

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Tatsuo Kawaguchi
Early Work 1964-1975
May 19 – July 8, 2017

OPENING RECEPTION: FRIDAY, MAY 19, 7-9PM

Kayne Griffin Corcoran is pleased to present *Early Work 1964-1975*, an exhibition by Tatsuo Kawaguchi, in its South gallery. This will be Kawaguchi's first solo exhibition in Los Angeles and with the gallery.

In 1965, Kawaguchi established himself as a key figure in the postwar Japanese avant-garde by co-founding Group "i" (meaning "unit"), a collective that sought to eliminate emotion and subjectivity from their work in favor of an "impersonal," cerebral art. Although Kawaguchi's practice has evolved in myriad ways over the intervening decades, it is still largely driven by themes he began investigating in the 1960s: removing his ego and influence from the art-making process; reaching viewers through thoughts and concepts rather than sentiment; and visualizing what is normally considered invisible.

In his early paintings (1964-1965), Kawaguchi relies on rigid systems and a vocabulary of largely-geometric shapes to activate the intellect rather than simply appeal to the senses. Even though the visual rhythms and often-vibrant colors create what scholar Atsushi Miyagawa called "a glorious illusion," the works' mechanical, repetitive compositions are meant to connect universally. By minimizing the evidence of human involvement, Kawaguchi frees the paintings to exist on a more purely symbolic level.

Each of the works in the *Interrelation* series (1967-1969) consists of a network of brightly colored vinyl wires snaking between Plexiglas-covered nodes on a rectangular wooden frame. To Kawaguchi, a single colored wire can be thought of as a single human life, allowing us to chart how each person relates to others—as well as how the larger, abstract entity we call a society relates to its individual members.

Kawaguchi's mirror sculptures use his decades-long fascination with puzzles and illusion to reveal the disconnects between our senses and our thinking. In *Cube and Cylinder* (1967), one half of two geometric shapes are suspended on opposite sides of a double mirror. When viewed from each side, the viewer sees a complete shape seemingly floating in space—precisely because human vision cannot detect that the reflected half is "not real." In *Two Mirrors (Between Mirror and Mirror)* (1968), Kawaguchi uses rope to bind a pair of reflective surfaces face to face. This creates a space that is both infinite in theory and permanently invisible to viewers. One can only understand the object through thought and imagination, not the senses.

Both *Bottle* (1968) and a selection from the *Iron of Iron and/or Tools* series (1975) playfully dismantle the relationship between language and reality. In the former, resin-coated ropes mimic the contours of a long-ago shattered bottle (complete with cork). In the latter, one of Kawaguchi's own iron tools merges with smelted iron from a blast furnace, creating a hybrid form. These works ask us to consider at what point an object lose its function and identity, as well as how exactly we should define it afterward.

Finally, *Dark* (1968) and *Exposure* (1971) double as works in themselves and records of past experiential installations. *Dark* consists of a poster and floorplan for an exhibition of the same name, for which Kawaguchi sealed Tokyo's Muramatsu Gallery in total blackness, day and night. *Exposure* consists of a sheet of photosensitive paper hung to absorb sunlight only during viewing hours of the two-week 1971 Kyoto Independent Exhibition, after which Kawaguchi preserved the work in a lightproof tube. Together, the pieces speak to the relationships between natural and artificial, reality and imagination, past and present.

Tatsuo Kawaguchi was born in Kobe, Japan in 1940 and earned a BFA from Tama University of Fine Art, Tokyo, in 1962. He has shown extensively in Japan and internationally since, including in such historically significant exhibitions as the 10th Tokyo Biennale in 1970, the Paris Youth Biennale in 1973, and *Magiciens de la terre* at the Centre Georges Pompidou in 1989. His work resides in the permanent collections of the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo; the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Denmark; and the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, among others. He lives and works in Chiba, Japan.

For press inquiries please email press@kaynegriffincorcoran.com.