

YURIKO YAMAGUCHI

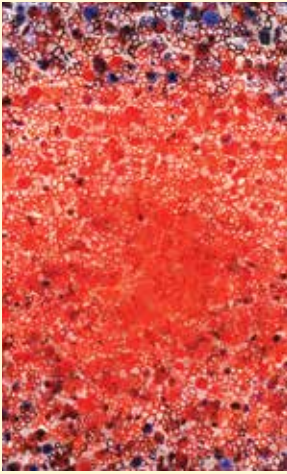
Japanese American, b. 1948

Fire & Water, 2014

Hand cast and pigmented resin, steel wire

Museum Purchase, Friends of Art Acquisition Fund, 2015.14

Fire & Water



Yuriko Yamaguchi (b. 1948) Born in Osaka, Japan, Yuriko Yamaguchi immigrated to the United States with her family in 1971. She graduated with a BA from the University of California, Berkeley in 1975, studied at Princeton University, and finished an MFA at the University of Maryland, College Park in 1979. Yamaguchi has received many honors for her work including the Jentel Artist Residency Award, the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center Artist Residency, the American Academy of Arts and Letters Award, the Joan Mitchell Foundation Award and a National Endowment for the Arts Visual Arts Fellowship. Her art can be found in numerous museum collections, including the Museum of Modern Art (Kamakura and Hayama, Japan), the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the National Museum of Women in the Arts, the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the Figge Art Museum.

A product of its time

As an “ecophilosopher,” Yuriko Yamaguchi seeks to find the “hidden connections between everything,” from nature to technology. She began experimenting with sculpture during her graduate studies in Maryland under Minimalist sculptor and painter Anne Truitt. Yamaguchi credits the work of German-born artist Eva Hesse with her shift into sculpture. Hesse celebrated the process of creation and used pliable materials to create abstract forms. Yamaguchi responded to this style by shying away from rigid materials like stone. She became committed to exploring the possibilities of her medium, stating, “I believe that art is inseparable from scientific, philosophical, social, economic and political realities.” She engages those realities in *Fire & Water*, where she responds to global warming.

Take a closer look

Yamaguchi values the precarious balance between opposite forces and how we exist within this system. In *Fire & Water*, she intentionally mixes underwater life with terrestrial life in an effort to emphasize their connections in nature. Yamaguchi used steel wire with wax and rubber molds of many objects, including pieces of coral reef and seeds that she gathered from the woods near her home. The red and blue resin elements of the artwork seem to glow from within. While the forms resemble bubbles and water, the color takes on a glowing warmth like fire, creating a collision of opposites reminiscent of how polar ice cap melt and global warming cause catastrophic storms and hurricanes.

Did you know?

Yuriko Yamaguchi is a philosopher, constantly exploring the interconnectedness of humans and nature with themes that include growth, change, and vulnerability. Yamaguchi is fascinated by the paradox of how humans struggle with ‘individual free will in a terminally interdependent world.’ She says, “Creative energy, in a way, is like rain that comes down from the sky when the accumulated humidity can no longer remain suspended and drops to the earth.”

On your own

<http://yurikoyamaguchiart.com>

Catalogue (Figge Art Museum) *Yuriko Yamaguchi: Interconnected in Art, Nature, Science and Technology*