

MOTHER GALLERY

Shigeko Kubota: *Duchampiana*, 1978

Restored in Beacon, 2019

Curated By David A. Ross

November 2 - December 15, 2019

Shigeko Kubota: *Restored in Beacon* unveils key video sculptures by video pioneer Shigeko Kubota recently restored in Beacon, NY by local artists John Reichert and Kazumi Tanaka. Exhibition Design, structural realization and installation by Zenote Sompantle and Reid Ballard.

This exhibition consists of works from Kubota's *Duchampiana* series, in which the artist appropriated the art and image of Marcel Duchamp, the core of which were conceived in the early 1970s and exhibited together at Rene Block Gallery in 1976. Two, single-channel videos by Kubota depicting Cage's commemoration of Duchamp and abstracted cherry blossoms also included in the show highlight the artist's distinctive ability to create a lyrical union of the personal and technological.

Born in Niigata, Japan, Shigeko Kubota moved to New York in 1964 and became a key member of Fluxus and a pioneer of video art. Kubota first met Marcel Duchamp on a flight to Buffalo en route to the opening of Merce Cunningham's *Walk Around Time* in the winter of 1968, and later that year also photographed Duchamp and John Cage's *Reunion* concert-chess match in Toronto. These two "chance meetings," as well as visits to Duchamp's final work, *Étant donnés*, at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and grave in Rouen, France had a lasting impact on Kubota's oeuvre. Surpassing mere homage, Kubota's assiduous appropriations examine Duchamp's legacy, and his role in the destruction of dichotomies: art/ life, masculinity/ femininity, East/ West, etc.

***Duchampiana: Video Chess*, 1968-75 / 2019**

Plywood box, glass sheet, twelve-inch video monitor, color-synthesized video of black-and-white photographs, plastic chess set, 35h x 25w x 25d in.



Organized by John Cage and performed at Ryerson Theater, Ryerson Polytechnic Institute, Toronto on March 5, 1968, *Reunion* included musicians David Tudor, Gordon Mumma and David Behrman and centered around chess matches between Cage and Duchamp. The chessboard, designed by Lowell Cross, was wired so that each movement of the chess pieces corresponded to different musical compositions, resulting in random scores determined by pre-configured chance operations. In *Video Chess*, photographs are overlaid with original audio from the concert, conveying a convivial game between Cage, Duchamp, and Teeny drinking wine, smoking, and conversing.

***Duchampiana: Marcel Duchamps Grave*, 1972-75 / 2019**

Plywood, mirrors, twelve, nine-inch video monitors, single-channel, color-synthesized video. 101h x 36w 167d in.



In *Duchamp's Grave*, the video shakes in the hands of the artist who is overwhelmed with emotion during a visit to the grave in Rouen, France in 1972. Duchamp's epitaph on screen reads, "It's always been the others who died" and in this sculpture Kubota explores possibilities of a plastic, ghostly video life.

***Duchampiana: Bicycle Wheel One, Two and Three*, 1976 / 1990**

Bicycle wheels mounted on wooden stools with motors, six, three-inch liquid crystal monitors, single-channel color video, sound. (3) 58h x 25w x 15d in.



Bicycles expand upon Duchamp's concept of the "assisted readymade" by adding monitors with colorized landscapes to the sculptures. For the artist, these motorized turning wheels recalled childhood rides through the Japanese countryside and Zen Buddhist philosophy.

***Duchampiana: Nude Descending a Staircase*, 1976 / 2019**

Plywood, three 12" and one 9" CRT monitors, single-channel, color-synthesized and color Super-8 video. 67h x 31w x 67d in.



An appropriation of Duchamp's iconic oil painting, Kubota's *Nude Descending* features fragmented images of fellow film-maker Sheila McClaughlin descending a staircase across four screens embedded in a staircase sculpture. Here Kubota explores the potential of video representations of motion and time by employing different tempo and exposures of McClaughlin's descent.

Meta Marcel: Window, 1966-77 / 2019

Plywood, glass, four-inch CRT monitor, single-channel
RCA color video, 30h x 23w x 23.5d in.



Like Duchamp's *Fresh Window*, Kubota's *Window* addresses issues of representation and authorship. The first iteration of this work is not edited video by the artist but a "snow pattern" produced by the innate random pattern of electrons created when a video Cathode Ray Tube is 'at rest' with no image control signal being input to it's circuitry.

In the viewing room:

Marcel Duchamp and John Cage, 1972

Single-channel black and white video, sound. 28 min. 27 sec.

This video fuses documentation of John Cage's homage to Duchamp performed in Bremen, West Germany in 1972 with Kubota's photographs from the *Reunion* chess match.



Rock Video: Cherry Blossom, 1986

Single-channel color video, silent. 12 min 54 sec.

Cherry blossoms abstracts video of blossoms taken in Tokyo in 1984 into kaleidoscopic imagery through electronic processing.



The Shigeko Kubota Video Art Foundation was established under bequest of Shigeko upon her passing in order to realize the expressed vision of video pioneers Shigeko Kubota and her husband Nam June Paik. Its mission is the preservation and advancement of video art and its broader public access enabled institutionally through the establishment and operational programs of The Nam June Paik and Shigeko Kubota Video Art Center.

**Shigeko Kubota Video Art Foundation
110 Mercer Street, New York, NY 10012
www.shigekokubotavideoartfoundation.org**