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KENTARO
IKEGAMI

ARTFORUM

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CRITICS' PICKS



Kentaro Ikegami, *XXXII*, 2018,
polyurethane fabric, aluminum pigment
paint, Plexiglas, 48 x 38".

Kentaro Ikegami

IRL INSTITUTE
MIAMI
December 2–March 4

Light is a near-physical thing—a phenomenon, to be sure, but one that can bend in nuclear explosions, camera flashes, and caustic overhead lights. In [Kentaro Ikegami's](#) “WAVES,” there's little of it; white umbrellas cover the brightest bulbs. The show's title refers to physician [Shuntaro Hida's](#) account of the United States' nuclear bombing of Hiroshima—a “black tidal wave” not

of water but of heat, then darkness and dread. Here, sound waves are altered too: Foam-insulated walls render the room a soft, reverent chamber, like a church, where silence feels dense.

Ikegami's “Flash Paintings,” 2016–, are made of aluminum pigment paint on Plexiglas, with fabric—mesh, Lycra, or polyurethane—stretched like skin across them. In the dim light of the gallery, the materials seem to undulate; a camera flash illuminates a dripping, cross-hatched motif painted on the Plexiglas. Ikegami drew the pattern from a photograph taken after the bombing of Hiroshima, in which the design of a woman's kimono is burned into her skin. In *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2003), [Susan Sontag](#) wrote that the power of such images “does not abate . . . because one cannot look at them often.” The nuclear explosion was its own kind of photographic event, where shadows were seared in the ground; the image is repeated here, a bad dream abstracted.

In *Harnessing the Basic Power of the Universe*, 2017, an LCD monitor—its screen turned away from the viewer—projects looped footage of explosions (sourced from *Independence Day* [1996], *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* [1991], and the television series *Dragon Ball Z* [1989–2003]) onto four plates of beam-splitter glass. Two red magnetic dice, stuck to the metal shelving unit on which the monitor hangs, evoke control panels, the apparatus from which bombs are sent hurling. Miasmatic, spitfire explosions are pop culture's most regular fantasy, death its most habitual trope. But there's no didacticism here—only the feeling of light itself, and the tenebrous shadow of its sudden absence.

— [Monica Uszerowicz](#)



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ART LIFESTYLE FASHION DESIGN

whitehall *Presents*

📍 SAN FRANCISCO
ART, AUGUST 30, 2018

The Space Program Launches in San Francisco with “Pleasure Over Matter”

By Pearl Fontaine

Founded by brothers **Jacob** and **Isaac Pritzker** and **Jud Bergeron**, **The Space Program** is an artist residency that recently opened in San Francisco as an effort to combat the

KENTARO IKEGAMI: I have included a work that is the latest in a series I began two years ago.

In its parts, the works are made of sheer/semi-translucent fabric that is stretched over a reflective aluminum painting. I use the fabric not to obscure the painting underneath, but like a painter would use varnish—a unifying surface. Whereas in its whole, the naked eye can perceive the works’ nuances in color and depth, but the camera has much difficulty focusing as it can only read the stretched surface of the fabric.

Since JPEGs and PDFs have become the primary mode of looking at art, I impulsively need my work to exceed the capability of the camera, so the documentation of it will always be ersatz to actually looking at the thing.



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Art in America



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REVIEWS Feb 3, 2015

Takashi Murakami

NEW YORK
at Gagosian

by [Sean Patrick Carney](#)

Last summer, I had the good fortune to see Ryuta Ushiro of the radical Japanese art collective Chim-Pom and collaborator [Kentaro Ikegami](#) give a performative lecture on the history of natural and man-made disasters throughout Japanese history. Their work takes absurd risks with a deviant sense of humor, confronting contemporary social themes with anarchical jubilation. While they employ concepts similar to Murakami's, they make his work look stagnant, safe and tired in comparison. But I find it encouraging that Murakami has apparently been shaken out of his narrow, market-driven brand of commodities dressed up to look rambunctious. Did this result from surviving the earthquake? Or is it a midlife crisis? I would wager it's both. It seems that Murakami is finally willing to engage his role as one of Japan's most visible cultural figures progressively. Let's hope he does just that.