

On Kawara

One Million Years: Past & Future

May 16, 2026, 12-6pm

May 17, 2026, 12-6pm

Foreign & Domestic, 24 Rutgers Street, New York, 10002

Foreign & Domestic is delighted to announce a new live reading of ***One Million Years: Past & Future*** by **On Kawara**.

This marks the first presentation in New York of the epochal participatory performance since On Kawara's retrospective exhibition at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in 2015.

One Million Years began as a group of twenty-four works, twelve spanning past millennia and twelve spanning the future. Respectively titled *One Million Years: Past* and *One Million Years: Future*, each work comprises ten binders containing, in total, two thousand pages of text. Years are allocated five hundred per page, in ten columns and fifty rows. To create *One Million Years*, Kawara devised a cut-and-paste method in which columns of single digits could be glued to grids of numbers that had already been typed. A page listing dates from 2001 to 2500 AD could readily be adapted to make one listing the years 2501 to 3000 AD, and so on. Final sheets were photocopied to conceal glued areas, then fit in transparent plastic sleeves and bound in individually boxed volumes. The years represented vary from work to work. The *Past* works were created in 1970 and 1971, and their lists end with the year prior to which they were assembled; the *Future* works, produced between 1980 and 1998, begin with the year after they were made. The ten years from 1971 to 1980 are not represented in either body of work.

In 1993, Kawara expanded *One Million Years* to encompass live and recorded readings, which allows the project to be both preserved and perpetuated through public recitation. Since then, *One Million Years* has been the subject of numerous other live readings and recordings around the world. All readings follow the same format, developed by the artist: readers appear in pairs, one male-identifying reader, who reads odd-number dates, and one female-identifying reader, who reads the even numbers (gender non-conforming readers may choose which set of dates they wish to read). Dates are read from both *One Million Years: Past* and *One Million Years: Future* and are always recited in English. Each new session begins where the previous one ended—counting slowly from the past to the present, or from the present into the future—to continue until the contents of all ten volumes of both works have been read aloud.

The first reading of *One Million Years* took place in 1993 during Kawara's yearlong solo exhibition "One Thousand Days One Million Years" at Dia Center for the Arts in New York. Forty-six live readings of *One Million Years: Past & Future* have since been conducted in thirty-one cities around the world, notably for the 100-day duration of Documenta 11 (2002), a continuous reading for seven days and seven nights in London's Trafalgar Square (2004), 83 days in the Oratorio di San Ludovico, Venice Biennale (2017), and most recently at Bourse de Commerce, Paris (2025).

This iteration of ***One Million Years: Past & Future*** is staged within **May 4, 2026**, an exhibition whose title changes daily to reflect the date, with work by **José Castillo-Pazos, Eloise Hess** and **On Kawara**.

The exhibition includes two telegrams sent by On Kawara to Dr. Zdenek Felix, on December 1, 1972 and January 26, 1981, that read "I am still alive".

Conceived in the same year - 1969 - *One Million Years* and *I Am Still Alive* are in productive tension, opposing the immediate and idiosyncratic "I am still alive" with the unfathomable number of dead and unborn. The span of a human life is read out in minutes, recorded history in a few pages.

Kawara dedicated *One Million Years: Past* to "all those who have lived and died" and *One Million Years: Future* to "the last one."

The performance of *One Million Years* takes place during the last days of the exhibition, on (and in) **May 16, 2026** and **May 17, 2026**, between 12 noon and 6pm.

For further information, and to volunteer as a reader, please contact info@foreigndomestic.io

May 4, 2026 is conceived and organized by Selena Parnon and Megan Yuan. [[exhibition documentation](#)]

On Kawara was alive for 29,771 days (December 24, 1932 - June 27, 2014).

Foreign & Domestic is a gallery located on the Lower East Side, opened by Alexander Meurice on July 14, 2022.

We express our sincere gratitude for the support of the One Million Years Foundation.