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KAY SEKIMACHI: SIMPLE COMPLEXITY **Works from the Forrest L. Merrill Collection**

September 25, 2016 – January 8, 2017

LOS ANGELES — The Craft & Folk Art Museum (CAFAM) presents **Kay Sekimachi: Simple Complexity**, a career survey of pioneering fiber artist Kay Sekimachi. The Bay Area artist is credited with developing groundbreaking techniques in sculptural weaving, as well as using unconventional materials such as nylon monofilament and hornets nests. Curated in collaboration with the artist, the 55 works in the exhibition are drawn from the collection of Forrest L. Merrill, who has been collecting Sekimachi's work for four decades. The exhibition is on view September 25, 2016 through January 8, 2017.

Sekimachi's works are part of a larger movement of fiber arts, which developed in the 1960s as textile artists began using fiber to create sculptural, non-utilitarian forms. Though she learned the foundations of weaving at Berkeley Adult School, her weaving techniques were radically transformed in 1955 after taking courses at the California College of the Arts and Crafts with influential textile artist Trude Guermonprez who had taught at innovative craft-focused institutions such as Black Mountain College and Pond Farm. Guermonprez taught her students the Bauhaus tenets of abstraction, intensive process, and relationship to architecture. The result is that Sekimachi's meticulously constructed sculptural forms contain a minimal aesthetic with sophisticated multi-layered weaves and structures that emphasize the natural, evocative qualities of the materials she uses.

Her renowned monofilament sculptures, such as *Nagare I* (1967), developed from her exploration of multiple-harness, or multi-layer, weaving in which parallel planes intersect and open into three-dimensional forms once off the loom. These monofilament sculptures are widely acknowledged as the first demonstrated use of nylon fishing line in weaving, as it was a relatively new plastic fiber at the time.

Beyond the frame loom, Sekimachi has also used cardweaving to create seamless fiber tubes like the *Marugawa* (1974-78) series. In this process, the long warp threads are threaded through cards, or tablets, that are drilled with holes. Some of her more complex pieces utilize up to 100 cards and 400 warp threads at a time. In the 1980s, she moved into creating vessels and intimate pieces such as woven boxes, books, split-ply twining, and paper structures. Sekimachi often employs dyeing techniques like ikat to color the warp (long) threads in her weavings. This variation in color creates texture and pattern that is integrated into the woven structure.

Sekimachi collaborated with her late husband, woodturner Bob Stocksdale, to create the *Marriage in Form* series. She used his turned wood vessels as a form to shape her own fiber vessels from hornet's nest paper. Sekimachi first applied a base layer of Kozo paper to a wood form and then laminated the hornet's nest paper. Though the fibers appear delicate and ethereal, her laminating technique made them into rigid, three-dimensional forms.

Kay Sekimachi was born in San Francisco, CA to first generation Japanese-American parents. She and her family were interned at Tanforan Assembly Center and then the Topaz War Relocation Center from 1942 to 1944. She attended the California College



Nagare I, 1967, black nylon monofilament, wood beads, plastic tubing; double, quadruple, and tubular weave. Collection of Forrest L. Merrill. Photo: M. Lee Fatherree



Paired Box, c.1990s, orange, blue, and natural linen; double weave pickup. Collection of Forrest L. Merrill. Photo: M. Lee Fatherree



Red Bowl, c. 1990s, special handmade Japanese paper; laminated, Krylon coated. Collection of Forrest L. Merrill. Photo: M. Lee Fatherree

of Arts and Crafts from 1946 to 1949. Sekimachi's works are in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; the Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.; Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris; and the Honolulu Museum of Art Spalding House (formerly The Contemporary Museum, Honolulu). She resides in Berkeley, CA.

An opening reception for *Kay Sekimachi: Simple Complexity* will take place on Saturday, September 24 from 6:00 - 9:00 p.m. The reception is free for CAFAM members and open to the public for a \$12 admission fee.

The exhibition is sponsored in part by an anonymous donor, the Los Angeles County Arts Commission, and the Department of Cultural Affairs, City of Los Angeles.



PROGRAMS

CAFAM will offer exhibition-related workshops and events in conjunction with the exhibition, including CraftLab family workshops on the second Sunday of each month from 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

CATALOGUE

Kay Sekimachi: Simple Complexity is accompanied by an illustrated publication authored by CAFAM Exhibitions Curator Holly Jerger and with an essay by Deborah Valoma, Professor and Chair of the Textiles Program at the California College of the Arts. The publication will be available both in-store and online at CAFAM Shop (www.cafamshop.org).



Left to right: *Marugawa I*, c.1974, black and natural linen; cardwoven seamless tube. *Marugawa IV*, c.1978 orange, blue, and natural linen; cardwoven seamless tube. *Marugawa II*, c.1974, black and natural linen; cardwoven seamless tube. Collection of Forrest L. Merrill. Photo: M. Lee Fatherree

Situated on historic Museum Row since 1973, the **Craft & Folk Art Museum (CAFAM)** is an invaluable contributor to Los Angeles culture, exhibiting current artists with intriguing perspectives and distinctive practices. Exploring the leading edge of craft, art, and design, CAFAM gives audience to diverse makers and artists whose work is often not represented in larger art institutions. The museum is a place to see art and make art — all under one roof. CAFAM coordinates a robust roster of hands-on workshops led by professional artists and makers. The intimate, atypical museum space and independent spirit at CAFAM combine to create an atmosphere of excitement and innovation, where people in Los Angeles deepen their relationships to art, creativity and one another. For more information, visit www.cafam.org

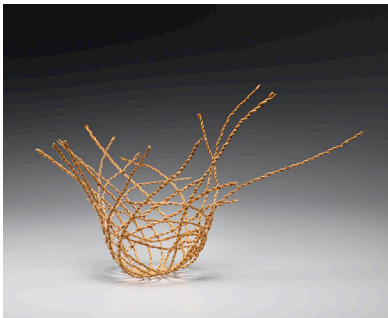
Location: 5814 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90036

Admission: FREE every Sunday

Regularly: \$7 for adults; \$5 for students, teachers, and seniors; free for CAFAM members

Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; Saturday & Sunday, 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.;

closed Mondays. Every first Thursday of the month, extended hours 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.



Untitled Basket, 1976, grass twine; split ply braiding. Collection of Forrest L. Merrill. Photo: M. Lee Fatherree