



I use numbers and technology because they are a world language. They can be a basis for discussion and thinking.

TATSUO MIYAJIMA

Tatsuo Miyajima

Time in Blue No. 29, 1996

Sixty-one blue LED counters and IC electric wire on black wooden panel

175 1/2 x 89 x 3 7/8 inches

Collection of the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth,

Museum purchase

Acquired in 1998

Tatsuo Miyajima's *Time in Blue No. 29* presents the viewer with a field of scattered blue LED counters, all counting from one to nine in slow, regular rhythms. The LED counter shows up in much of Miyajima's work, and he uses it to explore ideas of time. The subject of time is so common and ever-present that its exact definition can be hard to pin down. We know what time looks like – a clock, a wristwatch, dates, or old photos – but none of these things accurately tell us what time is. Miyajima is also interested in the relationship of time to religion and spirituality. Miyajima, a Buddhist, has called Buddhism "a religion about time." For instance, Buddhism maintains a belief of reincarnation and also the belief that the idea of "nothing" does not exist and that there is no death. In Miyajima's counters, the number "0" never appears, because one cannot represent something that does not exist. Instead, the counter goes blank before beginning its cycle of flashing numbers again, an endless cycle of death and rebirth. In much of Miyajima's work, the counters are cycling at different speeds. *Time in Blue No. 29* suggests a series of individual rhythms of time, all living within the same vast universe. Perhaps the piece suggests that there is no absolute definition of time. With his notions of time, death, rebirth, and rhythm, Miyajima explores some of the questions that have fascinated people for centuries. The artist has said about his work, "It is not about creating a beautiful image or system; it is more about creating an inner spiritual quality in the world. My idea of the future is not a pictorial image but a spiritual concept."