

Milford Graves

Fundamental Frequency



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ARTISTS SPACE

Artists Space, in collaboration with Mark Christman and Ars Nova Workshop, presents Milford Graves: *Fundamental Frequency*, a multiform retrospective exhibition and event series dedicated to the life and work of the maverick interdisciplinary artist and percussionist Milford Graves.

An innovative and revolutionary force in radical music making since the mid-1960s, Graves transformed the role of drumming in jazz, introducing a new way of dealing with unmetered time and proclaiming that the drummer was not simply a beat-keeper but rather a dynamic and influential improviser. Instrumental in the Free Jazz movement, Graves is known as a key member of the notable ensemble New York Art Quartet, and worked alongside the likes of Amiri Baraka and Albert Ayler. He is also known for his famed collaboration with pianist Don Pullen and his work with the Japanese avant-garde musicians Toshi Tsuchitori and Kaoru Abe, further underscoring the breadth of his collaborative experiments and influence on music, which extended across the United States to Europe and Japan, among other locations.

A true polymath, Graves transformed his family home in Jamaica, Queens into a laboratory for his varied interests. In his basement, Graves trained and practiced as a cardiac technician to understand the connection between drum rhythms and the heartbeat and its healing properties; he invented a martial art form called “Yara” drawing upon the movements of the praying mantis, and practiced the art form with musicians, students, and community members in his dojo; he was also a skilled botanist and herbalist with a community garden; and for decades, a dedicated and highly influential professor at Bennington College. Exploring cosmic relationships between rhythms and the universe—through movement, music, spiritualism, and the study of human anatomy—Graves embraced an expansive and holistic approach to sound that fundamentally expanded the boundaries of art and performance.

This comprehensive retrospective extends and expands the important work of last year’s Milford Graves: *A Mind-Body Deal* at ICA Philadelphia. Milford Graves: *Fundamental Frequency* includes extensive film and photographic documentation of Graves’ live performances, rare ephemera tracing both his solo appearances and dynamic collaborations, a collection of Graves’ hand-painted album covers and a comprehensive display of his musical output, his highly decorated drum set and percussion instruments, costumes and elements from his home including documentation and material related to Yara and traces of his scientific studies, multimedia sculptures, and both archival recordings and new live performances by his collaborators and acolytes presented at Artists Space and on the exhibition’s website. In its organization, *Fundamental Frequency* will critically trace the holistically interrelated aspects of the artist’s work and his relationships and significant network of collaborators: from Albert Ayler to Min Tanaka to Andrew Cyrille to Giuseppe Logan among others, foregrounding his radical approach to experimental music.

Milford Graves (1941-2021, Jamaica, Queens) was a percussionist, acupuncturist, herbalist, martial artist, programmer, and professor. A pioneer of Free Jazz, Graves was a member of the New York Art Quartet, whose iconic first recording in 1964 featured LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka) reading his poem “Black Dada Nihilismus.” In 1967, he played at John Coltrane’s funeral. A consummate autodidact with a syncretic approach, Graves invented a martial art form called Yara based on the movements of the praying mantis, African ritual dance, and Lindy Hop in 1972. Shortly thereafter, Graves joined the Black Music Division at Bennington College, where he taught for 39 years. In 2000, he was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship and began to study human heart vibrations to better understand music’s healing potential, and in 2015 he received the Doris Duke Foundation Impact Award. He is the subject of a critically acclaimed feature-length documentary, *Milford Graves: Full Mantis* (2018), directed by his former student, Jake Meginsky, with Neil Young. Among his many notable recordings are *In Concert At Yale University* (with Don Pullen, 1966); *Dialogue of the Drums* (with Andrew Cyrille, 1974); *Babi* (1977); *Meditation Among Us* (1977); *Real Deal* (with David Murray, 1992); *Grand Unification* (1998); *Beyond Quantum* (with Anthony Braxton and William Parker, 2008); and *Space/Time Redemption* (with Bill Laswell, 2014).

Statement on Yara

Milford Graves



Photographer unknown, *Yara in the Dojo*, 1992. Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

When somebody's sparring with me, and I see something coming at me—a fist or a foot that's coming, and I know it's gonna break me up... I want that. Because I learn how to mobilize and learn how to adjust to that particular situation, you see. Some people play tennis. Some people deal with golf. I don't feel like I'm getting that kind of confrontation. That thing coming at me—that's a negative aspect, you see. But the positive aspect is when I survive. And as long as I'm living, as long as I'm alive, as long as I'm in this environment, there's certain things that not only my self, but everyone should do to be able to survive. I find that it's very important for me to understand the idea of martial art.

Yara is a Yoruba word that means to be nimble or flexible. Actually it's spontaneous improvised, and it's reacting according to that particular situation. Yara is composed basically of West African dance movement. Warrior movement. A lot of movements that influenced me over the years. And to me it was only natural, just to flow into this type of movement, since it was part of my culture and lifestyle.

And the mantis story... I met guys, man, who was studying in Chinatown. And they had a complaint, man. They were really complaining, man. And their complaint was that if you weren't Chinese, you wouldn't get into the inner core, man. So that started to hit me. I said, "Wow, man." These guys have been studying that for a long time. That they were on the outskirts of things. I said, so I can't depend on anybody that's very protective—culturally or ethnic-wise—of what they do. I said I think I'm gonna have to evaluate this whole situation.

What is martial arts? What's Kung Fu? Where did it come from, man? Well, I started reading books on Chinese martial arts, the history of this art and the history of that art. There was many times, man, when I was reading about this so called grandmaster—he'd be up in the mountains meditating, and he saw this and he saw that. I said, "wow—I could do the same thing, man. I'll just go out in nature 'cause that's where they got it from."

And I remember one guy, he was doing this praying mantis in Chinatown, and he got upset because he approached his teacher, and his teacher said that he wasn't allowed to teach certain things to non-Chinese. And I said, "this is no good." And it was praying mantis. And he came and tried to show me praying mantis. I said, I'm going right to the praying mantis. That's the boss, not some human.

