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Yumiko Chiba Associates The Summer Show

Wataru Yamamoto *Plane Tree Observations*

Curated by Dan Abbe

July 26 (Fri) – August 10 (Sat), 2013

Venue: Yumiko Chiba Associates viewing room shinjuku

Yumiko Chiba Associates viewing room shinjuku will present a solo exhibition of Wataru Yamamoto's work "*Plane Tree Observations*," from July 26 to August 10, 2013.

Wataru Yamamoto (b. 1986) is a young Japanese photographer who stands out for his experimental technique. Although each of Yamamoto's projects to date have been executed in quite different ways, they share a common spirit of inquisition. We are accustomed to seeing the work of photographic "hunters," but Yamamoto is more of a mediator; he sets up certain variables or conditions which determine the content of his images. In a different project, "*Drawing a Line*," he took self-portraits in the middle of a forest using an extremely long cable release, which became an important element in the composition of the photograph. This performative quality places Yamamoto quite close to both Japanese and Western experimental photographers of the 1970s.

While many of these earlier experimental photographers produced their work in the studio, under more or less controlled conditions, Yamamoto is particularly interested in observations and representations of nature. This interest is clear in the work he's presenting at Yumiko Chiba Associates, "*Plane Tree Observations*." This project consists of Kirlian photographs, which are produced when a high-voltage electric charge is shot through an object onto photographic paper. Here, Yamamoto has made Kirlian photographs from plane tree leaves, which leave ghostly impressions that reflect their internal composition. This process makes visible the normally invisible variation between individual leaves.

Yamamoto will exhibit these photographs along with drawings related to the project. "*Plane Tree Observations*" represents an opportunity to see the development of a young photographer who is expanding the range of contemporary Japanese photography.

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■ Concept

I have experimented in Kirlian photographs that were once used for observing aura of plants. When high-frequency wave and high voltage are applied to an object, corona discharge is generated. This corona discharge becomes luminous and when it is shot through films and paper with disassociation of water vapor, Kirlian photographs are produced.

Shooting objects without camera and its magical image encouraged to fix the word “aura” in a mystical way for producing Kirlian photographs. Actually thickness of the objects, amount of moisture, and difference of experiment environment give changes in images obtained from each photograph. One might say that there is a recording process of production and changes of objects to be found, not just optical realism.

I intended to record, in my works, deep layer of the object in the experiment of Kirlian photographs and my own experiences, and to leave the trace of nature observation.

In the experiment, I used plane tree leaves which triggered that Aristoteles made observation of pinhole phenomenon in the open air. Being aware of this monumental story in the photograph history, I have focused on materiality of the leaves and try to feel the moment when the two images of Aristoteles and mine meet.

Wataru Yamamoto

■ Profile

Wataru Yamamoto

1986 Born in Tochigi

2013 Complete a doctor's degree at Tama Art University

2011 Won Excellence Award at the New Cosmos of Photography 2011

<Selected Exhibitions>

2013 “*Drawing a Line*”, photographers' gallery, Tokyo

2012 “*Wataru Yamamoto*”, Another Function, Tokyo

2012 “*3331 Trans Arts*”, 3331 Arts Chiyoda, Tokyo

2010 “*126 Polaroid*”, Yokohama Museum of Art, Kanagawa

Dan Abbe

Born in San Francisco in 1984. Graduated from Northwestern University (BA, Comparative Literature) in 2006, moved to Japan in 2009. Currently working as a writer and editor for *American Photo* (New York) and *IMA* (Tokyo). Publishing books under the name MCV MCV.

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Opening Hours: 12:00 - 19:00 (Closed on Sundays, Mondays, and National Holidays)