



Taka Ishii Gallery

Photography / Film

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Ikko Narahara “Venice – Nightscapes”

Dates: Sep 24 – Oct 22, 2016

Location: Taka Ishii Gallery Photography / Film

Opening reception: Saturday, Sep 24, 18:00 – 20:00

Taka Ishii Gallery Photography / Film is pleased to present “Venice – Nightscapes”, a solo exhibition of works by Ikko Narahara, from September 24 to October 22. Narahara, whose work is highly regarded in Japan and abroad, captures numerous facets of culture as they unfold in various sites from a unique macroscopic perspective. This exhibition will feature approximately 15 works shot between the late 1970s and early 1980s and included in his book *Venice – Nightscapes* (1985), part of his trilogy of books on Venice. He was enthralled by Venice upon his first visit in 1964 and subsequently returned frequently to complete his series.

Narahara first visited Venice in 1964 during his 1962 – 65 stay in Europe. He was moved by the mystical cityscape that suddenly appeared on water as it was illumined by the headlights of the boat on which he had arrived. He remained fascinated by Venice and returned on his way back to New York after traveling the Aegean Sea by boat in 1973. The origins of the city on water, by which it is isolated from the world, and the canals that run throughout to create a complex cityscape, intensified life in Venice. As a result, the city is colored strongly by its residents. For Narahara, who had been staying in New York and shooting various parts of the U.S. between 1970 and 1974, has written, “In contrast to the U.S., the nation closest to outer space, Venice was a city closest to humanity.” Venice was even more appealing than before, and he continued to adore, and frequently revisited the city after moving back to Tokyo.

Venice’s elegant beauty is akin to the sorrow one feels knowing the impermanence of the joys of life. (...) When I first started frequently visiting Venice in the 1970s, shadows of death had been flying around me. My mother had passed, and so had many close friends. After the wartime era of death, which I experienced as a child, another season of death had arrived. Strangely, I was drawn even more strongly to Venice with each new death. And my preference had shifted from the sun-filled Venice of light to Venice of the night. The graceful darkness that Venice creates, was also the best thing to rid myself of the death that seemed to surround me at the time. The brilliant darkness of Venice was a much more lively world compared to that of actual death. I felt as if I was aimlessly wandering in a time that transcended day and night, and life and death. Just as time is immortal, it seemed that light too had everlasting life there. Venice’s underworld-like darkness had a strange brightness, which was vibrant and belonged neither to day or night. And Venice had secretly been reborn in that radiant darkness. Venice banished its daytime population and turned back on 400 years of history. Inside its darkness lay the glorious figure of its own past when it was called the “Bride of the Adriatic Sea.”

Ikko Narahara, ‘Secrets of Venice’, *Taiyo no shozo [Portrait of the sun]*, Hakuishisa, 2016, pp. 304 – 309

For Narahara, Venice is a city that, “lives in joy after having savored the fact that all occurrences on earth will finally pass.” His interest in the city resulted in a trilogy of books: *Arcades of Light – Piazza San Marco* (1981), which is over 40 meters in length and documents the arch corridor of Piazza San Marco; *Venice – Nightscapes* (1985), which captured the brilliant darkness of the city on water; and *Venetian Light* (1987), his first book featuring all color photography. *Venice – Nightscapes* received the Award of the Year from the Photographic Society of Japan in 1986.

Ikko Narahara was born in 1931 in Fukuoka Prefecture. He enrolled in a Master's program (Art history) at Waseda University and in 1955 joined *Jitsuzaisha* [Real Existence], an avant-garde artist group together with Masuo Ikeda and Ay-O. At this time, Narahara socialized with artists such as Tatsuo Ikeda and On Kawara as well as Shuzo Takiguchi. During the same period, he met Shomei Tomatsu, Eikoh Hosoe, and together they set up an independent agency named *VIVO* (dissolved in 1961). Narahara had actively travelled the world, shifting his base of research and practice from Paris (1962-65) to New York (1970-74), holding numerous exhibitions throughout the course of his career. He has published a diverse number of photography books, and thus continues received high international acclaim. Narahara's major solo exhibitions include, "Human Land," Matsuya Gallery (Tokyo, 1956), "Ikko Narahara," Maison Européenne de la Photographie (Paris, 2002-2003), "Mirror of Space and Time: Synchronicity," Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography (2004). Major awards include the Japan Photo Critics Association Newcomer's Award (1958), The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture's Art Encouragement Prize (1968), the Mainichi Arts Award (1968), the Photographic Society of Japan Annual Award (1986) and The Medal with Purple Ribbon (1996).

For further information please contact:

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Gallery hours: 11:00-19:00 Closed on Sun, Mon and National holidays



Ikko Narahara
"Venice – Nightscapes", 1982 / 1983
Gelatin silver print
Image size: 47.9 x 31.5 cm
Paper size: 50.8 x 40.6 cm
© Ikko Narahara



Ikko Narahara
"Venice – Nightscapes", 1983
Gelatin silver print
Image size: 47.9 x 31.6 cm
Paper size: 50.8 x 40.6 cm
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