

Anton Kern Gallery

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Nobuyoshi Araki

EROS DIARY

July 9 – August 7, 2015

Photography was destined to be involved with death. Reality is in color, but at its beginnings photography always discolored reality and turned it into black and white. Color is life, black and white is death. A ghost was hiding in the invention of photography.

- Nobuyoshi Araki, in an interview with Nan Goldin, 1995.



June 23 — Nobuyoshi Araki's latest exhibition at Anton Kern Gallery, *EROS DIARY*, is comprised of a series of 77 new black and white photographs, which break from his traditional ruminations on eroticism and death to reflect more inwardly on the artist's own life and mortality. These photographs highlight an unusual softness and sombre introspection as Araki internalizes recent personal traumatic events including the loss of his beloved cat, Chiro, his fight with prostate cancer, and later, the loss of vision in his right eye.

Each photograph is timestamped in reference to the anniversary of Araki's marriage to his wife Yoko, who died in 1990. This date also coincides with the Chinese Qixi Festival, also known as the Tanabata Festival in Japan, a celebration of the annual meeting of "The Cowherd and Weaver Girl," an ancient Chinese folktale where two forbidden lovers reunite once a year for a single night. The persistent repetition of this date speaks at once to both the artist's reverence for his spouse and original muse, while also highlighting her absence in his life.

For Araki, photography itself represents a diary: a record of what happens day to day in his life, and the act of taking a photograph represents the killing of a moment or life, where his "self" is pulled out through the subject. In consequence of this action, as well as his age, illness, and life experience, the images in *EROS DIARY* become memorialized, showing us the distinct humanistic truths of joy, sorrow, life and death. These images, which are at times humorous, sexual, melancholy, and reflective, depict the entire spectrum of life from a personal perspective foreshadowing death.

With a career spanning six decades, Nobuyoshi Araki is one of the most prolific photographers of all time, having published over 400 books and exhibited in over 280 solo shows worldwide. Born in 1940 in Tokyo, Araki began his career as a commercial photographer, before making the intensely sexual *Kinbaku* bondage photographs he became known for. In 1971 he published his seminal book *Sentimental Journey*, and in 1991, *Winter Journey*, documenting both the euphoria of his honeymoon and sadness from his wife's death. *EROS DIARY* is Araki's fourth exhibition at Anton Kern Gallery.

Recent solo shows include *KaoRi Through the Looking Glass: Photo-Mad Old Man A 2015.5.25 75th Birthday*, Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo, Japan (2015); *Love on the Left Eye*, Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo, Japan (2015); *Ojo Shashu - Photography for the After Life: Eastern Sky, qARADISE*, Shiseido Gallery, Tokyo, Japan; *Ojo Shashu - Photography for the After Life: Love Journey*, Niigata City Art Museum, Niigata, Japan; *Ojo Shashu - Photography for the After Life: Faces, Skyscapes, Roads*, Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, Toyota, Japan (2015); *Ojo Shashu - Photography for the After Life: Alluring Hell*, Foam, Amsterdam, Netherlands (2014). Recent group shows include *In the Wake: Japanese Photographers respond to 3/11*, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA (2015); *Schlaflos – Das Bett in Geschichte und Gegenwartskunst*, Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, 21er Haus, Vienna, Austria (2015); *Conflict, Time, Photography*, Tate Modern, London, UK (2015).

The exhibition opens on Thursday, July 9 and runs until August 7, 2015. The gallery's summer hours are Monday through Friday from 10-6pm. For further information and images, please contact at gallery at 212.367.9663 or email: jasmin@antonkerngallery.com.