

PRESS RELEASE

KOTARO NUKAGA

September 10, 2022

Yuichiro Tamura 'N'

The first solo exhibition at KOTARO NUKAGA, Roppongi.



Yuichiro Tamura | N |

September 10 – November 6, 2022

KOTARO NUKAGA

From September 10 (Sat) to November 6 (Sun), 2022, KOTARO NUKAGA, Roppongi is pleased to present 'N,' a solo exhibition by Yuichiro Tamura.

Tamura's participation in international art festivals and exhibitions in both Japan and abroad, such as Asia Art Biennale 2019 (Taipei), Yokohama Triennale 2020 (Yokohama), and International Art Festival Aichi 2022 (Nagoya), has marked him as one of Japan's representative contemporary artists. This exhibition marks Tamura's first with KOTARO NUKAGA.

When N showed up to our meeting spot at the lounge of the Hotel Okura Kyoto, his face was the color of dry dirt. When I asked, he told me he'd had a hard time falling asleep. Whenever black clouds began to creep over the forest that spread out underneath his guest room window, his sleep was inevitably violated by nightmares, he said, and each time he felt he might suffocate. According to N, it was apparently the work of a monster that had inhabited the capital. Over the Japanese-style steak sandwich that had been brought to our table, N said to me: "Won't you avenge this monster?"

Using existing objects and languages as his materials, Tamura creates spatial exhibitions that divorce things from their conventional meanings, bringing the viewer into contact with alternate perspectives. In this exhibition, Tamura uses the letter "N" as his starting point in an attempt to create a connection between different dimensions, phases, and times to reveal to us a "new manifestation" of the world.

The exhibition is composed of a collection of various objects that allude to two different disconnected worlds, and an analog record that functions as a bridge between them.

One of these two worlds is Titan, Saturn's sixth and largest moon. Discovered by Dutch astronomer Christian Huygens in 1655, the planet-like moon is the only satellite body in the solar system other than Earth to have a nitrogen-rich atmosphere. Nitrogen, the chemical element with the atomic number 7, is symbolized by the letter "N". It is this nitrogen-filled world, characterized by its dry, ochre-colored surface, from which Tamura derives the world of "N".

Furthermore, "N", when read in Japanese, is pronounced with two syllables "eh-nu". Reversing these syllables gives us the word nue (鵺), which itself is a combination of two Chinese characters, night (夜) and bird (鳥). This word is the name for the legendary Japanese creature that appears in old tales like the Heike Monogatari, a creature with the face of a monkey, body of a raccoon, arms and legs of a tiger, and tail of a snake. An analogous Western comparison may be the chimera. Nue is also a type of play within the classical Japanese dance-drama, Noh. This other world, expressed within the exhibition space as a dark blue hue, represents the quiet sleeping nighttime, the other side of our world.

These two seemingly unconnected worlds, like the two opposing sides of a vinyl record, are the two opposing sides of the letter "N".

Graham Harman (1968-), the contemporary philosopher who developed the idea of object-oriented ontology (OOO), writes in his book *Immaterialism: Objects and Social Theory*.

And whereas naïve realism thinks that reality exists outside the mind and we can know it, object-oriented realism holds that reality exists outside the mind and we cannot know it.

Graham's theory suggests that humans do not actually have full access to the objects we sense and perceive; rather, we can only perceive things through indirect, implicit, and secondary means. In other words, we can never access the true essence of an object, but only an aspect of it.

This way of thinking provides us with hints as to how to interpret Tamura's exhibition. Harman's philosophical stance does not suggest that objects exist solely in relation to us, but rather shares with naïve realism the idea that objects exist outside of human consciousness regardless of the existence of human beings. However, in regards to the question of whether people can access the true essence of an object, he asserts that we cannot. In other words, we can perceive a single side of a thing, such as its "given role", through our indirect, implicit, and secondary means of perception (like the "N" in this exhibition), but we are not able to arrive at its true essence.

According to Harman, most of us approach objects believing that there are only two kinds of knowledge we can have about them: what they are made of, and what they do. The modern Western scientific community attempts to approach the path to understanding by reducing a subject to its parts; the humanities and sociology, on the other hand, pursue vague hypotheses, venturing into dark abysses to discover the unexplainable. However, the essence of an object has other sensory properties that cannot be accessed through just these usual interactions. Only through manipulation of the object from a different aspect may we encounter its hidden essence in some unexpected form.

Through anagrams, Tamura juxtaposes events in different dimensions, phases, and eras within the same plane, just as our ancestors did with stars in the night sky. Just as constellations were created by connecting many individual points of light, Tamura draws lines between objects placed on a shared plane to create a new constellation. In his book *Sekai wa waketemo wakaranai* (The world cannot be understood even when divided) (2009), biologist Shinichi Fukuoka (1959-) describes the world as such:

All factors in this world govern or complement each other. They exchange matter, energy, and information. If we capture an interaction at just one singular moment in time, it will seem to us that there is a giver and a receiver. But when we open up this derivative equation and observe the next moment in time, the cause and effect has been reversed. Or they have moved on in search of another equilibrium. Essentially, what we refer to as "causality" does not actually exist in this world. We must divide the world to understand it.

