Award, which recognizes outstanding publications in the history and criticism of modernism in the arts. The book was recently turned into an exhibition, *Radicalism in the Wilderness: Japanese Artists in the Global 1960s*, presented at the Japan Society Gallery in New York earlier this spring, in which Matsuzawa was prominently featured.

This exhibition was originated by Yale Union, Portland, Oregon