

BEN BROWN FINE ARTS



Nobuyoshi Araki, *Untitled (Bodyscape)*, 1997, c-print, 120 x 150 cm. (47 ¼ x 59 1/8 in.)
Hiroshi Sugimoto, *Baltic Sea, Rugen*, 1996, gelatin silver print, edition of 25, 50.8 x 61 cm. (20 x 24 in.)

NOBUYOSHI

ARAKI

HIROSHI

SUGIMOTO

28 January – 12 March 2016

PRIVATE VIEW: Wednesday 27 January, 6 – 8 PM

in association with McNamara Art Projects

Ben Brown Fine Arts Hong Kong, in collaboration with McNamara Art Projects, is pleased to announce the exhibition *Nobuyoshi Araki / Hiroshi Sugimoto*, featuring the iconic and seemingly disparate work of two of the most prominent contemporary photographers, both emanating from Japan. Hiroshi Sugimoto's starkly serene black and white seascapes and theatres will be hung alongside Nobuyoshi Araki's highly eroticized images of women and flowers, providing a discourse on the artists' reverence for their chosen subject matter and the powerfully evocative nature of photography. The work of these prolific artists, both of whom have spent the last six decades photographing in a tirelessly serial manner, epitomises the dichotomy often found in Japanese culture: impassivity, restraint and deliberation coexisting with a subculture of uninhibited sexuality, eccentricity and decadence.

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Nobuyoshi Araki, born in Tokyo in 1940, is celebrated for his highly intimate and unabashedly erotic images of women, often portrayed in the ancient Japanese practice of bondage known as *Kinbaku*. This prolific artist has photographed thousands of women in Japan, from strangers to partners, revealing a raw and unguarded intensity in them that speaks to his emotional connection with his subject matter. Photographs of flowers also figure significantly in Araki's *oeuvre*, which he depicts with suggestively sexual and corporeal clarity, magnifying and often colouring over the images. Araki's output ranges from spontaneous black and white snapshots documenting his daily life and encounters to technically precise, methodically staged scenes, all celebrating human connections, sensuality and the artist's lust for life. The irreverent artist has gained both cult status and critical acclaim around the world, and has published over 400 limited edition books of his photographs.

Hiroshi Sugimoto, born in Tokyo in 1948, is revered for his iconic black and white photographs of subject matter including museum dioramas, drive-in theatres, seascapes and architecture. In his serial work Sugimoto addresses notions of temporality, perception versus reality, the transience of life, and the fundamental elements that make up the natural world, namely water and light. In 1978, Sugimoto began his *Theatres* series, setting up a large format camera on a tripod at classic American movie theatres and drive-ins, leaving the camera shutter open for the duration of a film, the projector light on the screen creating a hauntingly overexposed central element in his work and revealing distinct architectural details of the dark theatre. These works allow Sugimoto to express the passage of time through a single image and exploit the possibilities of working with black and white film and an unconventional light source. In 1980, Sugimoto embarked on his *Seascapes* series, in which he fastidiously captured the convergence of sea and sky at different times of day, under varying atmospheric conditions, around the world. While the composition of the photographs is starkly consistent: sea, horizon line and air, the elements of time and light create endless pictorial arrangements in this meditative and sublime series. Unlike Araki's highly autobiographical and unapologetically explicit works, Sugimoto's meticulous compositions are devoid of human presence and suggestive of the supernatural.

We are honoured to bring the work of these two revered artists together, applauding their inimitable styles, their innovations to modern and contemporary photography, and their unflinching devotion to their chosen subject matter.

Please join the conversation with Ben Brown Fine Arts on Twitter (@BenBrownFineArt), Facebook (Ben Brown Fine Arts) and Instagram (@benbrownfinearts), via the hashtag #ArakiSugimoto

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Monday-Saturday, 11AM - 7PM