So that's when I looked in the magazines - plant magazines—and I saw a place where I could get these praying mantis from and I ordered them. I said, I'm gonna let them go. And I watched them and all their moves—ha! So I went to the best teacher. I went to the praying mantis himself. And that was better than what any human could teach me, 'cause if you go to another human, he may have a limitation. Maybe he can't move a certain way, right? If he can't move a certain way, then that means I'm not gonna get full mantis. I'm gonna get only a little bit of the mantis. But if I go to see all these different mantises, I'm getting the whole praying mantis, you know. I mean. I'm getting the whole praying mantis, man.

So that's how my stuff came. It came from going right to the source. When human folk want to shut you out, 'cause they don't like the way you look, they don't like the way you talk, or else they're very culturally or ethnically locked into their own set, then I'm gonna say, well, what's the origin of what they do? So I say, wow, it all goes back to this, here. It goes back to hanging out with nature.

—Milford Graves



Photographer Unknown, *Portrait of Milford Graves in his garden*, Jamaica, Queens, c. 1980s. Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves



Photographer Unknown, *Milford Graves' garden, Jamaica, Queens*, c. 1980s. Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Breath-Air: Notes on Fundamental Frequency

Danielle A. Jackson



Yuji Agemastu, *Acupuncture session with Milford Graves*, c. 1990s. Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Basic herbal preparations

Decoctions: are made by boiling the herbal material 10–20 minutes. Boiling should be slow and in a closed vessel. Generally one ounce of the herbal material can be added to one and one half-pint of water and boiled down to one pint.

Infusions (tea): are made by adding the herbal material to boiling water. Remove from fire and let stand for 15 mins. Generally, one ounce of the herbal material is added to one pint of water—also a teaspoonful of the herbal material can be added to a cup of boiling water.¹

A man walks slowly in about six inches of snow in the middle of what seems to be a forest. The trees sway back and forth as the wind blows fervently. The weather looks bone-chilling. Taking long and precise steps, he carries a singlestick or cudgel (like the ones used in martial arts), swinging it from left to right while periodically pausing to enact warrior poses and propulsive gestures. He appears to move with the wind, fully in tune with the element as if detecting its scent or its undulating vibrations.

Eventually he drops the stick and throws his hands up toward the sky in a circular motion, arms shaking with an involuntary tremor-like movement—the right followed by the left. Altering the rhythm and pace of his arm rotations, he kneels, jumps back up, then moves his arms from side to side in clockwise and counterclockwise motions. He breathes heavily, but in a way that feels intentional and composed. His breathing is as heavy and rapid as the wind.

Grabbing tree branches, almost using them as extensions of his own hands, the man moves them in a scissor-like motion. At times, he hides behind nature, then returns, quivering, recalling the immediate and palpable reaction of a body in freezing temperatures. The reality of his actions takes different forms, but what is most acute is the sound—a loud howl, a subtle and measured vocal rhythm of inhaling and exhaling, the buzzing that evokes a fly but ranges over octaves. The sound builds, then falls. The artist slips between different energy forces—a foundational principle of Yara, a martial-arts form that means “nimble” and “flexible” in Yoruba and is comprised of warrior poses, African ritual dance, and the Lindy Hop.²

Artist Milford Graves documents himself performing these expressive actions in the 1990 video *Movements in the Snow*, one of many tapes that record his decades of Yara happenings. An herbalist, acupuncturist, martial artist, and celebrated jazz percussionist who played a great part in ushering in the Free Jazz movement, Graves was both a dedicated student of human anatomy and a master of sound and improvisational forms who manipulated vibrations and frequencies.

In the lower atrium of *Milford Graves: Fundamental Frequency*, a retrospective exhibition looking back at Graves’s holistic and expansive approach to sound as well as his many relationships and networks, the video *Movements in the Snow* is playing. Above the monitor is an herbal chart hand-drawn by the artist—positioned relatively low to the ground such that it forces an intimate interaction with the viewer’s crouching body—detailing instructions for herbal decoctions and infusions that heal or otherwise serve as medicine. It illuminates herbs that assist certain organs, bodily functions, or mineral absorption, for example St. John’s bread or carob for healthy vocal cords; kelp for bone health; dandelion and black root for enhancements to bile flow from the liver; carrot leaves and okra as sources of magnesium, and so on.



Yuji Agemastu, *Yara in the Dojo*, c. 1990s. Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Photographs scattered throughout the galleries by Yuji Agematsu, one of Graves's longtime Yara disciples, document a secret 1980s acupuncture session at Graves's home, again pointing to the act of healing by alternative medicine.³ These can be understood as candid snapshots of the work produced in his laboratory, which he called the Center for Universal Wisdom, where at any given moment he might share knowledge of acupuncture's philosophies or ruminations on other topics—knowledge that he may have acquired from his travels to Japan or unearthed from the pages of books in his wondrous and esoteric library. Graves was a master of community building.

Putting these works in adjacency is a simple curatorial gesture, but one that lays a foundation for broader observations this show tries to illuminate—namely, that Graves's practice always foregrounded the body's internal mechanisms and bodily philosophies, whether via scientific recordings illustrated by EKG printouts; animations and sculptures using engineering software to measure, record, and manipulate heart rhythms; movement forms like Yara that Graves practiced in his home dojo; the act of gardening and eating plants to ingest their cosmic and healing energies (*Eating in the Garden* [1990]); or his exhaustive and intense musical performances with the likes of Albert Ayler, Toshi Tsuchitori, and other experimental jazz musicians who used their physicality and understanding of their instruments to reach the deepest limits of music and sound.

