

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Fergus McCaffrey, New York Kazuo and Fujiko Shiraga

April 30–June 20, 2015

Opening Reception: April 30, 6-8pm

(New York – January 26, 2015) The Estate of Kazuo Shiraga and Fergus McCaffrey are extremely proud to announce *Kazuo & Fujiko Shiraga*; the first-ever joint exhibition of Kazuo Shiraga and his wife Fujiko.

On view from April 30–June 20, 2015 at Fergus McCaffrey, New York, the show opens with a reception on April 30th from 6–8 pm.

Kazuo Shiraga (b. 1924–2008) married Fujiko Uemura (b. 1928) in 1948, the year that he graduated from Kyoto Municipal School of Painting. In 1952, Kazuo co-founded the avant-garde painting collective Zero Society with

Saburō Murakami and Akira Kanayama. Fujiko Shiraga and Atsuko Tanaka became members of Zero Society shortly thereafter, and in April 1955, the five artists joined the Gutai Art Association.

Before joining Gutai, Kazuo had already demonstrated great innovation by creating his first body painting in 1953 and foot-paintings in 1954. Gutai brought him closer to the influence of Jiro Yoshihara who famously challenged his students to “create what has never been done before.” Kazuo responded by making revolutionary performative works and large-scale “foot-paintings” of extraordinary aesthetic power, which he created while swinging from a rope. Kazuo’s signature style and unique method remained a constant for the rest of his six-decade long career.

Fujiko’s reaction to Yoshihara’s decree was equally radical. In 1955 she began making large and fragile collages of torn and layered paper that explored transparency and opacity. Simultaneously she created a concrete sculpture incised with deep horizontal lines, and *White Plank*, a 13 foot long angled plank of wood bisected by a long snaking cut. In 1960 she began creating paintings on canvas composed of wax, broken glass, torn paper and pigment. In 1961, she abandoned her own art making and moved to support Kazuo’s studio practice, a role she maintained for the remainder of Kazuo’s career.

After Kazuo’s death, several forgotten works by Fujiko were discovered in his studio. Created between 1955 and 1961, these works are a revelation and shed light on an

innovative artist deserving of wider study and recognition. Fifteen of Fujiko's works will be exhibited at Fergus McCaffrey adjacent to a selection of masterworks by Kazuo drawn from the Estate of Kazuo Shiraga. The exhibition will be accompanied by an in-depth publication exploring both artists' work.

Fergus McCaffrey has pioneered and advocated the understanding of Kazuo Shiraga in the United States since making the first solo exhibition of the artist's work at McCaffrey Fine Art in 2009. The gallery published *Kazuo Shiraga: Six Decades*, the first in-depth English language publication on the artist, co-authored by art historian Reiko Tomii and Fergus McCaffrey in 2009. This is Fergus McCaffrey's third exhibition of Shiraga's work in New York.

The first US museum survey of Kazuo Shiraga and his Gutai colleague Sadamasa Motonaga, entitled *Between Action and the Unknown: The Art of Kazuo Shiraga and Sadamasa Motonaga*, opens at the Dallas Museum of Art on February 8, 2015, and will run through July 19th.



About Fergus McCaffrey

Founded in 2006, Fergus McCaffrey is internationally recognized for its groundbreaking role promoting the work of post-war Japanese artists, as well as a quality roster of select contemporary European and American artists. Fergus McCaffrey's rigorous, thoughtful approach is marked by a commitment to discovery, often presenting the work of artists previously unrepresented or misrepresented. Dublin-born founder Fergus McCaffrey has been instrumental in introducing post-war Japanese art to a Western market, including Natsuyuki Nakanishi, and Gutai artists Sadamasa Motonaga and Kazuo Shiraga. The gallery also exhibits the work of seminal Western artists, including Andy Warhol, Birgit Jürgenssen, William Scott, Richard Nonas, Gary Rough, Jack Early and Sigmar Polke.

Chelsea, NY based Fergus McCaffrey just opened a second gallery location on the Caribbean island of St. Barthélemy. The gallery's third location opens in Tokyo in 2015.

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Stay connected with the gallery via Facebook, Instagram and Twitter with the hashtags #FMKazuoShiraga, #FMFujikoShiraga and #FMNewYork.

Images:

Top: Kazuo Shiraga painting in his studio with the assistance of Fujiko Shiraga, 1965
© Amagasaki Cultural Center; Courtesy of Fergus McCaffrey, New York

Left: **Fujiko Shiraga**, *Untitled*, 1961. Oil, japanese paper, and glass on canvas. 63 x 52 inches; 160 x 132 cm. © Fujiko Shiraga, Courtesy of Fergus McCaffrey, New York

Right: **Kazuo Shiraga**, *Seiran*, 1995. Oil on paper. 100 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 75 $\frac{3}{16}$ inches; 255.9 x 191 cm. © Estate of Kazuo Shiraga, Courtesy of Fergus McCaffrey, New York