



MICHAEL HOPPEN

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13 APRIL - JUNE

10 PORTLAND RD, W11 4LA

ALL PRESS ENQUIRIES

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The Michael Hoppen Gallery is delighted to present a kaleidoscope of works crossing centuries, genre, and media, to reveal a different interpretation of Japan – neither a delicate vision of the Floating World, nor the *kawaii* kitsch of Hello Kitty's homeland.

The concept of *okashi* has been used throughout Japanese aesthetic history to refer to those things which delight for their strangeness, their humour, or their power to intrigue. This show illustrates an eclectic understanding of Japan's visual identity by including photographs, vintage textiles, rich

colourful avantgarde theatre posters, woodblock shunga prints and unusual objects, such as *Netsuke* and *Harigata*, contextualising the gallery's interest in Japanese culture.

'My fascination with Japan was first provoked by seeing Japanese photobooks and magazines as a young photographer in the 1970's. When I first visited Japan 20 years ago, I was completely blown away by its energy and diversity. Whilst photography was, and remains, my key passion, I was enthralled and seduced by almost everything I laid eyes on.'

EIKOH HOSOE, *Ordeal by Roses #32*, 1961





EIKOH HOSOE
Kamaitichi #8, 1965



GEN OTSUKA, *Ballet dancers, Tokyo, 1954*

Michael Hoppen has travelled back and forth to Japan ever since and built up a varied and personal collection of Japanese materials. *Okashi* includes a collection of 1800s engravings which features depictions of *ohaguro* – the ancient Japanese practice of teeth blackening, a custom deemed alluring and beautiful which delighted in its strangeness.

'Okashi' gives a lively contextual backdrop against which to display works by Eikoh Hosoe from *Ordeal by Roses* (1963), the legendary collaborative series of portraits of author Yukio Mishima taken by this influential photographer. Included in the exhibition will be other important and rare works by Masahisa Fukase from his seminal project 'The Solitude of Ravens', and important early works by other post-war legendary artists including Daido Moriyama, Masitoshi Naito, Shomei Tomatsu and Gen Ōtsuka, including his pictures of the Tokyo Ballet and Komaki Ballet companies.



KEIICHI TANAAMI
No More War, 1967



(Left) TADANORI YOKOO, *Man-Powered Plane – Solomon, Tenjō Sajiki*, 1967



(Right) OYOBE KATSUHITO AND YAMADA SHIN, *Tale of the Haunted Chimney*, Situational Theatre Company, 1981

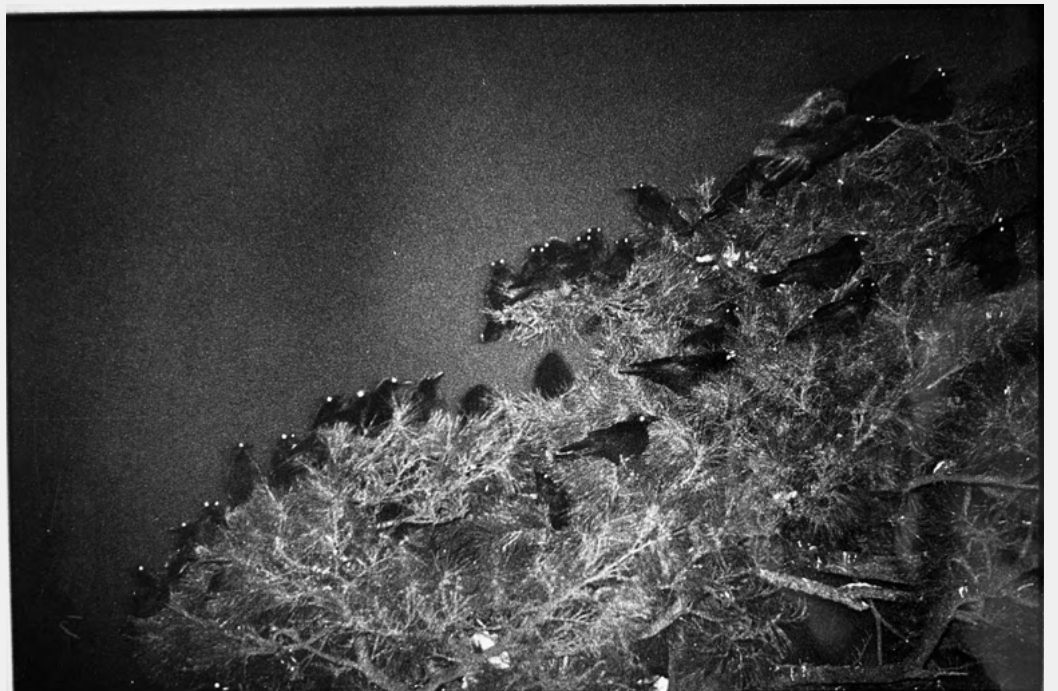
During his hunt for Japanese photography, Michael found himself drawn to the many other cultural mediums including Japan's rich textile tradition, particularly those dyed with the distinctive indigo sometimes described as 'Japan blue'. 'The lack of authorship in the kimonos and other varied textiles such as rare pieces of 'borrow', allowed me to look at them in a way that brought very little baggage. I judged them purely on an aesthetic basis, on colour, detail, what their purpose had been, and not based on who had made them. I concentrated on finding things that pleased my eye.'

A rare 19th century fireman's jacket in extraordinary condition with an intricate and colourful illustration of an amorous couple on the inside will be a highlight of the exhibition.

Also included are fine examples of 19th century Japanese shunga, theatre portraits and other fascinating scenes mixed with strange and beautiful objects brought from Japan. These will include Harigata from the Edo period and early Edo period lacquered plaster grotesque masks. An extraordinary selection of avant garde Japanese theatre posters and stunning examples of Tananoori Yokoo's work, long celebrated as one of the most influential graphic artists to emerge from Japan in the 1970s and 1980s.



NOBUYOSHI ARAKI
Sachin, 1963



MASAHISA FUKASE
Kanazawa, from Solitude of Ravens, 1978



MASAHISA FUKASE
Berobero - Untitled, 1991



UNKNOWN PHOTOGRAPHER
Japanese woman showing back of hair and obi (sash), c. 1885



KIMONO, Indigo horse trapping with resist design of prawns, C19th

About Michael Hoppen Gallery

The Michael Hoppen Gallery holds one of the foremost collections of Japanese photography in Europe.

The Michael Hoppen Gallery for the past 20 years has been closely involved in supplying many important institutions and Museums in the USA and Europe with key rare works by Japanese post-war photographers. The Getty LA, SF MoMA, MOMA NY, MoFA Boston and many others.

Michael Hoppen has worked with many key collectors around the world assisting them in building substantial and important collections of Japanese photography. The gallery has extensive knowledge and contacts in this field and continues to develop and unearth important works.

Photography credits

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