Performing with a colorful drum set—hand-painted in greens, blues, yellows, and reds, and with the bottom drum skins removed to allow for what he called “maximum resonance”—Graves maximized his instrument's potentiality, amplifying it into a kind of percussion choir that echoed the versatility and nimbleness of Yara. It was a host where Latin and African polyrhythms, Indian tabla, and Japanese gong rhythms could coexist. Circular nodes—a reference to the positioning of the cosmos (north, south, east, west horizons) are etched and marked on the top skins, further highlighting Graves's view of his drums as a tool by which to reach the cosmos. A critic once called Graves's drum set “an enlightened communion with wood, metal, and skin.”⁴ In extremely intense moments of playing, it is said that Graves would revert to the basic instincts of his hand drumming days; flinging the sticks away, he would play open handed or create bilateral movements with his elbows.⁵

Indeed, his instrument was more than the drums. It was his body and limbs—a full immersion into the depths and heights of what propulsive spiritual energy could produce. One night while performing with saxophonist Albert Ayler at Slugs' Saloon, a jazz dive in New York's East Village, Graves famously played with such intensity and rigor that fellow musicians in the crowd jokingly remarked that he couldn't possibly maintain that energy for another set. But Graves went on for five nights straight, three sets a night, only finally collapsing when tapping into the deepest level of his internal rhythms had truly exhausted him.⁶ Slugs' attracted a range of people—music enthusiasts, writers, poets, intellectuals, and avant-garde jazz musicians, from Amiri Baraka (a Graves collaborator) to Sun Ra to A. B. Spellman. A kind of existential experiment in human interaction, Slugs' emerged from its owners' (Jerry Schultz and Robert Schoenholt) enthusiasm for spiritual mystic and composer George Ivanovich Gurdjieff. Gurdjieff's teachings identified a “fourth way,” an engagement with mental and physical activities that could bring about a total alteration of consciousness.

It's uncanny how very many musicians like Graves, who had developed their own intellectual philosophies around spirituality, cosmology, and fundamental frequencies, found Slugs' a haven for their creative expressions. But Graves embraced the idea that music extended beyond a single concept of playing or site of musical communion. Years later, he developed what he called *Bäbi* music, a concept rooted in recognizing the drummer as an influential improviser but also “a therapeutic methodology that treats the individual as a whole, including specific organs necessary to maintain a continuous flow of vital energy throughout the mind and body.”⁷ Broken down, *bä* is the drum tone that activates

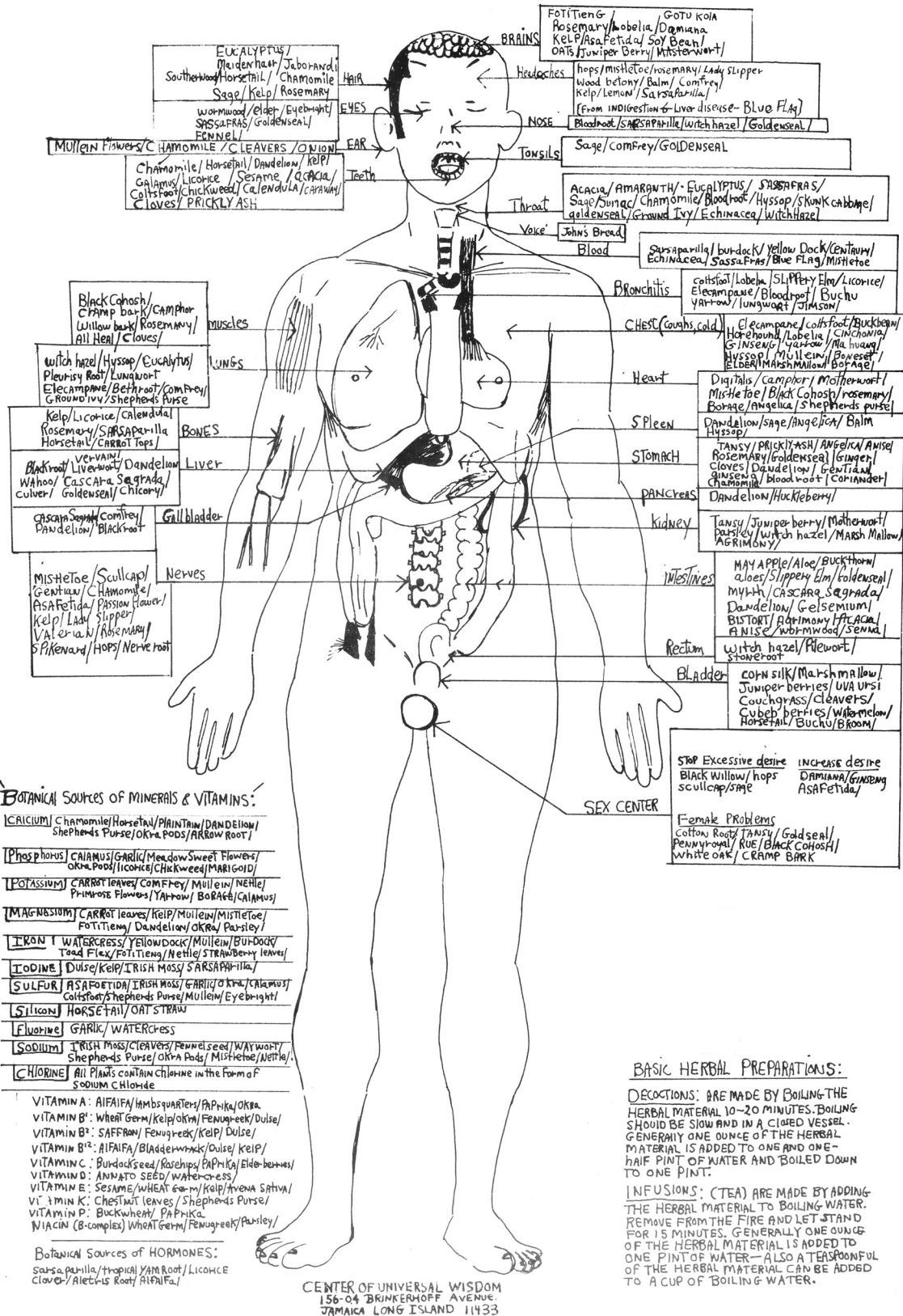
the respiratory energy, and *bi* is the drum tone that activates circulatory energy. According to Graves, the frequencies of Bābi music are in tune with the forces inherent in all living things and responsive to all living stimuli: Earth and cosmos. Graves's philosophies spanned the space of concert, home, and classroom; in the late 1970s while on the faculty at Bennington College, he held a research session and/or class entitled the Institute of Bio Creative Intuitive Development. Students would get their heartbeats recorded and Graves would play Bābi music to bring about an awakening to the music and its healing properties.

