

# PIONEERWORKS



## **PIONEER WORKS ANNOUNCES THE HIROSHIMA PANELS: An Exhibition and Program Series Exploring the Relationships Between Art and Trauma**

**Brooklyn, NY, November 2, 2015** – On the occasion of the 70th Anniversary of the atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Pioneer Works will present a series of exhibitions and programs exploring the discourse between art and trauma. The series begins with the opening of two exhibitions, running November 13 - December 20, 2015: *The Hiroshima Panels*, an exhibition of monumental paintings depicting the bombings and aftermath of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by **Japanese artists Iri and Toshi Maruki**, and *A Body in Fukushima*, a series of photographs depicting post-nuclear disaster Fukushima, collaboratively created by movement artist **Eiko Otake** and photographer **William Johnston**.

Concurrent programs will include: a solo movement performance by **Eiko Otake**; a discussion on the genetic transfer of trauma between Professor of Psychiatry and Neuroscience **Dr. Rachel Yehuda**, Professor of Biological Sciences **Timothy Mousseau**, and **Mitchie Takeuchi**, whose family founded the Hiroshima Red Cross in 1937; a discussion around Peter Galison's film *Containment* as part of Pioneer Works resident **Janna Levin's** program **Scientific Controversies**, and a series of educational forums in partnership with **Youth Arts New York** and **Hibakusha Stories**, featuring testimonies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki survivors.

Pioneer Works thanks Kathleen Sullivan, PhD, and Robert Croonquist of Hibakusha Stories for their support in the organization of the exhibitions and programming.

### **EXHIBITIONS:**

**Main Gallery: *The Hiroshima Panels***  
*November 13 - December 20*

*The Hiroshima Panels*, known colloquially as the *Guernica* of Japan, were painted by husband and wife **Iri Maruki** (1901–1995) and **Toshi Maruki** (1902–2000) over a 32-year period (1950–1982). Iri, a skilled sumi-e ink painter, and Toshi, a figure painter and children's book illustrator, entered Hiroshima three days after the bombing took the lives of 140,000 people, in search of family. The trauma caused by witnessing this

unparalleled magnitude of human suffering had a significant artistic impact on the couple and catalyzed the decades-long creation of the panels.

Keeping with the Japanese *byōbu* tradition, *The Hiroshima Panels* are painted on folding screens made of wood and paper using mostly black ink. Responding to the many facets of devastation caused by the atomic bombs, the artists used powerful flashes of crimson red and sky blue to highlight certain elements of the graphic scenes. Each panel measures 180 cm. x 270 cm. and is divided in eight folds of equal size. Six out of the 15 panels in the series will be on display at **Pioneer Works**: *Ghost* (1950), *Fire* (1950), *Death of American Prisoners of War* (1952), *Petition* (1955), *Floating Lanterns* (1969), and *Crows* (1972). Vacillating between almost photographic realism and non-representational abstraction, the panels complicate, challenge, and deepen common perceptions of the nuclear bombing and its aftermath.

Also on display will be a series of looping films and videos, such as the Academy Award–nominated *Hellfire: A Journey from Hiroshima* (1986), which captures the Marukis in their decades-long collaboration to create *The Hiroshima Panels*.

Produced by **Yoshiko Hayakawa** and curated by **Yukinori Okamura**, this will be the first time *The Hiroshima Panels* have been seen in New York in 45 years.

#### **Project Space: A Body in Fukushima**

*November 13 - December 20*

*A Body in Fukushima*, curated by Pioneer Works Director Gabriel Florenz, is a series of color photographs taken in 2014 in post-triple-disaster Fukushima by **Eiko Otake** (of internationally acclaimed choreography and dance team *Eiko & Koma*) and photographer and historian **William Johnston**.

In 2014, Otake and Johnston followed abandoned train tracks through desolate stations into eerily vacant towns and fields in Fukushima, Japan. Following the 2011 earthquake and tsunami, the explosions of the Daiichi nuclear plants made the area uninhabitable. Sometimes in vulnerable gestures and at other times in a fierce dance, Otake embodies grief, anger and remorse. Johnston's crystalline images capture her with the cries of the Fukushima landscapes. "By placing my body in these places," she says, "I thought of the generations of people who used to live there. I danced so as not to forget." A project of witness, remembrance and empathy, *A Body in Fukushima* grapples with the reality of human failure. As Johnston writes, "By witnessing events and places, we actually change them and ourselves in ways that may not always be apparent but are important."

**The opening receptions for both exhibitions will be held on November 13, from 6–9 p.m.** Following a curatorial walkthrough with Yukinori Okamura at 6pm, exhibiting artist Eiko Otake will present a solo dance performance amongst the artwork.

## **PROGRAMMING**

### *A Solo Dance Performance by Eiko Otake*

November 13, 7:30 p.m.

As part of the exhibitions' opening receptions, artist Eiko Otake will perform *A Body in a Gallery* in honor of the Maruki's work. Otake's body will connect the two separate exhibitions on view: Maruki's *Hiroshima Panels* with Otake and Johnston's *A Body in Fukushima*, both of which engage with human peril in the face of the destructive power of nuclear technology.

### *In Conversation: Genetic and Cultural Transfer of Trauma*

Timothy Mousseau, Dr. Rachel Yehuda, Mitchie Takeuchi

December 1, 7:30 p.m.

