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**“PROJECT SERIES 46: HIROKAZU KOSAKA:
ON THE VERANDAH SELECTED WORKS 1969-1974”
PRESENTED BY THE
POMONA COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART**

“Hirokazu Kosaka: On The Verandah Selected Works 1969-1974” will be on view **September 3 through October 20, 2013**, at the Pomona College Museum of Art. The exhibition is the 46th in the Museum’s Project Series and represents the first solo exhibition examining the early performative artwork of Hirokazu Kosaka. The exhibition brings together documentation of the artist’s artworks and rarely-seen films created between 1969 and 1974 and aims to demonstrate the range of innovative experiments in art-making that Kosaka explored during this period.

“Hirokazu Kosaka: On The Verandah” will have a **public reception on Saturday, September 7, 2013, from 5-7 p.m.** On **Thursday, October 17, 2013, at 5:15 p.m.** Kosaka will present **an archery demonstration and calligraphy workshop** during the Pomona College Museum of Art’s Art After Hours event.

Hirokazu Kosaka’s work brings together two of his strongest influences: the avant-garde practices present in the contemporary art of Southern California in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and the Buddhist spiritual ideologies with which he was raised. In 1966, he left Japan to attend Chouinard Art Institute in Los Angeles, where, along with many of his peers, Kosaka became interested in moving off of the canvas to body and performance work. As curator Glenn Phillips notes, “Any single work by Kosaka from this period, considered alone, could be seen as a ‘typical’ example of Southern California conceptualism. Yet when viewed as a whole, one sees a deeper philosophical groundwork emerging from Kosaka’s early work, a set of ideas and concepts (often some of the oldest ideas in Buddhist thought) that he has continued to elaborate in the immensely powerful large-scale performances that have been a hallmark of his practice since 1983, when he initiated a new and collaborative mode of working following years of study to become a Buddhist priest.” Today, Hirokazu Kosaka is a practicing artist, the artistic director of the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center, a master archer and an ordained Shingon Buddhist priest.

Kosaka was familiar at a young age with the Gutai group, a radical art group founded in post-war Japan whose work focused on both Buddhist philosophical concepts as well as experimental art practices that often combined performance, painting and interactive

installations. Kosaka began to consider the “concrete forms” of the Gutai group in relation to the experimental tendencies of his peers (such as Wolfgang Stoechle and Jack Goldstein), the repetition of Minimalism and the processes of Conceptualism, thereby creating performance artworks that attempted to reconcile these avant-garde artistic innovations with spiritual practices such as meditation, pilgrimage and Zen archery.

In his works from 1969 to 1974, Kosaka incorporates Buddhist notions such as that of *kalpa* (the magnitude of eons) or *enso* (the all-encompassing void) in addition to themes of violence, protest, the environment, sacred space, identity and cross-cultural interaction. The title, “On the Verandah,” refers to Kosaka’s conception of in-between spaces such as those between East and West, nature and culture, the physical and the spiritual, and, as Kosaka says, a series of “infinite maybes,” a different way of approaching and observing how one lives in and responds to the world.

Five Hour Run, a performance that took place at Los Angeles’ Mori’s Form Gallery in 1972, connects many of the themes in Kosaka’s early work. Kosaka ran for five hours in the gallery in order to prepare the space for an exhibition by Shozo Shimamoto (an early member of the Gutai group). This performance calls on the Japanese tradition of creating sacred spaces as well as the overarching theme of physical endurance; by running for five hours Kosaka energized and purified the space. *Five Hour Run* is not only a work of physical strength, but also a spiritual and conceptual artwork that transformed the perception of the gallery space.

Another work on view is *Soleares*, which documents Kosaka’s 1,000-mile walk on Shikoku Island off of the coast of Japan. Named after a classical Spanish Flamenco repertoire that Kosaka performed with a razor blade inserted in his index finger the night before his departure, Kosaka’s photos from his journey document his experience and capture the serenity of the island. Because his ordainment as a Buddhist priest took place at the end of this trip, the series of photographs represents his transition into a “man of the cloth.” Moreover, the connection to classical Spanish music references the concept of the Silk Road and reflects on the place of Buddhism in this notion of cross-cultural communication.

The exhibition of Hirokazu Kosaka’s work is the 46th exhibition in the Pomona College Museum of Art’s Project Series and is co-curated by Rebecca McGrew and Glenn Phillips, principal project specialist and consulting curator at the Getty Research Institute. A catalogue accompanies the exhibition and includes an essay by Phillips, an introduction by McGrew, and an annotated chronology of artworks by Shayda Amanat.

About Pomona College Museum of Art

The Project Series, organized by Museum Senior Curator Rebecca McGrew, presents Southern California artists in focused exhibitions. A catalogue accompanies each exhibition. The Project Series is supported in part by the Pasadena Art Alliance.

The Pomona College Museum of Art is located at 330 N. College Avenue, Claremont. The Museum is open to the public free of charge Tuesday through Sunday, from noon to 5 p.m., and Thursday, from noon to 11 p.m. For more information, call (909) 621-8283 or visit the

museum's Website: www.pomona.edu/museum.

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IMAGES AVAILABLE

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