

CRITIC'S PICKS



Minoru Yoshida, *Space Doll, September 25, New York, 1974 (detail), 1974*, graphite and watercolor on paper, 29 1/2 x 22".

NEW YORK

Minoru Yoshida

ULTERIOR GALLERY

172 Attorney St

October 20–November 25

In 1970, Minoru Yoshida—already a rising star of the Gutai group—moved to the United States from Kyoto. He originally planned for a quick return but stayed in New York for almost a decade. In three video documentations of performances from 1976, on display here, Yoshida dons his “synthesizer jacket,” a sculptural garment that looks a little like a Plexiglas corset lined with circuits. Responding to the artist’s body and movements, the jacket emitted a variety of electronic drones—sounds that one could characterize as techno-bagpipe.

In the video *Absolute Landscape No. 3 (Psychic Revolution)*, 1976, Yoshida is balancing atop a precarious-looking abandoned building in Woodstock, New York. He resembles a 1950s B-movie astronaut or a male Barbarella. When he descends, two women join him, wearing silver reflective eye coverings and similarly futuristic-looking costumes. The extraterrestrial trio pour salt onto a vast roll of paper, making an assortment of shapes. Eventually, they light the tableau on fire. It’s a solemn yet trippy ballet. The group seems to deliver an indecipherable new message, à la the aliens in the 2016 movie *Arrival*. Immerse yourself in their trance.

Yoshida the expatriate, dressed as an alien, plays with otherness. Two fabulous drawings are also presented here, precise renderings of a battered doll stuck into a pile of rocks (*Space Doll, September 25, New York and Space Doll, October 6, New York, both 1974*). We see the doll in the Woodstock performance; Yoshida briefly cradles it in his arms. These images are extraordinarily weird, a combination of academic draftsmanship and deep surrealism. Even though they were created more than forty years ago, they could have been made yesterday.

— Nicholas Chittenden Morgan