

PHOTOGRAPHERS OF JAPANESE DESCENT

14 March - 3 May, 2008

Opening Reception: Monday, 17 March, 6-9pm

As a participant in Asia Week in New York City, Howard Greenberg Gallery is pleased to present *Photographers of Japanese Descent*. The exhibition will feature works made throughout the twentieth century, encompassing a broad range of thematic, stylistic and aesthetic concerns. Since its inception, the gallery has shown a commitment to Japanese photographers and has exhibited their works in a range of contexts. This exhibition brings together works by many of these artists, providing an opportunity to view the diverse visual journeys that were explored by Japanese photographers over the past 75 years.



Nobuyoshi Araki (b. 1940) is one of the most well-known, yet controversial photographers working in Japan today. His provocative images often cross boundaries and were initially subject to occasional censorship in Japan. But he was inured to the criticism and continued to produce highly eroticized images, ultimately contributing to a loosening of the strictures imposed on his fellow photographers. His prolific output has further established his international reputation.



Eikoh Hosoe (b. 1933) occupies a position in the forefront of post-war Japanese photography. In 1959 he founded the agency *Vivo* to represent freelance photographers in Japan. Hosoe is a professor of photography at the Tokyo Institute of Polytechnics and is the Director of the Kiyosato Museum of Photography. His work frequently concerns itself with performance, theater and dance and explores many of the central themes that resonate throughout Japanese myth and literature. On exhibition are rare vintage prints from his 1961 series entitled *Ordeal by Roses* with Yukio Mishima as his model.



Kenro Izu (b.1949) studied photography at Nippon University and then emigrated to the U.S. in 1970. Izu travels extensively and has made a life long commitment to photographing sacred sites throughout the world. His skills as a craftsman are legendary, his large scale platinum/palladium prints unsurpassed for their beauty and technical virtuoso. His work from Bhutan was recently featured in a solo exhibition at The Rubin Museum in New York.



Tosh Matsumoto (b. 1920), born in the United States, was the first photographer of Japanese descent to become a member of the New York Photo-League and exhibited there in 1949. Matsumoto's work was included in the 1950 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art called *In and Out of Focus* and again at MoMA in 1953 in their exhibition, *Diogenes with a Camera II*. Following these exhibitions, Matsumoto withdrew from the artistic scene and was never known to exhibit his work again.



Shoji Ueda (1913-2000) gained international recognition and acceptance when his work was included in the 1960 exhibition of Japanese photography that Edward Steichen curated at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. A unique fusion of Surrealism and intimate narrative, Ueda's work is highly valued for both its dream-like quality and compositional originality. The Ueda Shoji Museum of Photography opened in Japan in 1995. In 2008, solo exhibitions of Ueda's work were held in Switzerland and at the M.E.P. in Paris.



An architect by training, **Iwao Yamawaki** (1898-1987) went to Germany in 1930 to study at the Bauhaus. During his two-year stay he abandoned architecture and took up photography, producing remarkable images of buildings, with a particular focus on those in the Bauhaus complex. His experimentation with extreme angles, high and low vantage points and light and shadow imbue his images with a classic modernist sensibility. Although his work reveals a debt to his Bauhaus teachers, his intuitive grasp of their philosophy enabled him to create photographs of great visual rigor and dynamism.



Like their Western counterparts of the early twentieth century, Japanese photographers were also striving to make photographs that would be considered "art". As a result, Pictorialism flourished in Japan in the 1920s and photographers such as **Toda** gained recognition. Like western Pictorialism, these photographs, some of which are currently exhibited in the South Gallery, are characterized by rigorous composition, low tones and soft focus. But despite the obvious direct links, a distinct Japanese sensibility reflects the myriad of cultural differences that exist between the two cultures.

*Also on exhibition are photographs of Japan
by William Klein and Ed Van Der Elsen and photographs of China by Marc Riboud.*

For further information or to request visuals for press,
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