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## KISHIO SUGA “Gathered <Intermediates>”

June 5 - July 10, 2021    CLOSED: Sun, Mon, National Holidays

Tomio Koyama Gallery is pleased to present “Gathered”, a solo exhibition featuring new works by artist Kishio Suga, recognized as a leading figure of Postwar Japanese art.

Suga has actively held solo exhibitions with the gallery every year, and on this occasion he presents work while focusing on the fact that “things are impermanent and in a state of flux –the very process of which becomes the work itself.” Introduced is a new installation using the entire room at the back of the gallery space, as well as a selection of new three-dimensional works installed on the wall.

### **【About Kishio Suga –Active at the Forefront for Over 50 Years, A Retrospective Exhibition at the Iwate Museum of Art this Year】**

Kishio Suga served as a central member of the art movement Mono-ha that took place from the late 1960s to the 1970s. The attitude and approach of the Mono-ha that channeled attention towards “things” themselves, which until then had only been considered as mere materials for artwork, as well as the human eye that perceives these “things,” has in recent years come to receive increasing international acclaim.

Suga has been active at the forefront for over 50 years, constantly illustrating a passion to produce work through his sharp and refined sensibility. Through deepening his own thoughts regarding his practice that in turn resonate with the “doctrine of the void” observed in Indian Madhyamaka Philosophy, the ideas and concepts of the Kyoto School, and the aesthetics and philosophy of Japanese landscape gardening, he continues to pave his own unique path within the realm of contemporary art.

Since his first solo exhibition in 1968, Suga has presented work on over 400 occasions in numerous exhibitions both within Japan and abroad. A large-scale retrospective, “20th Anniversary of the Iwate Museum of Art: Kishio Suga: The Existence of “Things” and the Eternity of “Site” will take place from December 2021 to February 2022 at the Iwate Museum of Art in the Iwate Prefecture where he was born and raised. The exhibition is anticipated to introduce Suga’s artistic career spanning over 50 years thus far through a selection of around 100 works.

Suga’s other international activities are far too numerous to comprehensively mention here. Please access the link for the list of Suga’s major exhibitions. Suga’s works are also housed in 47 prominent museums and art collections throughout the world including The Museum of Modern Art, New York (MoMA), Centre Pompidou, Tate Modern, The Museum of Modern Art Tokyo, and the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo.

## **【About Suga's Works and his Production Process】**

As a premise for producing work, Suga first thoroughly re-examines the preconceived notions of things, and reaffirms what the essence and existence (reality) of things are. Arranging things commonly found within everyday life such as wood, stone, metal, glass, and rope, he proceeds to convey the profound existence of "things" through subtle acts of intervention of connecting, cutting, and bending.

Furthermore, considering sites such as wooden frames, boards placed on the floor, window frames, the entire room, the water's surface, and external space as "frames" for the work, he arranges things in places that enable them to maximize their existence and effect. In this way, by expressing the continuity of the slight deviations of such things, their interdependence, differences, complexity, and so forth, the "things" in Suga's work come to present scenes and situations that we have never seen or felt before, in an almost vivid and animated manner.

Another major feature of Suga's practice is the means by which aspects that are not visible to the eye such as human consciousness and space are also considered in parallel, and as equivalent to "things". Activating the relationship between "things" and "things", "things" and "sites", and "things" and "people", he encourages people to perceive and engage with space in new ways.

## **【About the Exhibition "Gathered" and his New Work**

### **–The Transience of Things, Gathered Processes】**

While there are fundamental ideas and thoughts that continue to permeate his artistic practice, Suga in general has explored different interests on the occasion of each exhibition with intentions of "not doing the same thing."

Suga has written the following artist statement in correspondence to the exhibition:

.....

"Gathered <Intermediates>" Kishio Suga

"Things, for the most part, continue to be in a passage of time that is unrelated to human beings. It is therefore difficult for humans to easily understand its accumulation. No matter how much time is taken, it seems difficult to perceive the "process of being." This is true both in terms of the length of time, and its very nature. Unwittingly, humans attempt to treat things offhandedly in the name of art. This is because humans, in order to create, believe that things are necessary as a means of expression. However, it should be noted that fundamentally things do not exist with intentions of being used in art.

In the sense of being "that which exists," things and works are perhaps no different, yet in many instances the primitive existence of things is lost in the process of production. It means that the underlying quality of sorts that things inherently possess is no more. If such is the case, "things" essentially become "non-things," and although having shape and form, lose their original sense of existence.

Works (things) are always comprised of things that are in the midst of something."

.....

Suga regards things as not remaining in a certain consistent state, but as something that is transient –moving and changing with the passage of time. In this exhibition he focuses on the way in which the culmination of processes experienced by such "things" serves to constitute the work.

Suga has also stated as follows:

“Human beings eventually die, while trees for example wither, or burn to dust and disappear. In this sense, they undergo the same process, that is, moving from existence towards nothing. Things exist in the midst of this process. To make things change, means a transformation that ventures towards nothingness.”

(Kishio Suga Interview, Interviewer: Midori Matsui, Bijutsu Techo, 2015 March Issue)

“I feel that creating work is the process of deconstructing ordinary things through the power of meaning.”

“Art ultimately is a process. No matter how complete it may be, it is nothing but a mere process.”

(Kishio Suga Talk, Symposium “Mono-ha and Archives: For International Introduction”, Tama Art University, 2016)

This is also reflected in “Activation”, a performance event implemented in front audiences, which forms an essential part of his practice. Here, his actions, thoughts, and production process are regarded as the work.

In the new works “Scene of Elements” and “Site of Void” presented in this exhibition, a series of small stones and pieces of wood are aligned to form a free trajectory between several fragments of tree branches that are positioned at the edge. This continuity expresses different aspects as if it were the results of the intentional movement of things, giving the impression of an infinite rhythm and energy extending forever beyond the contours of the work.

Furthermore, in the new installation work “Accumulation of Void and Effects”, highly simple “things” in the form of stones and rope are arranged here and there throughout the entire room –the endless continuity and spatiality of which activates the viewer’s consciousness.

Art critic Midori Matsui states as follows regarding Suga’s work:

This (experience of Suga’s works) in turn conveys an unceasing feeling of freedom, when the spectator realizes the elusiveness of perception, which escapes the finest archive of knowledge.

(Midori Matsui “Approaching Kishio Suga: Methods for Capturing an Immanent World”, KISHIO SUGA-Catalogue, Tomio Koyama Gallery/Tokyo Gallery, 2006)

As we find ourselves physically restricted from interacting with people and moving between places, through viewing Suga’s work, we are able to liberate our senses that have increasingly become accustomed to digital environments. In doing so we once again realize that things, people, thoughts, and the world itself is constantly changing, and while connected but never coalescing, gives rise to a vast plethora of possibilities. Viewers are invited to experience the ever-evolving world of Suga’s work through his latest artistic endeavors.