**Timothy Mousseau** (Professor of Biological Sciences at the University of South Carolina), **Dr. Rachel Yehuda** (PhD, Professor of Psychiatry and Neuroscience and Director of the Traumatic Stress Studies Division at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine), and **Mitchie Takeuchi**, whose grandfather, Dr. Ken Takeuchi, was the founding president of Hiroshima's Red Cross Hospital from 1937 to 1947, will speak to the genetic and biological transfer of trauma. The evening's discussion will outline findings of each specialist's work and experiences, and consider the expansive social and cultural consequences of such large-scale trauma through the lens of scientific research.

### *Scientific Controversies #7: CONTAINMENT*

Janna Levin, Peter Galison

December 11, 7:30pm

In the recently released film *Containment* (2015), Harvard professor and physicist **Peter Galison** addresses a major consequence of emerging nuclear technology - the implications and viability of containing its waste. Sci Con's host, astrophysicist and author **Janna Levin**, will engage Peter in a discussion that examines the consequences, predictable or unforeseen, of the research and imagination that leads to scientific discovery. As we move forward, how do we insure our safety and that of generations to come? Should we give thought to the containment of such ideas?

### *Youth Arts New York & Hibakusha Stories*

November 17–December 18

**Youth Arts New York**, a United Nations non-governmental organization, provides experiences in the arts and sciences that engage youth in building a peaceful and sustainable future. Its signature initiative, **Hibakusha Stories**, has passed the legacy of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to approximately 30,000 high school students in all five boroughs of New York City, empowering them to build a world free of nuclear weapons. In partnership with **Youth Arts New York/Hibakusha Stories**, **Pioneer Works** will present a series of educational programs for area high school and university students that will include a tour of the exhibitions as well as various activities in arts, science, and civics.

Among the activities, attendees will hear survivor testimonies from **Setsuko Thurlow** and **Yasuaki Yamashita**: Thurlow (Hiroshima) will speak about experiencing the bombing at age 13, and about her personal encounter with the Marukis; **Yasuaki Yamashita** (Nagasaki), a ceramicist and painter, will talk about his experience as a 6-year-old survivor.

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## **ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

### **Iri Maruki**

Iri Maruki was born on June 20, 1901 in a small riverside farming village just upstream from the city of Hiroshima. Throughout the 1920's and 1930's, Iri belonged to a number of avant-garde artists' groups, such as Rekitei and the Bijutsu Bunka Arts Association, where he earned a reputation for his surrealist pieces and his unusual, highly personal approach to ink brush painting. In 1941 he married the Western-style oil painter Akamatsu Toshiko. Hoping to assist any surviving members of Iri's family, the couple traveled to Hiroshima just days after the nuclear bombing, thus becoming first-hand witnesses to the atomic aftermath. In time, Iri and Toshi began collaborating on a series of murals, producing 15 works in this series over the next 30 years. Many of these works feature large-scale landscape elements rendered in Iri's signature style. Iri died peacefully on October 18, 1995 at the age of 94.

### **Toshi Maruki**

Toshi Maruki was born on February 11, 1912 in Chippubetsu, Hokkaido to the family of the head priest of Zenshōji Temple. She studied oil painting at the Women's Arts School (now Joshibi University of Art and Design) and she spent significant time in both Russia and Micronesia. In 1941 she married the ink brush artist Maruki Iri. In the post-war years, she led the co-creation of multiple socially-engaged murals, including The Hiroshima Panels, The Massacre of Nanjing, Auschwitz, and Minamata. Toshi also earned acclaim as an author and illustrator of children's books, including Hiroshima no Pika [about the bombing at Hiroshima] and Tsutsuji no Musume [about the power of desire and longing], both of which continue to be read widely. On January 13, 2000 she died peacefully at the age of 87.

### **Eiko Otak**

Eiko Otake was born and raised in Japan, and has been based in New York since 1976. She created and performed worldwide as part of *Eiko & Koma* since 1972 and as a solo artist since 2014. *Eiko & Koma's* theatrical productions have often been commissioned and presented in BAM's Next Wave Festival and the American Dance Festival. Their living installations were presented in the Whitney Museum, Walker Art Center, Chicago MCA, and MoMA. *Eiko & Koma* were the first collaborative pair to receive a MacArthur Fellowship (1996) and were the first Asian choreographers to receive the Samuel H. Scripps American Festival Award (2004) and the Dance Magazine Award (2006). In 2012, Otake received inaugural Doris Duke Performing Artist Awards. Otake has taught a college course about the Atomic Bombings in Wesleyan University and Colorado College. *A Body in Fukushima* is a part of Otake's larger solo project *A Body in Places*, which will be the focus of four week long Platform (Feb 20- March 20) presented by Danspace Project at St Mark's Church in East Village, New York.

## **William Johnston**

William Johnston is a photographer who works with digital color, 35mm black and white, large-format cameras and platinum prints. He has been collaborating with Otake for her solo project, *A Body in Places*. He received his PhD from Harvard in History and East Asian Languages. Johnston is Professor of History, East Asian Studies, and Science in Society at Wesleyan University. His research has focused on the intersection of public health, cultural values, and economic and political forces.

## **ABOUT PIONEER WORKS**

**Pioneer Works** is a non-profit arts center for research and experimentation in contemporary culture. Through a broad range of exhibitions, performances, arts and science residencies, and educational programs, Pioneer Works seeks to transcend traditional disciplinary boundaries, foster community, and provide a space where alternative modes of thought are supported and activated in tangible ways. The organization was founded in 2012 by artist Dustin Yellin and is located in a 25,000-square-foot manufacturing warehouse in Red Hook, Brooklyn.

## **MEDIA CONTACTS**

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## **PIONEER WORKS**

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[www.pioneerworks.org](http://www.pioneerworks.org)

## **HOURS**

Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday, noon to 6 p.m.

Closed Monday and Tuesday

*Free and open to the public*