NOBUYOSHI ARAKI

The first solo exhibition at the gallery by Japanese artist Nobuyoshi Araki (1940), featuring a wide selection of colour and black-and-white photographs, including around twenty images from his series featuring the model Kaori, as well as examples of his well-known flower, still life and nude photographs from the *Tokyo Diary* series, and finally around fifty of his distinctive Polaroids.

Nobuyoshi Araki, or "Arachy", how he likes to be called, makes a portrait of his city of birth, Tokyo, which in turn becomes the central theme of his work; through Tokyo's lens his shots explore the female topic. It was during his long walks through Tokyo's streets that he captured his first empty cityscape pictures with a small Leica; *Tokyo Autumn* from 1972 is among his earlier examples. His subsequent discovery of Sinjuku, the notorious Red District - closed in 1985 due to juridical disposition- characterized by its infinite female types, exercises in Arachy a fascination that shapes his posterior work. Further, his incursions in the night as well as his predilection for female youth have gained him the nickname "Japanese Toulouse-Lautrec" (one can also think of the contemporary Balthus).

Working in the verge line, in between pornography and art, has brought the photographer considerable issues throughout his artistic career with Japanese authorities: the censure in 1988 of the release of the magazine Shashin Jidai which included his photographs, amoral charges, exhibition shut downs and the imprisonment in 1993 of a curator for showing the artist's nudes are some among the long list of examples. Despite the setbacks, Nobuyoshi Araki has managed to remain afloat, testing the limits of social tolerance; playing to be a rebel without being perceived as a threat to moral values and taboos. His photographic series from the eighties and nineties, such as *Tokyo Nude* and *Vaginal Flowers* respectively, combine his two previous independent artistic registers: his stripped sentimentality borderline kitsch with his disproportionate eroticism overtly pornographic. For example, his pictures of *A's Paradise* from 1998 portray Araki's ability to incorporate plastic animals regardless of the context either in city streets or as a fetish objects lying on the breasts or in between the buttocks of one of his beautiful models.

By 1979 Nobuyoshi Araki's photographs were already on display at the Venice Biennial and ever since then his work has been the subject to numerous retrospectives in venues both in Europe and in the United States. In Spain, his art was on view for the first time in Barcelona as part of a collective show in 1986 at La Casa Edizalde. In 1994 La Sala Parpalló de Valencia presented his oeuvre in a joint exhibition with Larry Clark. By 2001 his work was in the first Biennial of Barcelona and he then participated in PhotoEspaña 2002, a photographic festival held yearly in Madrid.

Parallel to this exhibit, a selection of his works is on view at La Fábrica Galería (Alameda, 9 – 28014 Madrid. Tel: + 34 91 360 13 25).

For further information or for images, please contact us.

Guecho, 12 B-C. E-28023 Madrid. Tel.: +34 91 593 21 84 - info@lscac.com