

## PRESS RELEASE

NORIKO AMBE

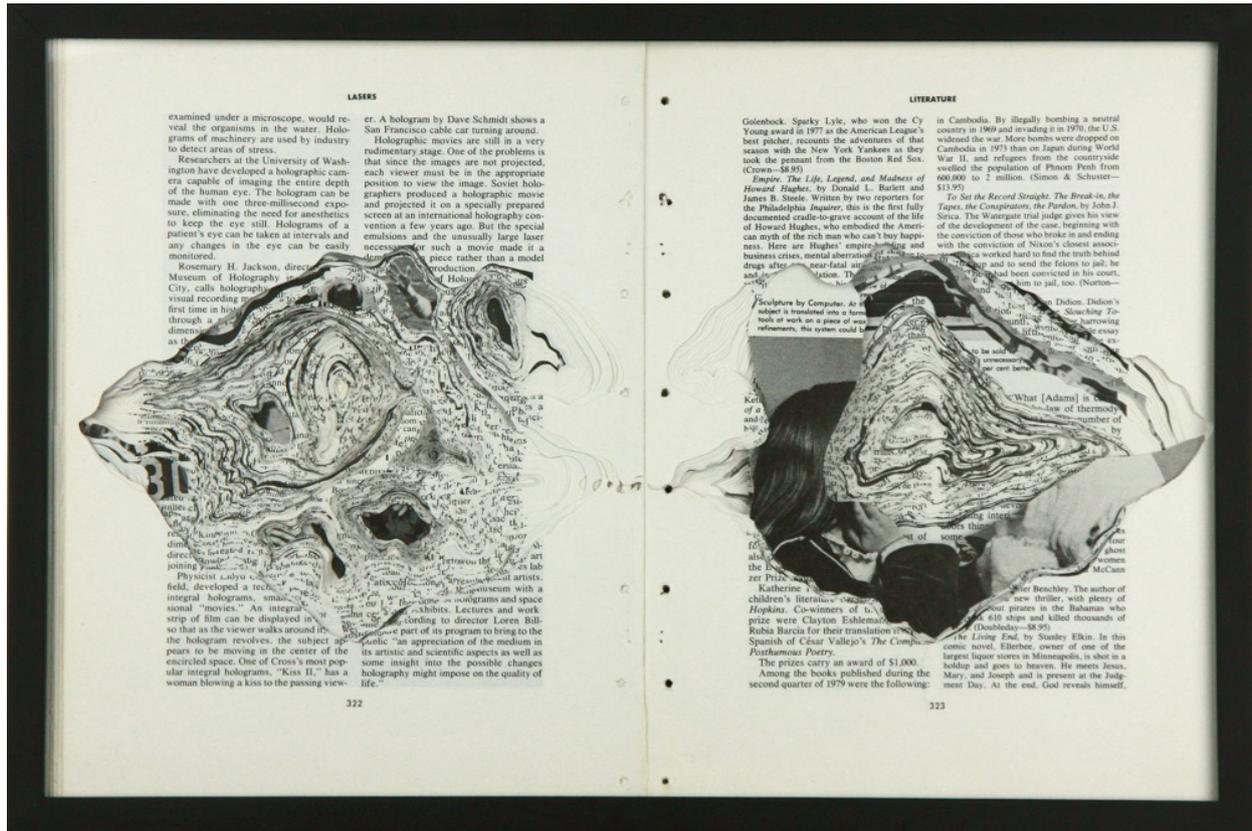
Continuous Cutting Altered Daily

JUNE24–JULY30, 2016

12-7pm

Closed on SUN, MON and National Holidays

Opening Reception: Friday, June 24, 6-8pm



&lt;LASERS-LITERATURE &gt; 2014 Cut on "Encyclopedia of the World Events" ©Noriko Ambe / MAHO KUBOTA GALLERY

MAHO KUBOTA GALLERY is delighted to announce an exhibition of new works by Noriko Ambe.

New coordinate axis for perception is produced by cutting into sheets of unblemished white paper and stacking the sheets together. Mysterious fluctuations in focus are revealed by making deep cuts in an existing book or text. The physicality of Noriko Ambe's manual process, acting as a horizontal axis, combines with a vertical axis spun from her unique narrative to make her paper sculptures very special indeed.

