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EXHIBITION: YUTAKA SONE

DATES: September 8 – October 9, 1999

The gallery is pleased to present the work of Japanese artist Yutaka Sone. This will be the artist's first one-person exhibition in the United States. His work has been widely exhibited internationally, most recently in the *Cities on the Move* exhibition, which was shown in the Louisiana Museum, Humbleback; the Hayward Gallery, London; the Vienna Secession; and P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center. Earlier this year his work was also included in the exhibition *Unfinished History* at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis and the Museum for Contemporary Art in Chicago. The Public Art Fund has commissioned Yutaka Sone to create a public sculpture to be installed here in New York.

Yutaka Sone's work defies easy categorization. Not only can it not be reduced to a single medium—Sone's work encompasses sculpture; drawings; performance; and video—it is also difficult to locate culturally. Although Sone has lived his entire life in Japan, primarily Tokyo, his work does not exploit his heritage. Nor does it aim to emulate strategies of western art. Rather it strives to create its own poetic vocabulary not connected to a particular culture, but to culture at large.

Sone has traveled extensively. His experience both of the places and the people he has met, his aim to unearth common ground between extremely diverse groups informs his work. For this exhibition, Sone has created three marble sculptures. They will be set in an impressive artificial jungle. One sculpture refers back to Sone's first trip abroad many years back when he visited Hong Kong. Now he has commissioned craftsmen in China to carve the island out of a large block of white marble, after his own plaster model. The resulting work of art is a study in contradiction. The stark white beauty of the sculpture stands in contrast to the dirty and fast-paced reality of the Asian City. The miniature buildings carved to scale seem to mock Hong Kong's celebrated skyline. Sone's choice of marble, so inextricably connected to the history of western statuary further confuses--until one ponders the final question that this work poses: Is this Hong Kong under British or under Chinese rule?

The other two marble sculptures, which Sone produced for the show, are also deceptively simple at first sight producing layers of meaning over time. A rollercoaster is carved with one of the trams suspended in the middle of the ride at its highest point, ready to plunge. The white roller coaster is like a journey, and Sone likes to think of the perfect moment of the ride. For the other work, Sone has created a miniature patch of first growth forest---a two floor jungle. It started with a simple idea: we live in cramped cities and must think and work vertically rather than horizontally. From there, references and metaphors are endless. It is the city of New York, and it could also remind us of Magritte and Tanguy.

Sone's journey continues in the back gallery with *Green Jungle* a monumental hand made jungle composed of seaweed, wood, sponge and tree branches and *Hello Bat*. In this four-minute video Sone filmed thousands of bats flying out their cave, accompanied by Bossa Nova music. The film is shown from 5 pm to 6 pm, approximately the same time when the bats habitually come out of their cave.

For further information, please contact the gallery at 212-966-9074.