



Taka Ishii Gallery

Photography / Film

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Ryuji Miyamoto “Architectural Apocalypse”

Dates: May 11—Jun 15, 2019

Location: Taka Ishii Gallery Photography / Film

Opening reception: Saturday, May 18, 18:00—20:00

Taka Ishii Gallery Photography / Film is pleased to present “Architectural Apocalypse,” an exhibition of works by Ryuji Miyamoto from May 11 to June 15. The exhibition marks Miyamoto’s second solo presentation with the gallery, and features a selection of approximately 20 works from his representative series “Architectural Apocalypse,” for which he received the 14th Kimura Ihei Memorial Photography Award in 1989.

Photography is a construct of light and dark and photosensitive material. Whether photography does or doesn't go digital, I believe that basic rule still holds. Light passing through a lens or pinhole burns an image on photosensitive material kept in a dark space, fixing a set view of the world. The act of photographing is always an encounter between light and photosensitive material in darkness. As the dark underside of the city grows still deeper and darker, I'm sure we won't run out of further encounters between light and whatever photosensitive apparatus.

Ryuji Miyamoto, ‘Foreword,’ *Architectural Apocalypse*, Heibonsha, 2003, p. 3

After holding his first solo exhibition in 1977, Miyamoto engaged in exploring his own artistic approach as a photographer while working for architectural journals and pictorial magazines. In 1983, having been profoundly fascinated by the demolition site of Nakano Prison, he continued to photograph the process of its dismantling and deconstruction for over a period of half a year that followed. His works figuratively capture traces of light that filter into degenerate spaces where boundaries of interior and exterior have become obsolete, presenting the buildings themselves as autonomous existences liberated from their usage purposes and systems of meaning. Miyamoto further pursued his photography of building demolition sites, from the demolition of the Grosses Schauspielhaus in Berlin that he encountered while on a work trip to Germany, to the demolition of the theaters, horserace tracks, cinemas, as well as the pavilions of Expo '85 that had originally been built on the premise of being dismantled. These series of works that explore the essence of architecture as "object" and turns a scrutinizing gaze towards changes in buildings and the urban landscape, were first presented in his 1986 solo exhibition “Architectural Apocalypse,” which featured the works photographed between 1983 and 1986, and later published in 1988 in a photobook of the same title. Miyamoto gained much acclaim for his oeuvre that demonstrated criticism through acts of photographing the demise of architecture that had once served as compositional elements of urban modernity, in addition to the straightforward manner in which he captured the transformation of space in the wake of demolition as opposed to presenting a narrative of loss and rebirth. He was awarded the 14th Kimura Ihei Memorial Photography Award for this work, along with his “Kowloon Walled City” series that was both exhibited and published in 1989.

The artist’s unique perspective on the various problems that the city and architecture serve to connote forms a part of a major current in the world of his work, from “Architectural Apocalypse” to “Kowloon Walled City” in which he photographed the high-rise slums of Hong Kong, “KOBE 1995 After the Earthquake” that captures the disaster-stricken areas of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, and “Cardboard Houses” that feature the makeshift dwellings of the homeless that had rapidly increased after the collapse of Japan’s economic bubble.

【Concurrent exhibition】

Ryuji Miyamoto “Invisible Land”

Dates: May 14—Jul 15, 2019

Location: Tokyo Photographic Art Museum

Yebisu Garden Place, 1-13-3 Mita Meguro-ku Tokyo 153-0062 tel: 81-3-3280-0099

Closing days: Mondays (except July 15)

Ryuji Miyamoto was born in Tokyo in 1947. After graduating from the Graphic Design Department of Tama Art University, and working as an editor at architectural magazines, he began working independently as a photographer. Miyamoto has photographed, from a unique perspective, the city and its buildings as they are transformed, ruined, and revived. His works, such as "Architectural Apocalypse" (1986), in which he shot building demolition sites, and "Kowloon Walled City" (1988), in which he photographed the titular high-rise slum in Hong Kong, have received critical acclaim both domestically and internationally. His solo exhibitions include "Ryuji Miyamoto Retrospective," Setagaya Art Museum, Tokyo (2004); "Urban Apocalypse," Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin (1999); "KOBE 1995 After the Earthquake+," Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt, Frankfurt (1999); "Architectural Apocalypse," Hillside Gallery, Tokyo (1986). He is the recipient of the 55th Award of the Ministry of Education in the Art Encouragement Prizes (for his solo exhibition at Setagaya Art Museum, 2005); Golden Lion Prize of the 6th International Architecture Exhibition Venice Biennale (for the exhibition "KOBE 1995 After the Earthquake," 1996); the 14th Kimura Ihei Memorial Photography Award (his photo-books *Architectural Apocalypse* and *Kowloon Walled City*, as well as his exhibition "Kowloon Walled City," 1989). His works are included in the collections of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (San Francisco); Deutschen Centrum für Photographie (Berlin); the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (Tokyo).

For further information please contact:

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



Ryuji Miyamoto
"Grosses Schauspielhaus, Berlin", 1985
Gelatin silver print
Image size: 34.3 x 50.9 cm
Paper size: 50.9 x 60.6 cm
© Ryuji Miyamoto



Ryuji Miyamoto
"Octagon Tower, Roosevelt Island, New York", 1991
Gelatin silver print
Image size: 50.5 x 39.9 cm
Paper size: 60.6 x 50.6 cm
© Ryuji Miyamoto



Ryuji Miyamoto
"Pavilions of Tsukuba Expo. '85, Tsukuba", 1985
Gelatin silver print
Image size: 36.8 x 53.1 cm
Paper size: 50.8 x 60.7 cm
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