Since setting up a studio in New York in 2004, Noriko Ambe has made America her base, but continues to exhibit in museums and galleries internationally. Her works feature in a number of prominent collections, including the Whitney and MoMA in New York. Ambe is particularly well known for the cutting project that she began in 1999. She creates cutting project works by making precise cuts in individual sheets of paper with a very sharp blade, then stacking hundreds or sometimes thousands of the sheets together, so that thin sheets of paper existing in barely more than two dimensions are transformed into solid works with a gratifying three-dimensional presence.

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Her representative work includes the Flat Globe series, in which she makes careful cuts in crisp, bright-white Yupo paper, stacking the sheets together to create cubic sculptures large enough to need two hands to hold. As hundreds of fragments—each only a thin piece of paper—build up layer after layer, the edges create elegant and beautiful curves that acknowledge each other's presence, resonating with time or generating a series of variations to create a landscape that seems like a part of the earth seen from the sky above. The layers occupy the time axis, and the form produced as the layers build up over time seems to conceal within it signs that something will emerge from this sequence that does not have a narrative. These small solid forms seem to carry an inherent energy. As if giving off light from deep from inside, they assert an alluring presence that quietly enchants their viewers.

Another series that can be considered Ambe's representative work takes as its material books, newspapers, photographs and other media available in our society. The artist takes her knife and cuts into this material. The chosen material may be an art book, or newspapers full of social or environmental context, but when Abe follows the instincts of her hands to cut into it, the power of intuition and rhythm take hold. Nevertheless, the intent of the artist who selected the media retains a definite presence. The harmonies and dissonances produced between these factors connect with changes in the state of the world that surrounds us, or with the history of art, taking in fragments such as individual memories and individual realization or awareness. They join together to become a unified whole, which is then dismantled once more piece by piece. The result of the artist's process has the appearance of a complex landform. The process begins with paper, which is only lightly affected by the pull of gravity, but each object produced by the process represented by this series of operations, and the physicality that they involve, has a definite weight.

"Continuous Cutting Altered Daily" features about a dozen new sculptures that Ambe created in her New York atelier over several intensive months.

In addition to her signature white paper relief works and cubic works, the exhibits include three new works in her book series. With an encyclopedia, she expresses the surprise of coincidence encountered when wandering through the forest of words that cover the pages. Working with a Mapplethorpe collection book, she carefully deals with the issue of censorship that artists face from time to time when using their bodies as media. And with a book of Fazal Sheikh's aerial photography of a desert area in the Middle East, she focuses on the current tension between the Islamic world and the non-Islamic world. In each of these three projects Ambe uses her unique vision and perception as a compass to transform books into visual forms that incorporate eye-popping power of imagination. In presenting this group of works that took a vast amount of time and effort to take shape as the artist addressed these stoic materials, the exhibition takes a leap forward in communicating the artist's resolution and involvement in society.

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Noriko Ambe

Noriko Ambe was born in Saitama, Japan in 1967, gained a BFA in oil painting from Musashino Art University in Tokyo, and now lives and works in New York.

Ambe creates elegantly-flowing elaborate three-dimensional forms that tug at viewers' senses, as can be seen in her cutting project works that involve cutting by hand into thousands of sheets of paper one by one, and stacking them so that the minute graduations of height introduced by each out sheet produce geological strata. In 2011, she became an AICA Award winner when AICA-USA (the US section of the International Association of Art Critics) selected her for second place in the Best Show in a Commercial Gallery Nationally category. She was also a finalist for the Nissan Art Award 2013.

Recent solo exhibitions include "Satellite View" Lora Reynolds Gallery (2015), "Inner Water" Warehouse Gallery, Syracuse University (2012), "キル - Artist Books, and Linear-Actions Cutting Project" The FLAG Art Foundation, 2010. Her works are included in many collections, including those of the Museum of Modern Art, New York and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

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<Man and the Sea>2016 Cut on a book "Man and the Sea" ©Noriko Ambe / MAHO KUBOTA GALLERY