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Kansuke Yamamoto

Dates: Jun 22 – Aug 10, 2018

Opening reception: Friday, Jun 22, 18:00 – 20:00

Taka Ishii Gallery New York is pleased to present a solo exhibition of works by Kansuke Yamamoto from June 22 to August 10. Based in Nagoya, Yamamoto created, between the early 1930s and 1980s, avant-garde photographic works that manifested his sharp eye for social criticism and a unique poetic sensibility. He was one of the leading figures of Surrealism photography in Japan. He used a variety of methods, including collage and photomontage. His subjects ranged from objects arranged in extraordinary ways and detailed close-ups of various materials. From the 1950s, he also created paintings, sculptures and serial theatrical photographs. This will be his third solo exhibition at Taka Ishii Gallery New York and it will feature twelve photographic works produced between the 1930s, his earliest period, and 1970.

Yamamoto began writing poetry in 1930 as the latest Western art movements and theories, such as Dadaism, Bauhaus, Neue Sachlichkeit and Surrealism were introduced to Japan and avant-garde activities flourished in various artistic fields under their influence. Through exposure to the poetry magazine *CINÉ* published by Chiryu Yamanaka, who was a leading theorist of Surrealism in Japan, Yamamoto's interest in modernist art deepened. Yamamoto began aiming "to practice Surrealism in photography" in 1931, when modern photographic expression was first established under the rubric of New Photography in Japan. That same year, the young Yamamoto helped establish the photographers' group "Independent Photography Research Association" along with Mitsuya Okonogi and others and began seriously searching for new photographic expressions.

With the publication of *Dokuritsu* (Independent) in 1931 and formation of "Nagoya Photo Avant-Garde" in 1939, Nagoya began to establish itself as a center for avant-garde after Tokyo and Osaka. Yamamoto's practice, which aimed to revolutionize the era's attitudes and establish poetic photographic images, was also instrumental in this process. Between the late 1940s and 1960s, he produced numerous experimental color photographs, photograms, serial photographs, and sculptural works, which all grew increasingly unique and complex. His works, which combine Western European Surrealist iconography with Japanese motifs and interests do not merely derive from or translate Western European art movements, but rather display acute aesthetic sensibility and superior spatial composition techniques.

Kansuke Yamamoto was born in Aichi in 1914 and passed away in 1987. He entered the French Literature Department at Meiji University and began writing poetry in 1930. In 1931, he began producing photographs with the aim of "practicing Surrealism in photography." That same year, he established the photographers' group "Dokuritsu Shashin Kenkyukai" (Independent Photography Research Association) with Mitsuya Okonogi and others in Nagoya and began searching for new photographic expressions. Inspired by the 1937 exhibition "Kaigai Chogenjitsushugi Sakuhinten" (Exhibition of Overseas Surrealist Works), he founded the Surrealist poetry journal *Yoru no Funsui* (the Night's Fountain), which ended after the fourth volume published in 1939 due to police censorship. In 1938, he also founded the photographers' group "Seidosha" (Blue Admiration Society) with Motoo Yoshitake and others and began publishing the newsletter *Carnet Bleu*. He also participated in the "Nagoya Photo Avant-Garde," which resulted from the photographers of the "Nagoya Avant-Garde Club," formed by Yoshio Shimozato and Chiryu Yamanaka, going independent, but left the group in 1941 ("Nagoya Photo Avant-Garde" dissolved in 1941 after changing its name to "Nagoya Shashin Bunka Kyokai" (Nagoya Photography Culture Association)). In 1939, Yamamoto became a member of the avant-garde poets' group VOU, organized by Katsue Kitasono and contributed

poetry and visual works to the group's journal and "Keisho" exhibitions until 1978, when it dissolved. In 1947, Yamamoto founded the avant-garde photographers' group "VIVI" with Keiichiro Goto, Minayoshi Takada and Yoshifumi Hattori. In 1949, he became a member of the photography section of "Bijutsu Bunka Kyokai" (Fine Art and Culture Association). In 1970, he published *Butterfly*. His major solo exhibitions include "Surrealist Yamamoto Kansuke" at Tokyo Station Gallery (2001). His major international exhibitions include "Japan's Modern Divide: The Photographs of Hiroshi Hamaya and Kansuke Yamamoto" at the J. Paul Getty Museum (Los Angeles, 2013). His works are included in the collections of the Nagoya City Art Museum, Tokyo Photographic Art Museum, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, the J. Paul Getty Museum, and The Art Institute of Chicago.

For further information, please contact:

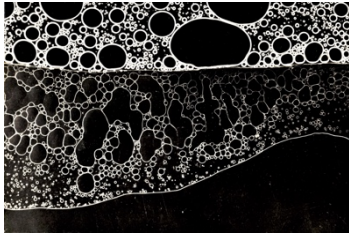
Exhibition & Press: Takayuki Fujii

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Mon-Fri 11:00-18:00

Closed on Sat, Sun and National Holidays



Kansuke Yamamoto

"Work", 1958

Gelatin silver print

Image and paper size: 18.5 x 27.8 cm

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Kansuke Yamamoto

"Butterfly", 1970

Collage on paper, gelatin silver print

38.4 x 23 cm

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