

√K Contemporary Presents

## Hamada Kiyoshi, “Strata of Memory -Light and Shadow-”



Venue: √K Contemporary (Root K Contemporary, 6 Minamicho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo)

Dates: September 19 (Sat) to October 24 (Sat), 2020

Contact: info@root-k.jp / +81 (0)3-6280-8808

√K Contemporary (“Root K Contemporary”, Shinjuku, Tokyo,) is proud to present Kiyoshi Hamada’s third major solo exhibition, “*Strata of Memory -Light and Shadow-*” from September 19 (Sat) to October 24 (Sat), 2020.

Following his solo exhibitions at Kashima Arts (Kyobashi, Tokyo, 2016) and Nerima Art Museum (Nerima-ku, Tokyo, 2015), Kiyoshi Hamada has since participated in international art fairs, receiving much global acclaim. This exhibition will present approximately 30 works, with a diverse selection of large to small scaled works, from the 1980’s to the present.

Beginning his career an award-winning woodblock print artist in the 1970s, Hamada’s works were sought and acquired by various domestic and international museums very early on. With a desire to expand beyond printmaking, in the 1980’s, Hamada searched for new forms of expression and introduced his series, *Drawing*: works of paper with large, black, hand-drawn lead surfaces, amassed from innumerable, single lines of pencil. However, in discovering and adopting a different,

independent mode of production, Hamada discontinued his *Drawing* series, and began the process of "shaving, carving and layering." In this exhibition, Hamada revisits *Drawing* for the first time in 40 years and introduces a new work that exceeds 3m in length.

Furthermore, in this exhibition, Hamada will present his first-ever, new series of semi-sculptural works. Contrasting the artist's previous, entirely two-dimensional works, this series presents mono-colored works of woodblocks on plywood. Giving light and shadow to an otherwise monochrome surface, these works are subject to the viewer's line of sight. A balance play between the viewer and the work, this series, like much of Hamada's oeuvre, is subtle and intimate.

Always evolving, Hamada never ceased art production and, with constant self-reflection, continues to challenge himself to find new ways to create while also producing works that are, in many ways, temporally accumulated, sublimated indexes of his very own movements. Now past 80 years old, Hamada will present the new forms of expressions, techniques, and values he has developed over his career.

*"Perpetual movement, to never be in one place.*

*To feel a memory that has passed, now, before your very eyes.*

*Now is when one is in a position to finally witness the freedom of their force (movement)."*

— Kiyoshi Hamada

### 【Special Event: Exhibition Artist Talk】

This special event will feature the artist, Kiyoshi Hamada, and guest speakers, Yuji Akimoto (Director of The University Art Museum - Tokyo University of the Arts, and Director of the Nerima Art Museum) and Ren Fukuzumi (Art Critic).

Date & Times: September 22, from 3pm JST.

Venue: √K Contemporary (6 Minamicho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo)

Free admission / reservations required.

For all inquiries, please contact √K Contemporary ([info@root-k.jp](mailto:info@root-k.jp)).

\*The event details are subject to change depending on the severity of the COVID-19 outbreak.

\*\*Please note, the session will be in Japanese. Event highlights with English subtitles will be published thereafter. Stay updated on the √K Contemporary website, Facebook (@rootkcontemporary), Instagram or Twitter (both @rk\_contemporary).

\*\*\*To prevent the spread of COVID-19, visitor capacity will be limited. Please note that reservations will be given on a first come first serve basis. Requests close for times when maximum capacity is reached.

## 【Exhibition Catalog】

Catalogs of exhibited works and an accompanying essay will be available for purchase.

Both, a record and an ode to Hamada's oeuvre, these catalogs illustrate the history of the artist's work and development, from the 1980's to the present alongside writings by the art critic, Ren Fukuzumi. Catalog contains full English translations as well!

Hamada Kiyoshi "Strata of Memory -Light and Shadow-" Exhibition Catalog

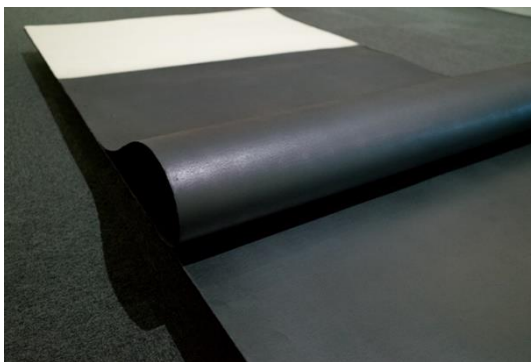
Price: 1,000 yen

Illustrated works: approximately 30 works

## 【Exhibition Highlights】

### i. *Drawing* Re-Examined

While Hamada began his career as a highly acclaimed woodblock print artist, he began to search for new forms of artistic expressions in the 1980s. Introducing his newfound aesthetic, Hamada's *Drawing* series consisted of works on paper, that contained overlapping, single pencil lines that amassed into a completely black surface. Created through a set of repetitive movements, the "surface" of each work emerges with the illuminating glow of graphite.



