



HOCA FOUNDATION PROUDLY PRESENTS

***UP CLOSE: EROTICISM IN THE WORKS OF EIKOH HOSOE, DAIDO MORIYAMA
AND NOBUYOSHI ARAKI***



Eikoh Hosoe, *Ordeal by Roses #32*, 1961 / ca. 1970
© Eikoh Hosoe / Courtesy of Taka Ishii Gallery

HONG KONG. – The Hong Kong Contemporary Art Foundation [HOCA] is proud to present an exhibition of Japanese photography, *Up Close: Eroticism in the works of Eikoh Hosoe, Daido Moriyama and Nobuyoshi Araki*. The exhibition will present erotic artworks in the oeuvre of the three celebrated masters, exploring sexual experience as a metaphor for life. *Up Close* will be open to the public from 16 - 25 October at The Space, with a parallel programme of daily documentary screenings relating to the Japanese avant-garde.

Contemporary Japan has a complex and layered relationship with sex. There exists a dichotomy whereby a thriving, often fetishistic erotic sub-culture forms part of the mundane, alongside strict obscenity laws and common sexual repression. In visual culture, the relationship between sex and art extends historically to the 17th century. *Shunga*, which translates literally into 'spring pictures' has had a profound influence on contemporary art. The loose aesthetic and erotic themes embraced by the exhibited artists denote an evolution of *shunga* in the wake of an alienated post-war society. The explicit exploration of *Eros* (life/sex) in a zeitgeist characterized by emptiness and collective trauma provides the conceptual framework for the exhibition. *Up Close* explores Japanese photography's shift from social documentary towards a medium for contemporary experience.

One of the forefathers of avant-garde contemporary photography, and a founding member of the independent photographic agency *VIVO*, Eikoh Hosoe led the medium away from documentary towards a surreal and expressionistic aesthetic. For over 50 years, Hosoe's work has explored the corporeal to express desire, capturing gritty photographs in high contrast, to emphasize the drama of individual experience. Hosoe turned the gaze away from the trauma of war towards a universal human experience of love and sex, with photographs framed up-close, and the human body abstracted into an ambiguous narrative that bears an underlying

sexual tension. His series were innovative in Japanese art where no tradition of the nude in abstract form existed.

Daido Moriyama, an assistant of Hosoe and an avid photographer, began by presenting his famous snapshots in various photography magazines since 1964. He later published work in *Provoke Magazine*, a historically important experimental publication founded in 1968. Moriyama's expressive 'are, bure, boke (rough, blurred and out-of-focus)' aesthetic broke the conventions of traditional documentary photography, tending towards the highly textured and dramatically contrasted images depicting the fragmentary nature of Japan's modern realities. From portraits of actors and nightclub performers, to his fish-netted legs shot close-up in the *Tights* series, his abstracted images focus on the erotic subtext consuming Tokyo. Moriyama challenged image making techniques; his practice is to capture quick snapshots without looking through the camera's viewfinder, a distinctive feature of his work. The resulting images are experiments with light, shade and composition including a formal element of chance.

Lacking in the subtle eroticism of Moriyama, contemporary Nobuyoshi Araki's work is exemplified by up-close, personal snapshots of naked women gazing emptily into the camera. Throughout his life, Araki has been consumed by *Eros* (life/sex) and *Thanatos* (death). Following the passing of his mother and then his wife, Araki's practice shifted towards a more explicitly *Eros* subject matter, capturing fragments of his life exploring the sex clubs of the Shinjuku area nightly between 1983 and 1985. His later work focuses on the Japanese act of *kinbaku* (the beauty of tight binding). The printed photographs are often painted over with black ink, covering the woman's exposed genitals as a unique method to navigating Japan's obscenity laws, which forbade the display of pubic hair in images. His recent *Hana Kinbaku* photographs from 2008 juxtaposes women tied up with sensual flowers in bloom, drawing the parallel of sex as life and linking to the concept of *Thanatos* with the element of danger added into the sexual act. Araki questions the veracity of the image by playing with reality, a sexual act that can be seen as performative and the camera as part of the performance.

Hosoe, Moriyama and Araki continue to be influential today, having established the direction of photography from the beginning of the 1960s by rejecting classical photojournalism and linear narratives, instead embracing the medium for individual expression. Japan's photography scene had no fixed ideology or style during this period, rather these artists questioned the role of the photograph itself. *Up Close* presents their groundbreaking work to take the audience through a universal experience, encouraging viewers to embrace the beauty of life and the natural instinct free from contemporary pressures.

HOCA Foundation - Up Close: Eroticism in the works of Eikoh Hosoe, Daido Moriyama and Nobuyoshi Araki

Media preview 15 October, 18:00 - 19:00

Exhibition Dates: 16 – 25 October 2015

Opening Times: Daily from 11:00 – 20:00

Location: The Space, 210 Hollywood Road, Sheung Wan, Hong Kong

Daily Documentary Screenings:

October 16 - 20 at 6:30PM: *Arakimentari* (75 min) Not Suitable for Children under 18

October 21 - 25 at 6:30PM: *Daido Moriyama: Stray Dog of Tokyo* (84 min)

“Up Close” catalogue will be available for sale along with 30 signed Polaroid photographs by Nobuyoshi Araki and a silkscreen print (edition of 50) by Daido Moriyama. All proceeds will go towards HOCA Foundation's future exhibitions.

Opening reception (By invitation only)

15 October 19:00 - 21:00 sponsored by PRIVATE





Daido Moriyama, *How to Create a Beautiful Picture 5: A Journey to a Corner Tobacco Shop*, 1987
©1987rney to a Corner Tobacco Shop5: A Journey to



Nobuyoshi Araki, *Marvellous Tales of Black Ink*, 1994
© Nobuyoshi Araki / Courtesy of Taka Ishii Gallery

MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

CdD.

Stephanie Poon: stephanie@cdd.com.hk | 6209 7957

Carmen Yam: carmen@cdd.com.hk | 9709 5377

Curator of HOCA Foundation, Lauren Every-Wortman and Director of Development Pauline Foesselare available for interviews by request.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

[About Hong Kong Contemporary Art Foundation \[HOCA\]](#)

The HOCA Foundation is a non-profit **organization** established in 2014, aimed at promoting

public awareness and developing access to contemporary art in Hong Kong. With a curated series of programmes across the city, HOCA will focus its attention on the younger generation of established international artists who are conceptually engaged with contemporary life and society. In tandem with the Foundation, the HOCA collection will also be developed and currently includes works by Banksy, JR, KAWS, James Turrell, Lee Ufan, Takashi Murakami and Yoshitomo Nara among others. The collection strategy draws inspiration from popular culture, reappropriating or reinterpreting a wide range of medium from animation, illustration, graffiti and graphic design, and seeks to enhance the dialogue of "high art" within the city.

In 2015, the HOCA Foundation has already hosted landmark exhibitions of JR and Invader to critical acclaim, as well as a parallel education programme, all accessible to the public. To further HOCA's community outreach, the Foundation will oversee the publication of contemporary art books and the subsequent donation of these to schools, libraries and charitable institutions.