Galerie Christophe Gaillard

Tetsumi KUDO

October 5th - November 9, 2013
Opening October 5th from 6pm to 9pm

Galerie Christophe Gaillard is presenting Tetsumi Kudo’s first gallery exhibition in twenty years from October 5th till November 9th.

Six years after the retrospective at the Maison Rouge devoted to this artist and curated by Anne Tronche, and twenty-four years after the last show at a European gallery (Galerie du Génie), the exhibition will bring together around twenty works — objects, sculptures, drawings, painting and computer painting — thereby retracing the artist’s career from the late fifties up until the late seventies.

An artist who is impossible to pigeonhole — his work has been linked to various avant-gardist movements such as Gutai, the New Realists, Fluxus etc. but never quite belonging to any of them — Tetsumi Kudo came to settle in France in 1962. With the backing of Jean-Jacques Lebel (“Pour conjurer l’esprit de catastrophe”), and later Alain Jouffroy (“Les objecteurs”), who were to play a major role in the discovery and subsequent recognition of his work, Tetsumi Kudo went on to develop an absolutely unclassifiable, unique oeuvre.

Deeply marked by the trauma of Hiroshima and the development of new technologies (biology, data processing), and with a concern for reflecting on future man — what might be termed posthumanism — through his various cocoon-phallus-chrysalid works, cages, wires, boxes etc., Kudo aimed at giving an account of the metamorphosis of modern man through notions of chance, indeterminacy, biology, sex and control, and in so doing questioned what survives of human freedom in our society of today: the place of the innate and the acquired, and that of the programmed response. He thus set out the bases of what he would call “a new ecology”.

Through all the control relays, from the box to the cage, from the vouchers to the transistorized garden, the artist sought to give an account of the metamorphosis of modern man. Like some ironic narrator, at various stages of his approach, Kudo deals with the biochemical survival of the human phenomenon and considers its organic metamorphosis. If there are heads enclosed in cages, if there are human limbs connected to plants via electronic circuitry, if there are hands held as eternal captives in an aquarium, it is because Kudo cultivated a perversely refined brand of humour and cruelty. In his world, man and technology are not in opposition to each other. Brought up together, they give birth to a new culture, which he termed ‘the new ecology’. For all the flowers, the cigarettes and crucifixes, the last souvenirs of a distant existence, the old human has disappeared from the territory devised by Kudo. A new world comes into being, a world that probably recalls the intolerable violence of Hiroshima and determinedly decks itself with fluorescent flowers.

Anne Tronche, curator of the exhibition at La Maison Rouge

Upon his death in 1990, Tetsumi Kudo left an oeuvre that is all at once grave, outraged, and full of humour and poetry, seminal work for artists like Paul McCarthy (who included it in his “private museum“ in 2010) and Mike Kelley. It is noteworthy that, following the retrospective devoted to the artist at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis in 2008, and the two solo shows at the Andrea Rosen Gallery, Tetsumi Kudo is to be given a major retrospective at 3 museums in Japan, in Osaka, Tokyo and Aomori, from November 2013 until June 2014.