



Erotica

from september 15 to november 30, 2011

DA-END



Daïdo Moriyama and the photography of nudes

Though better known for his vision of cities and their emblems, Daïdo Moriyama is also a photographer of nudes. The nude, which has sporadically appeared in his work, remains an important catalyst for the rest of his prodigious output. With these rare images, he has revolutionised an art where innovation is problematic. His first series dates from 1969 and presents the nude in an original context; a dozen images, poorly developed, a woman without a face or identity, on a bed, the positions are natural, without makeup or pose, legs spread, buttocks raised, under the sheets or in the shower. Moments before, during and after sex.

The Da End Gallery will present for the first time this little known aspect of one of the most emblematic figures of contemporary photography. From the first series for the magazine *Provoke* (1969) (which enabled the young artist, Araki then working in advertising, to launch full time into photography), to the rethinking of the mythic Kagerou nudes («Mayfly», 1972), without forgetting the incredible erotic series he created for *Playboy*. In the fifty or so photographs exhibited, some of which are in black and white, some in colour, a monochrome colour the artist loves, are above all perfect erotic images. Noteworthy are the titles of the series, pure masterpieces of poetry: *Premonition of a Virgin*, *Invading Eyes*, *Seized the moment*, *On the bed*, *COMMEINMYHOUSE*, *Ballad of Violation*. When one asks the artist to explain his titles, he replies with a simple sentence: « in every day life there is always something disturbing and slightly mad.....» These works were commissioned by *Playboy Japan*. Once every two weeks the magazine would publish his photos, alternating the other weeks with Kishin Shinoyama, the famous figure of commercial photography, who had been made famous by his nude photographs. Above all though, do not see these photographs as a rally cry to the capitalist cause or to the American press.

Let us not forget that Moriyama is a revolutionary, and as with all good Japanese agitators during this period, his struggle is the one against American imperialism.

Daïdo Moriyama was born in 1938, as with all his generation he encountered the chaos of bombardments; the two nuclear bombs and the defeat of the Empire. His photography is a manifestation of their personal and collective identity crisis. This post-war society and its race to modernity transformed cities, but also the mentality of the Japanese and their predilection for the shadow. Suddenly modesty is no longer a morale value: the intimacy of women is put on view in the pornographic images of *Playboy* and is displayed posted up in the streets. Television invades the family domain, occidental images appear in magazines and advertising, confronting a civilisation until then private and protectionist. A massive culture shock and the dawn of the age of images, which invade both our mentalities and our vision of the future. Forerunner.

Patrick Rémy, Paris 2011

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