

Nobuyoshi Araki "Flower Rondeau"**Dates: Nov 21, 2019 – Jan 19, 2020****Location: SHOP Taka Ishii Gallery, Hong Kong****Opening Reception: Thursday, Nov 21, 6-8pm**

SHOP Taka Ishii Gallery is pleased to present "Flower Rondeau," an exhibition of Nobuyoshi Araki from November 21, 2019 to January 19, 2020. The exhibition, which marks both Araki's 28th presentation at Taka Ishii Gallery and the Hong Kong space's first anniversary, features a selection of photographic works and two collaborations, "NOBUYOSHI ARAKI x uniform experiment" by SOPH. and "COMING OF AGE" by Virgil Abloh. These pieces gathered from different series/projects gently align with one another through flower motifs, one of the iconic subjects of Araki's works, and the wallpaper of "Flower Rondeau" (1997) exclusively made for this exhibition will transform the space. Rare vintage books and editions will also be available for viewing and purchase.

Flowers preyed on Araki's imagination as symbols of Eros and Thanatos since his childhood. Growing up nearby Jyokanji temple in downtown Tokyo, a place where spirits of courtesans from Yoshiwara were enshrined, Araki used to watch the cut flowers offered at the graveyards. To Araki, arranging decayed flowers is a form of revival, and photography records the beauty of brevity eternally.

Flowers become more enriched with life as they approach their death.

The most beautiful moment is just before they perish.

When coming close to them, one is enraptured with sexual spirituality and I can hear the Flower Rondeau.

Nobuyoshi Araki, *Kakyoku*, Shinchosha, 1997, p.1

Departing from his earlier practice of placing flowers among a ruined setting, the series "Flower Rondeau" emphasizes the fully-bloomed blossoms' own corruption in close-ups. The lush petals are imbued with an undisguised sensual undertone and the bold, unexpected color combinations create a "flower-fuck scene" as described by the artist.

Original photographic works on view include "67 Shooting Back" (2007) and "From Close-range" (1991), featuring nudes, skylines and decayed flowers. "67 Shooting Back" is a counterattack launched by Araki at 67 years old against digital photography and the status quo of beauty. Produced with a 6 x 7 film camera, this series gives prominence to married middle-aged women, who are identified by Araki as "real women" of "lives full of faults and with a dirty side." While the deeply toned black and white photographs selected from "From Close-range" is part of a profoundly personal series, taken after the death of his wife Yoko in January 1990. Objects linked to the memories of Yoko, including wilting flowers, are recorded with a delicate sensitivity and masterful craftsmanship. Araki once said in an interview, "I loved my wife, and traces of this remain in my feelings and my body, traces that survive in the photos". These sentimental works remark his incredible love, which is his point of departure as an I-Novel photographer.

Araki's wild and joie de vivre approach to photography is highly appreciated not only in the scope of fine art but also by the fashion world. The Japanese photography master has teamed up with international fashion brands and icons, including Issey Miyake (1997), CHRISTIAN DADA (2016), mame (2016), Supreme (2016), and Saint Laurent (2017). The 2019 collaboration "NOBUYOSHI ARAKI x uniform experiment" presents pieces on which the artist's signature and his polaroid floral series are printed. The printed images have been selected by Hiroshi Fujiwara, a prominent musician, producer, designer, and at the same time a noticeable icon in music, street fashion, and pop culture. Also, made exclusively for this show, the special items "NOBUYOSHI ARAKI x uniform experiment" for Taka Ishii Gallery are only available at the SHOP. Another featured collaboration is the exclusive tees from the exhibition "COMING OF AGE," held at Little Big Man Gallery in Los Angeles this year, in which the series "Satchin" by Araki was on view. Curated by Virgil Abloh, an architect, designer,

and creative director who owns two labels Pyrex Vision and OFF-WHITE, “COMING OF AGE” is connected with Abloh’s SS19 campaign for Louis Vuitton, which explored similar themes of boyhood and youth. “COMING OF AGE” has travelled to Espace Louis Vuitton in Beijing and Munich.

Nobuyoshi Araki (Tokyo, 1940) is a Tokyo-based photographer. Receiving high acclaim since the 1970s for photographic works that portray a dialogue between him and the female subjects he captures, Araki has established his very own world of photography that permeates with an intense air of Eros and Thanatos through images such as those of alluring flowers, kinbaku (bondage) nudes, skyscapes, food, the streets of Tokyo, and his cat. He has continued to vigorously publish over 520 books of his works, and has simultaneously held numerous exhibitions both throughout Japan and abroad. Araki is recognized internationally as one of the leading figures of post-war Japanese photography. His recent solo exhibitions include “Sentimental Journey 1971-2017-,” the Tokyo Photographic Art Museum, Tokyo (2017); “Araki,” the Musée National des Arts Asiatiques Guimet, Paris (2016); “Ōjō Shashū: Photography for the Afterlife – Faces, Skyscapes, Roads,” the Toyota Municipal Museum of Art (2014); “Nobuyoshi Araki Photobook Exhibition: ArāKI,” the IZU PHOTO MUSEUM, Shizuoka (2012); “NOBUYOSHI ARAKI: Self, Life, Death,” Barbican Art Gallery, London (2005). Araki is a recipient of The Photographic Society of Japan Annual Award (1990), the Austrian Decoration of Honor for Science and Arts (2008) and the 54th Mainichi Art Award (2012).



Nobuyoshi Araki
“67 Shooting Back”, 2007
RP direct print
Image size: 47 x 59.2 cm
Paper size: 50.7 x 61 cm
© Nobuyoshi Araki



NOBUYOSHI ARAKI x uniform experiment
“FLOWER”
© SOPH.

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