Graves's practice was multifaceted, tapping into sound philosophies that extended far beyond the music industry and into everyday life. Acupuncture, herbalism, gardening, polyrhythms, and so much more were all fluid expressions to Graves that blended seamlessly in his persistent search for fundamental frequencies.

Notes

- 1 Milford Graves was a skilled herbalist and dedicated much of his life to seeking a keen understanding of the fundamental and internal rhythms of life and the body. This language comes from a handwritten guide that he gathered as part of what he called the Center for Universal Wisdom, one of many laboratories in the artist's home.
- 2 The Lindy Hop is an African American social dance associated with the culture of swing-era Harlem in the late 1930s and early 1940s. A hot and hip dance, the Lindy is (like Yara) a fusion of many dances, including jazz tap and the Charleston, and was popularized by the singer Josephine Baker. The form is incredibly acrobatic and high energy, with dynamic twists and turns that are improvisational at heart. It combines elements of solo and partnered dance.
- 3 These acupuncture sessions were carried out at a time when the practice was not yet legal in New York City. Graves taught techniques to students with a Japanese physician who was visiting. Some of the attendees were his students from Bennington College. This is one of many happenings that Graves hosted in his home—again part of the laboratory he called the Center for Universal Wisdom, which also was home to his herbal studies.
- 4 Hank Shteamer, "Interview: NYC Percussion Legend Milford Graves," Red Bull Music Academy, June 4, 2015, <https://daily.redbullmusicacademy.com/2015/06/milford-graves-interview>.
- 5 Ben Young, "Call It Art: New York Art Quartet, 1964-65 (Burlington, VT: Triple Point Records, 2012), 45.
- 6 See Milford Graves on Albert Ayler, WKCR audio recording with Mitch Goldman and Andy Rothman, July 13, 1987, <https://www.cc-seas.columbia.edu/wkcr/archives/Jazz%20Archive/artist/Milford%20Graves>.
- 7 Handout for Institute of Biocreative Intuitive Development, 1977, Bennington College, Black Music Division. They called this event an awakening of Bābi music as a concept. On this occasion Graves released his groundbreaking LP *Bābi* through the Institute of Percussive Studies, founded by Graves and Andrew Cyrille. Years earlier, Graves founded the label Self-Reliance Program with pianist Don Pullen. An alternative to mainstream labels, it was intended to protect artists from exploitation and to celebrate the ingenuity and creative energy of musicians without limitations, much as with the Institute of Percussive Studies.
- 8 Unreleased recording of Graves discussing the concept of Bābi music, 1977, courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves.

HERBAL CHART



Beyond Method

Min Tanaka on Milford Graves



Aki Onda, *Milford Graves and Min Tanaka*, 1985. Courtesy of Aki Onda

Milford Graves took his first trip to Japan in 1977 at the invitation of the influential producer and music critic Aquirax Aida. Spending nearly a month there, he teamed up with the musicians Kauro Abe, Toshi Tsuchitori, Takagi Mototeru, and Kondo Toshinori to create the masterpiece album *Meditation Among Us*. Graves' time in Japan was formidable, establishing long-lasting relationships, particularly with fellow-drummer Tsuchitori—the only living musician from this original ensemble. Graves also encountered the radical dance improviser Min Tanaka, who speaks of the “huge shock” of seeing Graves perform a solo concert. The two would go on to collaborate extensively throughout the world. On the occasion of Milford Graves: *Fundamental Frequency*, Danielle A. Jackson and Jay Sanders of Artists Space interviewed Min Tanaka. Special thanks to Rin Ishihara and Satoshi Kondo for facilitating our conversation.

Starting at the beginning, when did you first encounter the work of Milford Graves? And how did you come to meet him and begin collaborating?

I saw Milford play in Tokyo in the mid-1970s. I believe it was his first visit to Japan. It was a huge shock. As I sat almost in the middle of the concert hall, I didn't move a muscle as the entire audience reacted with their bodies. I was later told by Milford that he had noticed that there was one man who was not moving at all. When Milford was interviewed by Kosakusha, a publishing company, I was lucky enough to get a chance to listen in on his interview as I sat in the corner of the room. And then, I got to be the one who escorted him to his next concert venue, which left me with memories of a series of events. In 1978, he came to see me dance at the Clocktower in New York. The following year, we performed together for the first time at the Paul Robeson House in Bennington, Vermont. Needless to say, it was an extraordinary experience. At the beginning of the performance, I vividly remember running on all fours like an animal through the stage-less hall. I was also impressed by Milford's long, passionate talk after the show.

Can you say a bit about the influence Milford's presence and work had in Japan, for musicians there who were exploring the frontiers of Free Jazz, and for the artistic culture more broadly?

Needless to say, Milford has had a great influence not only on Japanese percussionists, but also on people in various fields of expression. There were not a few people who called him “excessive,” but I always felt this was the essence of him as an expressionist, as he would always begin his playing by rousing himself. To begin by being present in the world with the whole body. That clearly is a means that should be the basis for every expressionist. Even today, I believe that methods of expression should continue to be related to existence.

Your infamous trio with Milford and Derek Bailey is one of the most legendary groups in free improvisation history. Can you tell us how the group approached its live performances and what the dynamic was between the three of you?

