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KEIJI UEMATSU: INVISIBLE FORCE



7 MARCH – 27 APRIL 2019

PRIVATE VIEW: WEDNESDAY 6 MARCH, 6 – 8PM

SIMON LEE GALLERY, NEW YORK

Simon Lee Gallery, New York, is pleased to announce *Invisible Force*, an exhibition of new and historical work by Japanese conceptual artist, Keiji Uematsu, his first ever solo presentation in the United States.

Uematsu's multidisciplinary practice strives to illuminate the invisible relationships between objects and the spaces they inhabit. For more than five decades the artist has carried out the terms of a rigorous manifesto that spotlights the de-familiarization of space and draws his viewers' attention to the interplay of such natural forces as gravity, tension and material attraction through media including photography, drawing and sculptural installation. He writes, 'what I want to do is to make visible existence, visible connections and visible relations appear more clearly. And to cause non-visible existence, non-visible connections and non-visible relations to appear. And to cause visible existence, visible connections and visible relations not to appear'. Uematsu is often associated with the Japanese Mono-ha group of artists, who rejected traditional methods of representation in favor of an engagement with natural and industrial materials, focusing on the ways in which they interact in space in largely unaltered states. Yet his aesthetic is set apart by his pursuit of Western theory and philosophy, which contributed to his decision to move from Japan to Germany in 1975.

Dating from the start of his career, a set of two photographic diptychs from 1973 – of which one image from each pair is on view in the gallery – demonstrate Uematsu's preoccupation with the act of 'seeing'. In *Horizontal Position*, the left-hand image depicts an empty doorway in one of the galleries of the Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art; in the right-hand image, the artist is stretched across the width of the same door frame, held half way up by the tension between his outstretched limbs. By contrast, in *Vertical Position* a beam of wood stands upright in the doorway of the first photograph, while in the second the artist supports the beam so that its top reaches the lintel of the doorway: body and sculptural element are as one. Reflecting Uematsu's interest in the relationship between body and object, the doubling of the image emphasizes the invisible forces at play, made visible by conceptual intervention.

Equally concerned by the binaries of equilibrium are a group of recent and historic sculptures. In *Corner Piece II – Vertical Space*, 1990, a black copper cone balances improbably on its very point, which sits atop a stone set on the ground. In a later work dating from 2010, *Situation – Floating Form* a brass branch floats effortlessly over three evenly spaced copper cones. Here, Uematsu's fascination with the natural world – a sign of his loose affiliation to the Mono-ha movement – is partnered with the conical motif that is a hallmark of his sculptural practice. Displayed alongside the sculptures are a group of sketches, spanning nearly thirty years. These project drawings document the artist's

unflagging commitment to sculptural innovation from the early years of his career to the present day, presenting blueprints for his work and demonstrating his continued exploration of the visible and invisible forces that shape our experience of the world around us.

NOTES TO EDITORS

About Keiji Uematsu

Keiji Uematsu was born in 1947 in Kobe, Japan and lives and works in Minoh, Japan and Dusseldorf, Germany. He received his BFA from Kobe University in 1969 and since has been the recipient of numerous awards, including the 38th Nakahara Teiji Prize (2013); the Kobe city Cultural Prize (2010); the 6th Asago 2001 Outdoor Sculpture in Tataragi '99, Grand Prize (1999) and the 22nd Iue Culture Prize (1998). His work has been exhibited in solo exhibitions worldwide, including at Kunstlerverein Malkasten, Dusseldorf, Germany (2016, 2005); Otani Memorial Art Museum, Hyogo, Japan (2006); Aomori Contemporary Art Center, Aomori, Japan (2003) and the Kitakyushu Municipal Museum of Art, Fukuoka, Japan (2003). Major group shows include the National Museum of Art, Osaka, Japan (2018); Tate, London, UK (2016); Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX (2015), which travelled to Grey Art Gallery, New York, NY and Japan Society, New York, NY; The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, Japan (2015); Kunsthalle Bremen, Germany (2012) and The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA (2007). His work is housed in major international collections, including the Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain, Paris, France; Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus und Kunstbau, Munich, Germany; The National Museum of Art, Osaka, Japan; Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art, Kyoto, Japan; Moderna Museet Stockholm, Stockholm, Sweden and Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, amongst others.

About Simon Lee Gallery

Founded in Mayfair, London in 2002, Simon Lee Gallery represents artists of diverse generations whose practices range from sculpture and painting to video and photography and who share a broad interest in an exploration of the conceptual. Aiming to provide a significant international audience for its artists, the gallery also regularly punctuates its programme with historical exhibitions and curated group shows, which present shifts in contemporary art practice and thought, whilst broadening the dialogue with artists outside of the gallery's core programme. In addition to its UK activity, in 2012 the gallery opened a space in Hong Kong, helping to introduce its artists to a wider public in Asia, with a fully independent programme. In 2014, Simon Lee Gallery opened an office and private viewing space. In 2017, the New York space was re-launched with an independent year-round programme of exhibitions and events, showcasing the work of emerging and established artists in dynamic group and solo exhibitions.

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www.simonleegallery.com

Image: Keiji Uematsu, *Stone/Rope/Man II*, 1974, Gelatin silver print, vintage 120 x 89 cm (47 1/4 x 35 1/8 in.)
Edition 1 of 3. Courtesy the artist and Simon Lee Gallery.

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