

Nobuyoshi Araki – Kinbaku

May 2 – June 14, 2008

Jablonka Galerie Berlin

This exhibition presents 100 B/W photographs from the series entitled *Kinbaku*. In Japan, Kinbaku is a traditional art form combining elements from the arts of packaging and of flower decoration (Ikebana). Araki has emphasized a contrast to the Western concept of Bondage: “*Kinbaku* (knots with ropes) are different from bondage. I only tie up a woman's body because I know I cannot tie up her heart. Only her physical parts can be tied up. Tying up a woman becomes an embrace.” Most models have asked Araki themselves to be photographed for the *Kinbaku* series. In the *Kinbaku* images, Araki's ideas of beauty, photography and eroticism are joined in an incomparable and poetic way.

Nobuyoshi Araki takes photographs of women because photography for him is inextricably linked to love and eroticism. “A photographer who doesn't photograph women is no photographer, or only a third-rate one. Meeting a woman anywhere teaches you more about the world than reading Balzac. Whether it be a wife, a woman encountered by happenstance, or a prostitute, she will teach you about the world. In fact I build my life on meeting women and I have hardly read a book since primary school. ... I think that all the attractions in life are implied in women. There are many essential elements: beauty, disgust, obscenity, purity ... much more than one finds in nature. In woman, there is sky and sea. In woman, there is the flower and the bud ...”

Araki's essential relation to photography reveals itself in his extraordinary productivity as well as in his controversial motives. The close connection of the ecstatic moment of photography with death and futility dominates his work. “Black and white photos represent death. Taking a photo is like killing the subject,” Araki said in his conversation with Jérôme Sans, but on the other hand, photography for him is the most intense form of life: “After all, I prefer photographs to sex. Recently, I have declined offers to date...because everyone wants to have sex. They are not satisfied by only having dinner together. I won't do that any more. I prefer photography. In sex, I consider myself the second or third person. I just take advantage of sex to take good photos.”

The art of Araki is closely related to the traditional Japanese art of the woodblock print, Ukiyo-e, which aimed at the production of images from the fleeting life and insisted on the moment, just as Araki's photographs do today. Concurrent to the exhibition at Jablonka Galerie, the Kestnergesellschaft Hannover presents 100 coloured photographs of the *Kinbaku* Series, together with woodcuts by Hokusai, one of the great masters of Ukiyo-e. This show runs from 22 February until 11 May 2008.