In performance, Derek Bailey, who came to Japan for the first time after Milford, had a completely different impact on me. The freedom of his sound to play around in time and space gave me the sense of a completely different cultural trait from that of Milford. In 1979, Derek and I formed our first duo at a gallery in London. I was surprised to find that my body was experiencing sound of Derek's presence in an opposite place to me, which was different from the physical sensation of resonance that I experienced with Milford's. What would happen to the dance if the duo's experiences with Milford and Derek overlapped, and their music existed in the same space-time? My curiosity started to grow. I suppose they both must have felt the same too. Derek and I visited Milford's house in Queens, New York. I think it was 1980. At that time, the presence of dance between the two musicians seemed to be a prerequisite for all three of us, whose primary interest was also leaning towards improvisation. The trio's experiment, under the title “Improvisation”

was named “the MMD project” (Min, Milford, Derek). It was myself and my fellow friends who took charge of the production in Japan. Not only did no music professional or promoter support the fusion of the three of us, they didn’t even trust us. Taking place in seven different cities throughout Japan, the MMD project “Improvisation” began in a state of public skepticism. Those who had been dismissive about the possibility of a collaboration between the two musicians and their strong personalities were now witness to their experiment. Needless to say, it was dance that was the catalyst. For me, dance is a symbol of diversity. Dance is an expression of the possibility of the existence of a single body. At every moment, variability ceaselessly seeks to materialize itself as hope under the name of improvisation. The MMD project proved to be a successful experiment as the seats were sold out, and the venues reached maximum capacity at every location. This was in the fall of 1981. The following year after performances in New York and Munich, the MMD project came to an end. It remained incomplete, yet the collaborations between myself and each musician continued, respectively.

Since you have collaborated with so many different musicians, can you say a bit about what was particularly unique and special about Milford’s approach?

What I kept feeling during my collaboration with Milford was the sense of being in touch with the history of the human body=physique. It is not a verbal history, but a history of sensations and emotions left within the body. The invisible images that Milford’s drums, cymbals, and voice kept sending me, in unison, were sensational. It seemed that a sense of what could be called the history of the swarm of life was groaning and screaming in my body.

Milford created a martial arts form called Yara based on the movements of the praying mantis, African dance rituals, and the Lindy Hop, a 1930’s social dance prevalent during the Swing era. Do you see any parallels between Yara and Butoh or your own movement style either aesthetically or spiritually?

In my mind, Butoh is long over. What is recognized as a genre by society is not something that I pursue. Doubts persist about the progressive nature of affirming the present with being indifferent to changes from the past. Dancing was started by humankind long, long ago. This was before the invention of words. The need to dance exists inside each of our bodies. In other words, it starts from things that cannot be seen or shown. The dance does not begin with movement, but rather the movement you can see would emerge because of what you feel in your body. If we continue to pursue only movement, it will eventually end up becoming a new sport in the Olympics. I believe that it is in the pursuit of beauty and movement of the body as a spirit that the unknowability of dance can show its freedom.

As a lifelong practitioner of improvisational and spontaneous movement, can you speak about the importance of improvisation as a form, and within your practice at large? Is improvisation a means to achieve freedom?

I’m not sure what the point is in seeing improvisation as a way of expression. I find pleasure in being aware of improvisation as a way of life. Just as “freedom” is no more than a word. Improvisation is a situation that should always be beyond method. I currently believe that incompleteness is the act that guarantees freedom.

From the outside looking in, there’s much overlap in the way that you and Milford observe and exist within nature. Thinking about the fact that Milford ran a community garden in his neighborhood and lived from vegetables planted in his garden, he believed that eating directly from the plant gave him cosmic energy and promoted healing. We know that you are a farmer. Do you feel that closeness to nature or to the earth has influenced your approach to movement or your way or

being in the world?

Living in a society full of human beings is confining. I have always sought to live my life without forgetting that I am a living being with a consciousness called "I," within a living organism that is a collection of single cells—just like all other living things. I don't know what is written in the DNA of my body, but whatever the history of life is, it must be imprinted on it. I am definitely a living creature, a "1" of the human species that is not special at all. What fun. However, there is only one me. This can be demonstrated by fingerprints and other marks. What about the other living creatures? Plants and insects have more of the same species than humans. Plants, in particular, can be said to hold our lives in their hands. They are monsters. I am currently living in an extremely depopulated mountain village where plants are in a precise cycle of life and death. It's been almost 40 years since I started farming. I used to work with many other young people, but now I work alone. I plow and thin the fields by myself, and am very happy when people eat my crops. For me, the formation of the earth is nothing but a miracle. Humans continue to do terrible things to the earth. They are the only species I can think of who continues to be the ugliest of all living things, even in human relationships. This is easy to understand if you forget your consciousness and focus your mind on a single blade of grass. The universe is visiting every place. Even in a corner of your body.

Works in the Exhibition

Entrance Gallery

Milford Graves, *Yara Training Bag*, c. 1990; Wood, punching bags, hand-painted boxing gloves, springs, samurai sword, rubber balls, acupuncture model, tape, metal fixtures, athletic socks, rope; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Monitors

Milford Graves, *Yara (Warm up)*, c. 1980s; Color video, 3:31 minutes; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Milford Graves, *Yara Video 1*, c. 1980s; Color video, 3:06 minutes; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Milford Graves, *Yara Video 2*, c. 1980s; Color video, 6:50 minutes; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Wall

Yuji Agematsu, *Yara Photographs*, c. 1989; Four black and white photographs; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Monitor on Shelf, left

Milford Graves, *Eating in the Garden*, 1990; Color video, sound, 5:02 minutes; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Main Gallery, left to right

Milford Graves and Don Pullen, *At Yale University* (SRP Records), 1966; Acrylic on LP sleeve; Courtesy of Greg

Wooten

Photographer unknown, *Milford Graves and Don Pullen with handpainted LPs*, c. 1970s; framed by Yuji Agematsu; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Milford Graves and Don Pullen, *At Yale University* (SRP Records), 1966; Acrylic on LP sleeve; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Milford Graves and Don Pullen, *At Yale University* (SRP Records), 1966; Acrylic on LP sleeve; Courtesy of Marty Ehrlich

