

ULTERIOR

Minoru Yoshida: Performances in New York



Minoru Yoshida, *Synthesizer Jacket #2*, 1974.

Photo: Courtesy of Midori Yoshida, photographer unknown.

June 14–16, 2019

Hours: 12:00–18:00

Space 23 °c

2-17-23 Nakamachi, Setagaya, Tokyo 158-0091

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Book Launch and Closing Reception: Sunday, June 16, 16:00–18:00

Artist Minoru Yoshida (1935–2010) was born in Osaka, Japan, and studied painting at Kyoto City University of Fine Arts. He began to make a name for himself as an artist in the early 1960s and became a member of Gutai Art Association, the legendary postwar artists collective. During the years 1970 through 1978, Yoshida lived in New York. Although he was established as one of the most notable late Gutai artists, known for his sculptures, paintings, and installation works featuring cutting-edge technology, the work that Yoshida made during his eight years in New York remains largely unknown in both Japan and the U.S. *Minoru Yoshida: Performances in New York* will introduce Yoshida’s performance documentation videos from this era—an imperative for further research into and a more comprehensive understanding of Yoshida’s oeuvre both before and after living in the United States.

In February 1970, Yoshida first moved to Los Angeles, then traveled across the country to New York. Cross-pollinating developments in conceptual, performance, and video-based art in the New York art community of the the 1970s inspired him to develop one of his most important themes of the time, a speculative guide to art practice he called *Epicurism of Space Universe*. Yoshida began producing a series of performances in which he aimed to substantiate his philosophy of “extraterrestriality”—a way to adopt the viewpoint of a visitor from another planet and scrutinize human behavior on Earth. *Epicurism of Space Universe* was the focus of Yoshida’s artistic activity from 1974 until his return to Japan in 1978.

In recent years, many videos were discovered at the late artist’s studio by Yoshida’s family. A 2017 video screening event at Ulterior Gallery in New York marked their first public exhibition. During his years in New York, Yoshida attempted to combine his body, electronic sounds, and sculptural parts to create an original kind of live performance. These videos capture the process through which, influenced by the changing modes of the New York art scene of that era, Yoshida radically altered and developed his practice.

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This exhibition will introduce a number of documentary videos of Minoru Yoshida performing while wearing his artwork *Synthesizer Jacket*. On Sunday, June 16, we will also launch *Epicurism of Space Universe in New York*, a publication which documents Minoru Yoshida's New York performances through photographs and explanatory texts. The book is the first bilingual publication to collect rarely seen documentary photographs of Minoru Yoshida's artistic activities in the 1970s.

Following recent exhibitions in New York, Minoru Yoshida's 1970s art practice has begun to be re-evaluated. As a related program, Hirai Shoichi, a professor at Kansai University, who has been researching Minoru Yoshida's work of this era, will deliver a talk at Tokyo University of the Arts, accompanied by a performance by Gendai Kazoku, the family performance unit founded by Minoru Yoshida (members: Midori Araki, Shonen Yoshida, and Asao Yoshida) on June 6.

[Related Program]

Minoru Yoshida, Performances in New York: 1970–1978

Tokyo University of the Arts, Art Media Center

Media Special Lecture: Art+

Date & Time: Thursday, June 6, 2019 18:00–19:30

Location: Tokyo University of the Arts, Faculty of Fine Arts, Central Building, First Lecture Room (this lecture is open to all students and the public)

Lecturer: Shoichi Hirai (Kansai University professor and curator of *Gutai: The Spirit of an Era* at National Art Center, Tokyo), with a performance by Gendai Kazoku (Midori Araki, Shonen Yoshida, and Asao Yoshida)

Moderator: Toshiharu Ito (Professor, Tokyo University of the Arts, Department of Intermedia Art)

* The publication *Epicurism of Space Universe* will be available at Space 23°c during the exhibition. After the exhibition, please contact Ulterior Gallery at info@ulteriorgallery.com to purchase this title.

Planned by: Gendai Kazoku Researchers

Coordination: Space 23°c / Ulterior Gallery

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