*Drawing Floor (1)*, 1983, Pencil on paper, 113×260cm



*Drawing 84*, 1984, Pencil on paper, 245 ×112cm

While the series was well-received, since the 1980s, Hamada discontinued his production of large-scale works and, instead, has focused on different systems of production. For this exhibition, the artist has chosen to challenge *Drawing* once again with a new work that exceeds 3m. This exhibition will be a chance to, both, encounter the first major *Drawing* piece the artist has made since the 1980s and see the larger works Hamada produced in the

1980s.

## ii. Light and Shadow in a Monochrome World

A new series of semi-sculptural works will be unveiled at this exhibition. Stepping away from two-dimensional modes of production, these works reflect the artist's continuous endeavor to address and express where he is "now". A work of light and shadow, these works reflect visceral, primordial notions of the self. One of the key works from the exhibition, "2-2-17" (2020), consists of 6 panels that amounts to 3m in width. An entirely black surface of overlapping woodblocks, the formal texture of the work changes the experience of the work completely from the angle of sight. These pure expressions of light and shadow reflect the sensitivity Hamada developed over 80 years of age.



2-2-17, 2020, Paint and woodblocks on plywood, 180 ×273cm

### 【The Artist: Kiyoshi Hamada】

1937: Born in Kochi, Japan

1961: Graduated from Tama Art University

Following art school graduation, Hamada became acquainted with the great avant-garde artists of post-war Japan, such as Yoshishige Saito, and began developing unique abstract forms of aesthetic expressions. He was

awarded an Honorable Mention at the Modern Woodblock Prints Competition of 1977 and, while amassing much acclaim, has been active in various domestic and international exhibitions. In 2015, his solo exhibition, "*The Legacy of Kiyoshi Hamada - Paintings of Layering and Erasing*", was held



at the Nerima Art Museum and his works, in their quiet, but ever-developing aesthetic and production.

Public Collections: The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, The Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, Kraków Museum of Art, Artizon Museum of Art, Tokyo, Nerima Museum of Art, Tokyo, Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery, and more.

### 【About √K Contemporary】

√K Contemporary (*Root K Contemporary*) is an art gallery that exhibits post-war to present-day artists that opened in March 2020. As the sister gallery to Kashima Arts, √K Contemporary gallery was established with the aim to create a place where one can experience art at its fullest and seeks to represent the next generation of vanguard artists.

For the past decade, the advancement of the Japanese art market has been the core ambition of √K Contemporary founders. As respected Japanese calligraphy and antique painting specialists, they have contributed to various projects and exhibitions and continue to actively address the various gaps in the Japanese art market.



√K Contemporary exterior

With this, √K Contemporary was designed to exhibit works in a spacious setting with minimalistic interiors, designed with the intention of liberating general, social and temporal associations. A gallery dedicated to the shared experience of art, √K Contemporary hosts a range of events, as well as exhibitions by modern to contemporary artists from Japan and abroad. The gallery space of √K Contemporary spans from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, with roughly 300sqm of space in between and, located in the heart of Tokyo, is one of the largest galleries in the city.

## 【Introducing the rental space, Space √K】

Space √K is a diverse event space located in the basement of √K Contemporary. Space √K can be rented for the day or more. With roughly 180sqm of space, its minimalist concrete and mortar interior can be repurposed for various activities, exhibitions, photo/video shoots and events.

Learn more about Space √K, visit:

<https://root-k.jp/space-root-k/>



## 【Exhibition Outline】

Exhibition Title: “Strata of Memory - Light and Shadow –“  
(Japanese: “Kioku no Chiso -Hikari to Kage-“)

Artist: Kiyoshi Hamada

Preview: September 18 (Fri), 3pm to 7pm.

Dates: September 19 (Sat) – October 24 (Sat), 2020

\* Depending on the severity of the COVID-19 outbreak, event details are subject to change.

Exhibited Works: Approximately 30 works, from the Drawing series of the 1980s to the present.

Exhibition URL: [https://rootk.jp/en/exhibitions/strata\\_of\\_memory\\_hamada\\_kiyoshi/](https://rootk.jp/en/exhibitions/strata_of_memory_hamada_kiyoshi/)

Venue: √K Contemporary (Root K Contemporary)

Address: 6 Minamicho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo

Tel: +81 (0)3-6280-8808 / Email: [info@root-k.jp](mailto:info@root-k.jp) / URL: [root-k.jp](http://root-k.jp)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/rootkcontemporary/>

Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/rk\\_contemporary/](https://www.instagram.com/rk_contemporary/)

Twitter: [https://twitter.com/rk\\_contemporary](https://twitter.com/rk_contemporary)

## 【Press & Media Contact】

Naoko Watanabe, Aisei Tamura

√K Contemporary (SEI-RIN Co.,Ltd.)

Address: 6 Minamicho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo.

Tel: +81 (0)3-6280-8808 / Email: [pr@sei-rin.com](mailto:pr@sei-rin.com) / URL: [root-k.jp](http://root-k.jp)