Milford Graves and Don Pullen, *At Yale University* (SRP Records), 1966; Acrylic on LP sleeve; Courtesy of Björn Thorstensson

Milford Graves and Don Pullen, *At Yale University* (SRP Records), 1966; Acrylic on LP sleeve; Courtesy of Hugh Glover

Milford Graves and Don Pullen, *At Yale University* (SRP Records), 1966; Acrylic on LP sleeve; Courtesy of John Corbett and Terri Kapsalis

Milford Graves and Don Pullen, *At Yale University* (SRP Records), 1966; Acrylic on LP sleeve; Courtesy of Chris Reisman

Milford Graves and Don Pullen, *At Yale University* (SRP Records), 1966; Acrylic on LP sleeve; Courtesy of the Estate of Don Heffington

Milford Graves and Don Pullen, *At Yale University* (SRP Records), 1966; Acrylic on LP sleeve; Courtesy of Bernard Drayton

Milford Graves and Don Pullen, *At Yale University* (SRP Records), 1966; Goldleaf LP sleeve; Courtesy of Clifford Allen

Aki Onda, *Milford Graves and Min Tanaka*, 1985; Two black and white photographs; Courtesy of Aki Onda

Poster for *Min Tanaka and Milford Graves Performance at Le Palace*, c. 1980s; Courtesy of Min Tanaka, Madada Inc.

Lois Graves, *Costume*, 1969; Various fabrics; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Corner Monitor

ETV Japan Special (with Toshi Tsuchitori), 1993; Color video, 44:46 minutes; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

School for Autism Visit (with Min Tanaka), 1988; Color video, 1:51 minutes; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Charlie Steiner, *Milford Graves Solo Performance at the Kai-Momagatake Shrine*, 1988; Color video, 25:32 minutes; Courtesy of Charlie Steiner, Vagabond Video

Vitrine 1

Audio: New York Art Quartet, *Performance at the Museum of Modern Art*, July 15, 1965; Sound recording, 15:42 minutes

Michael Snow, *New York Eye & Ear Control*, 1964; 35mm film container; Courtesy of the Film-Makers' Cooperative

New York Art Quartet, *Mohawk* (fontana), 1965; LP; Courtesy of John Corbett and Terri Kapsalis

New York Art Quartet (ESP Disc), 1965; LP; Courtesy John Corbett and Terri Kapsalis

Photographer unknown, *Albert Ayler and Milford Graves outside of John Coltrane's funeral at St. Peter's Lutheran Church*, New York City, 1967; Black and white photograph; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Booklet from *The ESP Sampler*, 1967; Courtesy of Martin Zimmermann

New York Art Quartet, *Concert at the Museum of Modern Art*, Reel-to-reel box, 1965; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Will Gamble, *Milford Graves & New York Art Quartet at Michael Snow's Loft*, c. 1960s; Four black and white photographs; Courtesy of the Estate of Will Gamble

Sherwin Greenberg, *Ayler Brothers Jazz Concert (featuring Milford Graves) March 9, 1968, Buffalo Arts Festival*, Albright-Knox Gallery Auditorium, 1968; Five color and black and white photographs; Albright-Knox Art Gallery's Archives and Digital Assets Collection

Vitrine 2

East Side Review, January/February 1966; Magazine; Courtesy of Danielle Jackson

Amiri Baraka, *Four Revolutionary Plays*, 1969; Publication; Courtesy of Danielle Jackson

Journal of Black Poetry, Vol. 1 no. 12, 1969; Magazine; Courtesy of Danielle Jackson

Poster for *Sight and Sound*, 1969; Courtesy of the Estate of

Milford Graves

The Cricket: Black Evolution in Music, No. 1, 1968; Magazine; Courtesy of Christopher Funkhouser

The Cricket: Black Evolution in Music, No. 3, 1969; Magazine; Courtesy of Aldon Nielsen

Vitrine 3

Audio: *Milford Graves and Min Tanaka performing at Osaka Namba Technical High School*, November 13, 1981; Sound recording, 42:48 minutes; Courtesy of Min Tanaka, Madada Inc.

Photographer unknown, *Milford Graves performing in Hakushi*, 1998; 24 color photographs; Courtesy of Min Tanaka, Madada Inc.

Photographer unknown, *Milford Graves performing in Hakushi*, 1988; Three black and white photographs; Courtesy of Min Tanaka, Madada Inc.,

improvisation, c. 1981; Publication; Courtesy of Min Tanaka, Madada Inc.

Program from *Festival 82, Munich*, 25 May-6 June, 1982; Courtesy of Min Tanaka, Madada Inc.

Milford Graves, Min Tanaka, and Derek Bailey, *MMD Japan Society Concert*, 1982; Two black and white photographs; Courtesy of Min Tanaka, Madada Inc.

Min Tanaka, *Bodyprint*, 1981; Publication; Courtesy of Min Tanaka, Madada Inc.

Photographer unknown, *Milford Graves, Min Tanaka,*

and Derek Bailey in New York, 1982; Black and white photograph; Courtesy of Min Tanaka, Madada Inc.

Min Tanaka, Milford Graves, Derek Bailey, *MMD Japan Society Concert*, 1982; Program (front and back); Courtesy of the Japan Society

Min Tanaka, Milford Graves, Derek Bailey, *MMD Japan Society Concert*, 1982; Postcard (front and back); Courtesy of the Japan Society

MMD, *improvisation*, Tour poster, 1981; Courtesy of Min Tanaka, Madada Inc.

