

Media Information: 24 January 2012

BALTIC

ON KAWARA

One Million Years

1 March – 29 April 2012

BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, in partnership with **AV Festival**, present the acclaimed Japanese born and New York based artist **On Kawara's** epic work ***One Million Years*** from **Thursday 1 March to Sunday 29 April**.

Kawara aims to make viewers aware of their place in history and to give the passage of time a kind of materiality. His interest in how society uses dates to grasp time's elusiveness can be seen in the twenty-volume, book project ***One Million Years***. Created in **1969**, the work condenses the timescale of our entire human history to only a few pages and presents the length of an average human life as nothing more than a few lines. This list of dates is divided between two books of multiple volumes: the first book, **Past**, is dedicated to 'all those who have lived and died', and covers the years from **998,031 BC to 1969 AD**. The second book, **Future**, is dedicated to 'the last one', and begins with the year **1993 AD** and ends with the year **1,001,992 AD**.

Embracing the theme of the fourth biennial **AV Festival**, ***As Slow As Possible***, ***One Million Years*** will be recited over a 2 month period as the twenty volumes are read aloud at **BALTIC**. The work is centred around a desk and two chairs in a windowed booth in the middle of an otherwise almost empty gallery. Within the space – participants recruited from the general public - one man and one woman at a time, will take turns to recite progressive dates going one million years into the future or into the past (during gallery hours only).

Kawara's works speak simply and directly about the passage and marking of time. In **1966** he embarked upon his on-going **Today Series** of Date paintings, of which there are now thousands, each one consisting of the date on which it was made, meticulously painted in white on a plain coloured background. Another series of works, begun in **1969**, involved sending postcards and telegrams to friends and acquaintances bearing messages like 'I am still alive'. **Kawara** has produced numerous artist's books, such as ***I Met***, a day-by-day listing of all the people he has ever met. At the root of all these works is the artist's fundamental and on-going concern with the essence of human existence.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Participants required for *One Million Years*

On Kawara's *One Million Years* is the opportunity for the public and arts professionals to participate by reading aloud, from this landmark work. Readings take place continuously in one and a half hour slots, every day, with a total of 480 people reading for the full duration of the exhibition. To book your reading slot in advance email

onemillionyears@avfestival.co.uk

AV Festival 12: As Slow As Possible takes place 1-31 March 2012 across Newcastle, Gateshead, Sunderland and Middlesbrough. Slowness is the theme for the fourth edition of AV Festival. **AV Festival 12: As Slow As Possible** is a biennial Festival in slow motion, with some works running for 31 days, some for fleeting moments only, and others appearing to freeze or extend time. Spanning visual art, music, sound and film, the Festival includes over 20 exhibitions and 80 events. **AV Festival 12: As Slow As Possible** is funded by Arts Council England, BFI, PRS for Music Foundation, Wellcome Trust, Henry Moore Foundation, Sunderland Council and Middlesbrough Council.

avfestival.co.uk

BALTIC is a major international centre for contemporary art situated on the south bank of the River Tyne in Gateshead, England. BALTIC presents a constantly changing, distinctive and ambitious programme of exhibitions and events, and is a world leader in the presentation, commissioning and communication of contemporary visual art. BALTIC has welcomed over 4 million visitors, since opening to the public in July 2002.

GALLERY INFORMATION:

BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art
Gateshead Quays
South Shore Road
Gateshead
NE8 3BA
UK

Admission: FREE

Opening hours:

Monday - Sunday 10.00 - 18.00

Except Tuesdays 10.30 – 18.00

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