Yet the world cannot be understood even when divided. But when we open up this derivative equation and observe the next moment in time, the cause and effect has been reversed. Or they have moved on in search of another equilibrium. Essentially, what we refer to as "causality" does not actually exist in this world. We must divide the world to understand it. Yet the world cannot be understood even when divided.

Fukuoka's conclusion asserts that we can not understand the world, even if we reduce it into parts. Objects and things communicate with each other regardless of human intervention. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. It may be true that to understand something means to "divide it" (the Japanese term for "understand" has the same root character as "divide"), but that does not mean that everything can be understandable.

When the "emergence" of the collection of manipulated objects leads to properties or behaviors that the scattered pieces do not have on their own— that is, when the whole becomes greater than its parts— that gap becomes the manifestation of an irreducible new meaning produced through the paraphrase of art.

"N" is not only the tale of an insomniac, but also a story that resides within each viewer.

Thanks to Mikami Mariko, Murakami Miki, Ohno Kurena, Araki Masamitsu, Komatsu Kazumichi, Mimasu Yusuke, Uruno Kei, Seko Ryoga, Onaka Shunsuke(Calamari Inc.), Hugh Aldersey-Williams, Sasao Chigusa, Okumura Yuki, Leiden University Libraries, Kawashima Selkon Textiles Co.,Ltd., HIGURE 17-15 cas Co., Ltd.

EXHIBITION DETAILS

Yuichiro Tamura, 'N'

September 10 (Sat) - November 6 (Sun), 2022

11:00 - 18:00 (Tue - Sat)

*Closed on Sun, Mon, and Public Holidays

*Open Sept 18 (Sun), Sept 19 (Mon), Nov 3 (Thurs/National holiday), Nov 6 (Sun)

*Schedule and contents are subject to change at the request of the national and local governments

VENUE

KOTARO NUKAGA, Roppongi

Piramide Bldg. 2F, 6-6-9 Roppongi, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-0032 Japan

3 minutes walk from Tokyo Metro Hibiya Line and the Toei Subway Oedo Line Exit 1 or 3 of Roppongi station

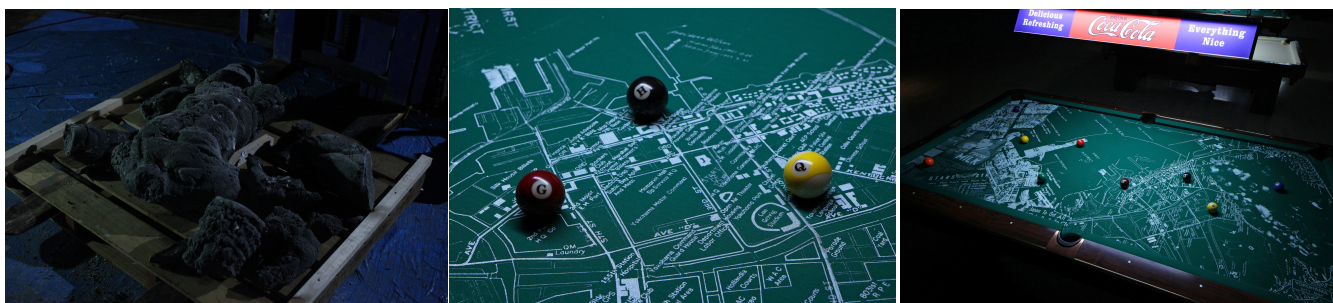
ARTIST PROFILE



Yuichiro Tamura

Yuichi Tamura (b. 1977, Toyama) currently lives and is based in Kyoto. Tamura's work begins from the existing images and objects, and takes an interdisciplinary approach to various media including photography, video, installation, performance and theater. He creates multilayered narratives, containing a mixture of fact and fiction, based on a wide range of sources from indigenous historical themes to well-known popular subjects. New interpretations and readings are bestowed upon original histories and memories, thereby transcending spaces and time, and questioning what it means to be "contemporary." The majority of his works are commissioned, and museum collections are also treated as subject matter in recent years.

PAST WORK



裏切りの海 / *Milky Bay*, 2016, BODY/PLAY/POLITICS , Yokohama Museum of Art , Asia Art Biennale 2019, Taipei.



畏怖 / *If (Ifu / If)*, 2019, Yokohama Triennale 2020, Yokohama.



見えざる手 (*Miezaru Te*), 2022, Aichi Triennale 2022, Aichi.

PRESS CONTACT

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