



FUCK C 001, 1200mm×1800mm, 1969

Tenmei Kanoh | 加納典明

FUCK

November 12 - December 11, 2021

YUKIKOMIZUTANI is pleased to present “FUCK”, a solo exhibition of works by Tenmei Kanoh. On the Summer of 1969, commissioned by magazine Heibon Punch for a special issue, “FUCK” was shot during his stay in New York where he documented Yayoi Kusama’s performances, with artists who worked closely with her, and with performers from Andy Warhol’s Factory. The exhibition introduces a selection consisting of his lauded infrared color film series, as well as hitherto unseen monochrome iterations. Held at the same time with YASAKA GALLERY Ginza presenting Tenmei Kanoh’s paintings “PINK DOG”, “FUCK” will be unveiled on November 12 (Fri), 2021, and will remain on view until December 11 (Sat).

Summer of ’69, the heatwave set the tone in New York. On the night of 27 June 1969, Stonewall uprising took place in New York. In August, this joyous rebellion gained greater momentum in Woodstock music festival, thus giving birth to the counterculture generation. It was on this very year that Tenmei Kanoh was in New York documenting the people and streets of New York. On a spree, he went on guerrilla nude shoots at Central Park, Wall Street, Brooklyn Bridge, and Harlem. With the help of Heibon Punch magazine editor Jiro Ishikawa, Tenmei Kanoh was introduced to Yayoi Kusama, who offered to perform for him in East Village. Much to his surprise upon arrival, Yayoi Kusama’s impromptu orgy started. He has never seen such radical performance embodying the free love zeitgeist of 60s American counterculture, so he went straight to work. Inspired by this shoot, Kano invited Yayoi Kusama’s performers to Tad Wakamatsu’s studio, a photographer living in New York who was acquainted with her. This session focusing on the beauty of the body, transcending the boundaries of race and gender. The “FUCK” series comprises of these two bodies of works.

Characteristics of his work include theatrical nudes in lucid hues, and grunge monochrome aesthetic expressing contempt for conventional notions of beauty. Working alongside his father who was a graphic designer, he was familiar with foreign fashion magazines used as reference material, featuring Richard Avedon and Hiro Wakabayashi. However, his photographs feel more arbitrary than inspired by the greats. What separates him from the rest is his provocative play. The innate desire to rebel is a lifelong theme which can be traced back to his early works “三里塚1972” (Sanrizuka 1972). Not only does he photograph countercultural subjects, but his method is equally eccentric. Developed only in the U.S., Tenmei Kanoh got his hands on state-of-the-art infrared color film, initially intended for aerial photography during the war. The property of the film blocking most of the visible light spectrum, used to photograph the orgy has a bizarre effect, lips appearing yellow, exaggerate blood vessels, and brown hair altered bright red. An instrument in the Vietnam War experimentally used to express the shared human pathos, “FUCK” is a riposte to other nude photographers.

This exhibition focuses on a selection of Tenmei Kanoh’s reflexive portraits that demonstrate his innate response to “FUCK”. Into the bizarre world, the happenings that unfold are never short of surprises through his lenses. We hope this serves as an opportunity for viewers to fathom Tenmei Kanoh’s boundless vision, and contemplate his works with great relish.