Vitrine 4

Audio: Milford Graves, *Meditation Among Us*, 1977; Sound recording, 36:05 minutes

Milford Graves, *Meditation Among Us* (Kitty Records), 1977; LP; Courtesy of Clifford Allen

Toshiro Kuwabara, *Meeting Milford Graves with Aquirax Aida & Toshi Tsuchitori*, 1977; Black and white photograph; Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Toshiro Kuwabara, *Kaoru Abe, Toshi Tsuchitori, Milford Graves on Piano*, 1977; Black and white photograph; Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Toshiro Kuwabara, *Milford Graves Recording with Producer Aquirax Aida*, 1977; Black and white photograph; Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Toshiro Kuwabara, *Milford Graves Recording with Aquirax Aida*, 1977; Black and white photograph; Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Toshiro Kuwabara, *Milford Graves Recording*, 1977; Black and white photograph; Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Jazz Magazine, Vol. 1, 1977; Magazine; Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Toshiro Kuwabara, *Milford Graves with Mototeru Tagaki*, 1977; Black and white photograph; Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Toshiro Kuwabara, *Milford Graves with Toshi Tsuchitori*, 1977; Black and white photograph; Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Jazz Magazine, Vol. 2, 1977; Magazine; Courtesy of Yuzo Sakarumoto

Milford Graves, *Revelation for Free*, 1978; Tour flyer; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Masahiro Imai, *Milford Graves and talking drums*, 1977; Black and white photograph; Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Toshiro Kuwabara, *Milford Graves and talking drums*, 1977; Black and white photograph; Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Toshiro Kuwabara, *Milford Graves at Chi practice with Toshi Tsuchitori*, 1977; Black and white photograph; Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Toshiro Kuwabara, *Milford Graves practices martial arts with Toshinori Kondo & Toshi Tsuchitori*, 1977; Black and white photograph; Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Toshiro Kuwabara, *Milford Graves Visiting Japanese Acupuncture*, 1977; Black and white photograph; Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Vitrine 5

Flyer for *Milford Graves & Toshi Tsuchitori Concert*, Tokyo Saison Theater, Japan, 1993; Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Eimei Uchiyama, *Milford Graves with Toshi Tsuchitori in Gujo*, 1993; Black and white photograph; Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Yoshio Ishii, *Milford Graves with Toshi Tsuchitori in Tokyo*, 1993; Black and white photograph; Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Yoshio Ishii, *Milford Graves with Toshi Tsuchitori in Osaka*, 1993; Black and white photograph; Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Lois Graves, *Hat*, 1969; Various fabrics; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Yoshio Ishii, *Milford Graves with Toshi Tsuchitori in Osaka*, 1993; Color photograph; Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Yoshio Ishii, *Milford Graves with Toshi Tsuchitori in Osaka*, 1993; Color photograph; Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Eimei Uchiyama, *Milford Graves Workshop in Gujo*, 1993; Black and white photograph; Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Eimei Uchiyama, *Milford Graves with Toshi Tsuchitori in Gujo*, 1993; Black and white photograph; Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

MUSIC No. 2, 1998; Magazine; Courtesy of Yuzo Sakarumoto

Eimei Uchiyama, *Milford Graves with Toshi Tsuchitori in Gujo*, 1993; Black and white photograph; Courtesy of

Toshi Tsuchitori

Eimei Uchiyama, *Milford Graves in Gujo*, 1993; Black and white photograph; Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Vitrine 6

Milford Graves and Andrew Cyrille, *Dialogue of the Drums*, 1974; LP; Courtesy of John Corbett and Terri Kapsalis

Catalogue for *ISP Records, Catalog No. 2*, c. 1970s; Courtesy of Yuzo Sakarumoto

Coda, 1974; Magazine; Courtesy of Danielle Jackson

Flyer for *Dialogue of the Drums*, 1974; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Milford Graves, *Pieces of Time*, (Soul Note), 1984; LP; Courtesy of John Corbett and Terri Kapsalis

Lona Foote, *Milford Graves and Famadou Don Moye*, c. 1987; Black and white photograph; Courtesy of the Photo Estate of Lona Foote

Lona Foote, *Milford Graves*, c. 1987; Photograph, black and white; Courtesy of the Photo Estate of Lona Foote

Without and Within, 1965; Pamphlet; Courtesy of Nathaniel Otting

Announcement for *Milford Graves and Don Pullen performing at the Afro-Arts Cultural Center*, 1968; Photocopy; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Pullen-Graves Music, *Envelope containing slides*, 1968; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

The Giuseppi Logan Quartet (ESP disk), 1965; LP; Courtesy of Clifford Allen

Giuseppi Logan, *More* (ESP disk), 1966; LP; Courtesy of John Corbett and Terri Kapsalis

Main Gallery (cont'd)

Milford Graves, *Untitled*, 2020; Ink, Sharpie, acrylic paint, collage elements on paper; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Milford Graves, *Untitled*, 2020; Ink, Sharpie, acrylic paint, collage elements on paper; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Milford Graves, *Chair*, c. 1989; Wood, metal, Egyptian figurines, mirror, copper, brass, casters; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Milford Graves, *Untitled*, c. 1980s; Acrylic paint on bark, framed; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Milford Graves, *Hand-painted drums*, c. 1970s; Wood and metal bass drums, toms, snares, acrylic paint, and mixed media; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Milford Graves, *Earth Resonance*, 2020; Tone generator, transducer, painted gong; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Milford Graves Quartet (Hugh Glover, Arthur Williams, and Joe Rigby), *Performance at the Jazz Middelheim Festival*, Antwerp, Belgium, August 15, 1973; Black and white video, 22:39 minutes; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Milford Graves, *Percussion Ensemble* (ESP Disc), 1965; LP; Courtesy of John Corbett and Terri Kapsalis

Milford Graves and Don Pullen, *Nommo* (SRP Records), 1967; LP; Courtesy of John Corbett and Terri Kapsalis

Milford Graves and Don Pullen, *Nommo* (IPS), 1977 (Second edition); LP; Courtesy of John Corbett and Terri Kapsalis

Milford Graves, *Bäbi* (IPS), 1977; LP; Courtesy of John Corbett and Terri Kapsalis

