



Taka Ishii Gallery

Photography / Film

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Ayaka Yamamoto

“We are Made of Grass, Soil, and Trees”

Dates: Aug 25 – Sep 29, 2018

Location: Taka Ishii Gallery Photography / Film

Opening reception: Saturday, Aug 25, 18:00 – 20:00

Taka Ishii Gallery Photography / Film is pleased to present “We are Made of Grass, Soil, and Trees,” a solo exhibition of works by Ayaka Yamamoto, from August 25 to September 29. This will be Yamamoto’s second solo show with Taka Ishii Gallery and it will feature 14 works shot in various parts of Eastern Europe between 2014 and 2017.

- *I thought that if I was going to create humans from various earthly materials, I'd like to make them out of grass, soil, and trees.*
- *The noun 'nature' means both natural scenery and inherent character.
I am always left standing and stilled by big questions such as, 'What is human existence?' and, 'What is my inherent character?'
I would like to examine the inherent character that exists in an unmarked state, prior to being named.*

Ayaka Yamamoto, June 2018

Yamamoto’s photographic practice involves traveling to and staying in foreign countries, where she has difficulty communicating verbally, and shooting young women whom she meets there. Having her subjects wear clothes the artist procures locally, Yamamoto produces portraits by communicating physically through gesticulations and pre-linguistic sounds. The resulting images betray their subjects in usually hidden unconscious states, stripped of the clothes they ordinarily wear and their personal image, which constitute their identities.

The title of this exhibition “We are Made of Grass, Soil, and Trees” was inspired by an Ainu myth that Yamamoto read. At the locales that she shot her photographs, people still live in proximity to nature. Yamamoto has said that she wants, “To extract the receptivity and beliefs of pre-linguistic people in the present.” This desire forms the core of her practice, in which she interacts with her subjects without relying on language or knowledge, and by trusting the potential of physical sensibility.

Repeatedly confronting and communing with her subjects, Yamamoto began to feel that her subjects mirrored her. In this series, her interests have shifted to address the actions that more deeply connect her to the subjects that stand in front of her. To make these images, Yamamoto asked her subjects about the meanings of their names and dreams they had to gain insight into their inherent character. Her gaze, meanwhile, seems to want to identify the links between the essential existence of her subjects that are revealed as a receptacle under their removed masks, and the various elements that are accumulated in that receptacle to form the masks.

Ayaka Yamamoto’s new book *We are Made of Grass, Soil, and Trees* will also be published concurrently with the exhibition.

【Publication details】

Ayaka Yamamoto “We are Made of Grass, Soil, and Trees”

Published by T&M Projects (2018)

Retail price: ¥6,500- (tax excl.)

Total 72 pages, H28.8 x W26 cm

Text by Michiko Kasahara (English and Japanese)

Presale copies available at the exhibition (General sales will start in September)

Ayaka Yamamoto was born in 1983 in Kobe, Japan. She graduated Kyoto Seika University in 2006. She began studying painting in college, but she gradually moved towards performance and video art, both of which she produced using her body. In 2004, while studying abroad in San Francisco, she started taking photographs. In the middle of a situation in which communication through words was difficult, photography took on a value beyond its essential nature, serving as a point of contact with many other people. Since then, Yamamoto has continued to take extremely fascinating portraits which generate an unusual atmosphere. Yamamoto describes the settings of these portraits in the following way: "I choose to photograph places that I cannot imagine, even from the images that have accumulated under my eyelids, and where the languages and things I already know have no value." In 2009, she traveled to Finland and Estonia, and later went to Estonia (2010), Latvia (2011, 2012, 2014), France (2012, 2013), Russia (2014), Ukraine (2015), Bulgaria (2016) and Romania (2017) to realize her works. Her works are included in the collection of Kiyosato Museum of Photographic Arts (Yamanashi, Japan) and Villa Pérochon Centre d'Art Contemporain Photographique (Niort, France).

For further information please contact:

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Gallery hours: 11:00-19:00 Closed on Sun, Mon and National holidays



Ayaka Yamamoto
"Untitled #175", 2016
C-print
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Ayaka Yamamoto
"Untitled #137", 2014
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