



Taka Ishii Gallery

Photography / Film

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Kazumi Kurigami “April”

Dates: Jun 20 – Jul 25, 2020

Location: Taka Ishii Gallery Photography / Film

The exhibition will open on Jun 20th in following with the Tokyo Metropolitan Government lifting its business suspension request. The gallery will implement necessary measures to prevent coronavirus infections.

Taka Ishii Gallery Photography / Film is pleased to present “April,” an exhibition of works by Kazumi Kurigami from Jun 20 to Jul 25, 2020. This exhibition is held in conjunction with the release of his eponymous publication featuring a series of photographs of the 20th century photography giant Robert Frank (1924-2019). Introduced on this occasion are a selection of 22 works taken between 1992 and 1994, spanning from the encounter of these two photographers, to their travels in Furano, Hokkaido.

For over half a century since commencing his photographic practice in 1960, Kurigami has served as a leading figure in the world of advertising through his sharp visual expressions that are symbolic of the times. For Kurigami, who from the early stages of his career has proposed his own concepts for image making, both the processes and results of his work are not limited to the genre of advertising, but can be prescribed to field of “photography” in the larger sense. The various series of works that capture subjects Kurigami had instinctively been drawn to, reflect his unique aesthetic as well as views on life and death.

Portraits that impressively capture not only the famous figures but also the atmosphere of the times, is indeed an important part of Kurigami’s oeuvre. Among such works, the special edition of *SWITCH* magazine (1992) with its cover featuring Kurigami’s photograph of Robert Frank gazing directly towards the camera, had received significant acclaim and response from readers. Kurigami came face to face with the great photographer, and filled with feelings of aspiration, respect and awe, shot the photographs during his visits to Frank’s studio in New York and villa in Nova Scotia. As Kurigami himself stated, “(...) when I stood in front of him, I found that his gentle and earnest gaze that had once looked into the depths of American life, was deeply directed towards Robert Frank himself,” filming had eventually shifted from a session filled with a thrilling sense of excitement like a game of exchanging souls to a delicate dialogue of tracing one another’s spiritual world. After his father passed away, Kurigami invited Frank to travel to his hometown of Furano, and in April 1994 they visited Hokkaido together. Kurigami until then had pushed forward while seeking to break away from the landscapes of his hometown engraved upon his body. Nevertheless, he came to embrace the endless flow of time of life and death, pressing the shutter as he gave into his senses. The course of this journey is recorded in his publication *NORTHERN* (2002). Thereafter, Kurigami continued to frequently visit Hokkaido.

We boarded a train from Shari Station, and traveled to Abashiri. A female student was napping in a vacant car. She was floating through a dream.

The drift ice continued for what seemed like an eternity. The frozen sea, which glowed like moonlit snow, would suddenly turn dark at times. The train wove its way in and out of tunnels cut through the jagged coastline. Day and night switched in an instant and there was a flickering effect, like to see a film run through a slowed down movie projector. Night, I see a refraction of myself cast in the dark. Day, I gaze at the drift ice coating the sea. Time flickers in slow motion. I thought of a poem from Robert Frank’s work depicting drift ice entitled “End Of Dream.”

*Every year the ice melts, the winds and tides take the
broken up pieces out to sea. It is also the portrait of a man waiting
for another spring another spring another vision... another dream...*

Robert pushed his large hand to the window and gazed at the passing scenery without moving. I quietly pointed my camera at his large shoulders from behind, they reminded me of my father’s.

In the following year, in February 1995, Frank's retrospective "Robert Frank: Moving Out" was held at the Yokohama Museum of Art. The chronology featured in official catalog includes the entry "April 1994, Hokkaido." Frank, who was delighted with the trip to Hokkaido, considering it as "a holiday" of sorts, had perhaps also dedicated his thoughts to this memorable and irreplaceable experience.

【Publication details】

Kazumi Kurigami, *April* Published by Switch Publishing, 2020

Retail price: ¥3,200- (tax excl.) Total 152 pages, 80 illustrations

<http://www.switch-store.net/SHOP/BO0097.html>

Kazumi Kurigami was born in Hokkaido in 1936. He graduated from the Tokyo College of Photography in 1961. Kurigami began his career as an independent photographer in 1965, and has since continued to work within the forefront of visual expression through a diverse practice that also encompasses commercial films in fields such as fashion and advertising. His publications include *NORTHERN* (Switch Publishing, 2002), which features monochrome and color snapshots taken of everyday life during his travels in Hokkaido where he was born and raised.

For further information please contact:

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Gallery hours: 12:00-18:00 Closed on Sun, Mon and National holidays



Kazumi Kurigami

"Robert Frank_New York", 1992

Gelatin silver print

50.3 x 67.4 cm

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