Lona Foote, *The Knitting Factory*, c. 1987; Black and white photograph; Courtesy of the Photo Estate of Lona Foote

Wall Vitrine

The Hilltop, Vol. 1 no. 4, 1977; Magazine; Courtesy of Calvin Reid

Calvin Reid, *Milford Graves at FESTAC*, 1977; Three color and black and white photographs; Courtesy of Calvin Reid

Milford Graves at FESTAC, 1977; Cassette tape; Courtesy of Calvin Reid

Main Gallery (cont'd)

Lois Graves, *Three costumes*, 1969; Various fabrics; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Projection

Milford Graves, *Yara Session*, c. 1988; Color video, 56:27 minutes; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Main Gallery (cont'd)

Milford Graves, *Pathways of Infinite Possibilities: Yara*, 2017; Wood, metal brackets, copper wire, plastic medical figures, artifacts, medical heart specimen, wooden model hand, religious figurine, water element, printed labels, lights, stones, glue, amplifier, speaker, metal brackets, casters; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Milford Graves, *Untitled drawing*, 2020; Ink, Sharpie, acrylic paint, collage elements on paper; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Milford Graves, *Untitled drawing*, 2020; Ink, Sharpie, acrylic paint, collage elements on paper; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Back Gallery, left to right

Yuji Agematsu, *Acupuncture Photographs*, c. 1990; Six black and white photographs; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Monitor

Demonstration of Needling Technique, c. 1980s; Color video, 24:16 minutes; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Vitrine 1

Milford Graves, *EKG Heart Monitoring Print Out* (Tom Calabro), 1978; Ink on continuous paper; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Monitor

Milford Graves, *LabVIEW animation*, c. 2014-2020;

LabVIEW software screen captures, 4:21 minutes; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Corner

Milford Graves, *Cosmos 2*, 2017; Wood, copper netting, hand-painted drum, lights, metal, casters; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Milford Graves, *Cosmos 3*, 2017; Wood, acupuncture head, figurines, artifact, turntable, printed label, metal, glue, casters; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Milford Graves, *Cosmos 4*, 2017; Wood, copper netting and tubing, hand-painted drum, plasma globe, tree branch, model brain, lights, printed label, stones, transducer, amplifier, wires, wooden crate, metal bracket, glue, casters etc.; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Milford Graves, *Cosmos 5*, 2017; Wood, anatomical model, metal figurine, plastic figure, turntable, magnet, copper pipe, outdoor house lamp, transducer, amplifier, printed label, wires, metal, glue, casters; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Center Wall

Milford Graves, *LabVIEW chart*, 2004; Paper collage; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Corner

Milford Graves, *Bikongo-Ifá: Spirit of the Being*, 2020; Wood, tabla, acupuncture model, bata drum, Nkondi figure, George Washington

Carverbust, compass, glass, peanuts, LabVIEW animation, monitors, bells, plasma lamp, globe, eagle figurine, alarm clock, collaged paper printouts, copper wire, paint marker, metal fasteners, casters; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Monitor

Milford Graves, *LabVIEW animation*, c. 2014-2020; LabVIEW software screen captures, 2:53 minutes; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Vitrine 2

Milford Graves, *EKG Heart Monitoring Print Out*, 1978; Ink on continuous printer paper; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Milford Graves, *Bäbi* (IPS), 1977; LP; Courtesy of Clifford Allen

Milford in the Lab, c. 1970s; Black and white photograph; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Flyer for *Institute of Bio Creative Intuitive Development*, 1978; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Photographer unknown, *Milford Graves in the Lab*, c. 1970s; Two black and white photographs; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Corner Monitor

Milford Graves Teaching at Bennington College, 1977; Black and white video, 1:02:41 minutes; Courtesy of Ben Young

Vitrine 3

Milford Graves' stethoscope; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Milford Graves, *EKG Heart Monitoring Print Outs*, 1978; Ink on continuous printer paper; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

George David Geckeler M.D. *Stethoscopic Heart Records Revised - Heart Recordings*, (Columbia Records), 1973; LP; Courtesy of Mark Christman

Milford Graves, *Untitled drawing*, 2020; Ink, Sharpie, acrylic paint, collage elements on paper; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Above

Milford Graves, *Untitled*, 2020; Ink, Sharpie, acrylic paint, collage elements on paper; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Milford Graves, *Untitled*, 2020; Ink, Sharpie, acrylic paint, collage elements on paper; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Center of Gallery

Milford Graves, *Pathways of Infinite Possibilities: Skeleton*, 2017; Human skeleton, steel pipe, wires, stickers, medical ear model, dundun (talking drum), preserved heart, stethoscope, video monitor, transducer, amplifier, wood, metal, printed labels, marker, casters; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Milford Graves, *Collage of Healing Herbs and Bodily Systems*, 1994; Mixed media

collage; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Stair Landing

Milford Graves, *Yara Scrapbook* (compiled by Yuji Agematsu), c. 1989; Color and black and white photographs; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Toshi Tsuchitori, *Yara sign*, 1976; Black and white photograph; Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Toshi Tsuchitori, *Practicing Yara in the dojo*, 1976; Black and white photograph; Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Toshi Tsuchitori, *Milford Graves, Toshi Tsuchitori, and Hugh Glover in the dojo*, 1976; Black and white photograph; Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Toshi Tsuchitori, *Milford Graves at home*, 1976; Black and white photograph; Courtesy of Toshi Tsuchitori

Lower Atrium

Milford Graves, *Herbal Chart*, c. 1980; Ink on paper; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Milford Graves, *Movements in the Snow*, 1990; Color video, 10:28 minutes; Courtesy of the Estate of Milford Graves

Milford Graves: *Fundamental Frequency* is on view at Artists Space from October 8, 2021–January 8, 2022. Lead Support is provided by the Robert D. Bielecki Foundation. Core Support is provided by Corbett vs. Dempsey, Martin & Rebecca Eisenberg, and Joe & Nancy Walker.

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