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NOBUYOSHI ARAKI

selected works and 129 books

It must have been in the mid-1980s when I first heard about Nobuyoshi Araki and soon stood in front of his works in a Japan exhibition at the Kunsthaus Zürich. I was immediately fascinated by his symbolically charged, impressive black-and-white photos. His works depicted a world that seemed strangely lifeless and frozen.

About ten years later, I was able to meet Araki in person in Tokyo and the first thing I noticed was that his right index finger was bandaged, as if he had injured himself.





When asked what happened then, he said that he had an inflammation of the periosteum in his index finger that came from taking pictures, i.e. the finger had become inflamed by pressing too many times (about 1,000 photos per day) on the shutter release of a camera - a strange and quite impressive injury.

Later we went to a karaoke bar and Araki sang "My Way" by Frank Sinatra.



His genius was impressively shown to me that same evening and a few days later, and it went like this: Of course, during the subsequent visit to the restaurant, I sat down as close as possible to Araki and we laughed and celebrated without him understanding me and me. I took a few photos of the guests left and right, of course Araki and of the plates of food in front of us. Suddenly, Araki snatched the camera away from me and started taking pictures himself, injury or not. He looked to one side and took pictures from the other side, that is, blind. Digital cameras didn't exist at that time and I had the photos developed and about a week later I received the photos from that evening and what I saw left me speechless... It was easy to tell which photos were of me (pretty bad and unspectacular) and which were of Araki.

As I said, he spoke and gestured in one direction while reaching out in the other direction and taking pictures.



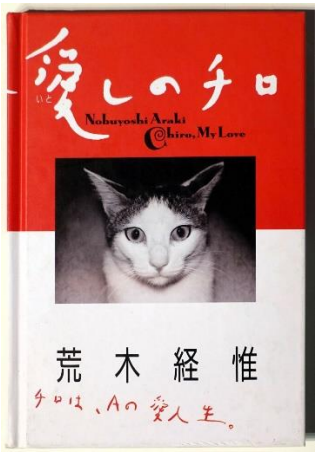


With Martin Parr a few years later, then a similar experience: My photos bad, his perfect.



In some of Nobuyoshi Araki's shots, you can see beautifully draped dead salamanders or dried-up blind crawlers. Araki said that there were gifts from his beloved cat "Chiro" and he wanted to make the cat happy and he therefore uses these gifts in his photos.

The cat Chiro also strongly connects Araki with his beloved wife Yoko Aoki, who died of cancer. Shortly before Yoko's death in 1994, a book by Araki was published only about Chiro, whom his wife loved so much. Araki places a copy of Chiro's book in Yoko's coffin. His wife lives on in the cat.



Nobuyoshi Araki (born 1940) is one of the most famous photographers in the world and has published countless pictures and more than 500 photo books since 1970.

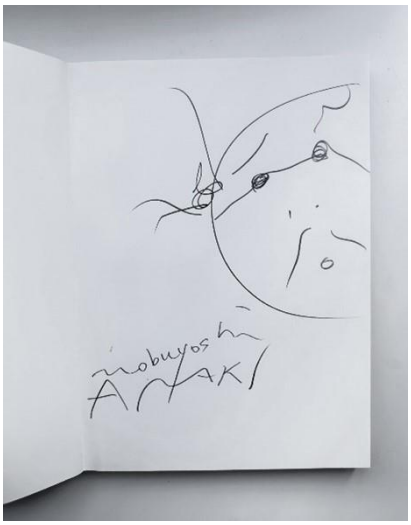
The medium of the book plays an important role in Araki's oeuvre. It is equivalent to prints and, in its combination of photography, text and graphic design, shows independent compositions and image solutions.

Araki's center of life is the metropolis of Tokyo, where he was born and raised. On his permanent forays through the city, the photographer has been capturing architecture, streets and passers-by in an almost obsessive manner since his photographic beginnings. In intuitive photographs, he expresses a decidedly subjective view that reflects one's own experience of what he has experienced and seen.

Nudes have been an integral part of Araki's work from the very beginning. Highly staged, these photos, located between performance and sculpture, differ markedly from Araki's snapshot-like shots.

Araki's photos of bondage are among his most famous and controversial works. By emphasizing peculiarities of Japanese culture, Western critics also established an "exotic" interpretation: it conceives of bondage as an art form with aesthetic aspirations that is deeply rooted in Japanese culture. Seen in this light, the photos are not mere pornography, but a reinterpretation of traditional erotic depictions of paintings and prints (ukiyo-e).

It is with great pleasure that Galerie Nicola von Senger presents a selection of 48 of the best and most iconic photos and 129 art photo books of Nobuyoshi Araki, many of them signed, some of them with a stylized self-portrait of the artist, like this one:



For further information and images, please contact info@nicolavonsenger.com