

The Asian Arts & Culture Program at UMass Amherst Fine Arts Center

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WHAT: ABOUT KAZUO OHNO: *Reliving the Master Diva's Masterpieces*
WHEN: Wednesday, October 5
TIME: 7:30 PM
WHERE: Bowker Auditorium

Whiffs of Japanese butoh dance combined with glimpses of performance art create a new wave of Dance Theater in ***About Kazuo Ohno –Reliving the Master Diva's Masterpieces*** by Takao Kawaguchi. The University of Massachusetts Amherst Asian Arts and Culture Program presents this evocative solo performance at Bowker Auditorium on Wednesday, October 5. Tickets are \$25 and youth (seventeen and under) are \$10 and can be purchased online at fineartscenter.com or by calling the Fine Arts Center Box Office at 1-800-999-UMAS or 413-545-2511. The box office is open Monday through Friday from 10:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.

The title of the piece, ***About Kazuo Ohno***, refers to a star of the modern dance world in post-war Japan. Kazuo Ohno was the co-creator of butoh along with Tatsumi Hijikata and performed original dances until his death in 2010 at age 103. In ***About Kazuo Ohno***, Takao Kawaguchi strives to re-create the distinctive, and largely improvisational dances of the Kazuo Ohno. “*It suddenly popped into my head that I wanted to become Kazuo Ohno*” says Kawaguchi. He channels the persona of the legendary Butoh dancer through a series of masterworks including: “Admiring La Argentina” (1977), “My Mother”(1981), and “Dead Sea, Ghost, Wiener waltz” (1985). Ohno’s style was improvisational and unique for its distinctive features of his body and movements. Kawaguchi projects himself into being by “copying” the forms and shapes of the master Ohno’s body thereby reliving the dream. Here copy becomes an original.

Takao Kawaguchi, the creator and principal of *About Kazuo Ohno*, was initiated into the world of performing arts through a student-led Spanish theater group in Tokyo. He began his career as a member of Le Théâtre de la Mandragore Tokyo, a mime-based physical theatre company in 1985. After moving to pre-Olympic Barcelona, he was immersed in cutting-edge European theater and dance. Upon his return to Japan in 1990, Kawaguchi self-taught and formed a small company called ATA Dance before joining Dumb Type in 1996. Kawaguchi was part of the group until 2008.

The turn of the millennium inspired Kawaguchi to go solo and work with modern-punk musicians, artists and wizards of light and sound, including Atsuhiko Itoh (*Diquenoves -- Say You Don't See*, 2003 & 2006), Fuyuki Yamakawa (*D.D.D. -- How Many More Times Will My Heart Beat Before it Stops?*, 2004-07) and Daito Manabe (*TABLEMIND*, 2006 & 2011). Aside from butoh-inspired work, Kawaguchi's latest creation, *Touch of the Other*, is a performance on male sex in public toilets that is based on the sociological research done in the 1960s by U.S. sociologist Laud Humphreys. It was presented at ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives and REDCAT Theater in Los Angeles before premiering in Tokyo in 2016. Kawaguchi was also the director of Tokyo International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival from 1996 -1999.

At UMass, Kawaguchi will present two free outreach events, a talk and a dance workshop besides his performance. "The LGBTQ Scene in Japan: A Conversation with Takao Kawaguchi" will be at the UMass Stonewall Center on Monday October 3 from 7-8 p.m and a dance workshop on Body Sculpting (reservations required) in the Dance Department's Totman studio. There will be an archival film screening of ***Admiring La Argentina featuring Kazuo Ohno*** with introduction by Professor Bruce Baird on Tuesday October 4, in the Dubois Library, 26th floor at 7 p.m. On October 5, ticketholders are invited to a pre-performance talk by Professor Baird at 7:00 p.m. in Bowker Auditorium.

This seven-city tour of Takao Kawaguchi's *About Kazuo Ohno* is produced and organized by Japan Society, New York and supported by The Japan Foundation *Performing Arts JAPAN* Program and the Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan in the fiscal year 2016. Residency support during *About Kazuo Ohno's* North American Tour is provided by Mount Tremper Arts. Special thanks to the Kazuo Ohno Dance Studio.

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