

MIGUEL ABREU GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Exhibition: Yuji Agematsu
1995 & 2003

Location: 88 Eldridge Street, New York, NY 10002

Dates: May 1 – June 21, 2019

Reception: Friday, May 3, 6-8 PM

The City – a bounded infinity. A labyrinth where you are never lost
- Kobo Abe

Miguel Abreu Gallery is pleased to announce the opening, on Friday, May 3, of *1995 & 2003*, Yuji Agematsu's second solo exhibition at the gallery. The show will be on view at our 88 Eldridge Street location.

Stone is stone. War is war, says Yuji Agematsu with certainty, bending down suddenly to collect a rhinestone pressed into a piece of chewing gum off the New York sidewalk. For over thirty years, Agematsu has walked the city's streets daily with his attentions acutely turned to the mundane and the overlooked, to the detritus of urban life. What began as a simple gesture of acculturation, immersing himself in the very materials and infrastructure of a foreign city, has developed over decades into a unique form of realism. Instead of an identity cut through by the pervasive contemporary forces of mediation, differentiation, and alienation, Agematsu has discovered a knowledge of the local—of the reciprocity of the particular and the communal—that evinces the vital interconnectivity of person and place through our regular processes of waste and regeneration. In this way, Agematsu's work doesn't encounter change and decay as phenomena in need of suspension, but rather as elements of the delicate permanence of social life, as a poetics of renewal and continuance.

1995 & 2003 traces a near-decade of crucial evolution in Agematsu's practice. Showing the emergence of his widely recognizable *zips*—arrangements of daily sculptures contained in cigarette box cellophane wrappers and displayed in monthly configurations—the current exhibition premieres a year's worth of sculptures derived from walks and presented in bags backed with a steel plate in the artist's typical calendar formation. More taxonomical, the 1995 *ziplocs* operate in a different mode of observation than the subsequent 2003 *zips*, articulating the collected objects with a greater emphasis on their discreteness. Held tightly within the ziploc's plastic sleeve, these almost clinical stagings appear like examination slides or even investigative evidence. They express a peculiar material distance, not so much the ecological selfsame relation of artist and object in Agematsu's more recent work, but more the opaque, even aloof eye of the detective. Not unlike surveying a crime scene, the *ziplocs* offer an eerie access to the unfolding life of the city. As a catalog of chance encounters, they echo the constant lament of the present: *where have I found myself, what has happened here before me?*

Along with two full years of *ziplocs* and *zips*, *1995 & 2003* presents a unique series of freeform notebook and single-sheet drawings. In 2003, due to a tenancy dispute in his midtown apartment building, Agematsu lived for the year rent-free, providing him with an unprecedented amount of time to commit to artmaking. In-between his ritual walks, he produced a diverse range of drawings as a way of documenting the phenomenal impressions of his wandering. Using found objects and patterns in the artist's counted steps as initial coordinates for an abstract spatialization, Agematsu's drawings form an intimate net laid over the city of his mind like a palimpsest of sensory notations. The result is a singular mode of psychic mapmaking otherwise unrepeated within the larger serial nature of his output.

– Michael Cavuto

Yuji Agematsu was born in 1956 in Kanagawa, Japan. He lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Agematsu studied with Tokio Hasegawa, a member of the band Taj Mahal Travellers, and the jazz drummer and choreographer Milford Graves. He has had solo exhibitions at the Power Station, Dallas (2018), Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York (2017), Artspeak, Vancouver (2014), Real Fine Arts, Brooklyn (2012 & 2014), Anthology Film Archives, New York (2004), and TZ'Art & Co., New York (1994). In 2014, Agematsu had a large scale exhibition at Yale Union, Portland, OR, which was accompanied by the monograph ZIP: 01-01-14...12-31-14, published by Yale Union, Thea Westreich Wagner/Ethan Wagner Publications, and Artspeak. Agematsu was included in the 57th Carnegie International, Pittsburgh (2018), and was previously shown in Speak Lokal, Kunsthalle Zurich, Switzerland (2017), Serialities, organized by Olivier Renaud-Clément, Hauser & Wirth, New York (2017), The Keeper, curated by Massimiliano Gioni, New Museum, New York (2016), and Looking Back / The 7th White Columns Annual, selected by Richard Birkett (2013). Agematsu has performed at the Swiss Institute, New York (2018), Artists Space, New York (2017), and as part of the solo presentation Walk on A, B, C, organized by Jay Sanders, Whitney Museum of American Art (2016). Currently, he has solo exhibitions mounted at Lulu, Mexico City, and Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius.