

Foreword

March 2004

Jonathan Watkins, Director Ikon Gallery

This is Noguchi Rika's first solo exhibition in the UK. It consists of a selection of work that augments her representation in *Facts of Life*, a group exhibition of contemporary Japanese art at the Hayward Gallery, London in 2001. This included a number of photographs from her *New Land* and *A Prime Series*, poignant images of the way humanity touches the world.

In the selection for this exhibition, shared between the Hara Museum and Ikon Gallery, we have a much wider range of imagery, diverse yet consistent with Noguchi's fundamental aesthetic proposition, earlier series as well as some of her most recent works. It exemplifies at once the artist's strength of purpose and her adventurousness. She invites us to witness with her, for example, islands being formed off the coast of Holland, a rocket launch site "sleeping," people aspiring to the conditions of birds and fish, people at once on the ground and in the clouds, and a city under the sea. All normally strange, and strangely normal, this is actually everyday life on planet earth. And this has been the artist's message all along.

About the *World below Zero* literally is the central feature of Ikon's exhibition. It depicts not only a Chinese swimming team, but also the artist's interaction with individual subjects. As such it is an anthology for the various collaborative relationships which have made this exhibition such an exciting adventure in its own right. Firstly, thanks to the Hara Museum, especially Toshio Hara, Atsuo Yasuda and Yoko Nakamura for their initiative, imagination, and professionalism, to The Japan Foundation for their faith and invaluable support, D'Amelio Terras and Gallery Koyanagi for their spontaneity and action beyond the call of duty. Above all thanks to the artist for communicating wonderful things.