

Nonaka-Hill is pleased to announce two exhibitions;

Tatsumi Hijikata and

Eikoh Hosoe: Collaborations with Tatsumi Hijikata

These exhibitions are on view from October 12 - November 30, 2019, with an opening reception on Saturday, October 12th, 5-8pm.

Tatsumi Hijikata

Tatsumi Hijikata was the founder of *Ankoku Butoh* (literally meaning, *dance of darkness*), widely known and practiced today, some 60 years later, as *Butoh*.

Hijikata arrived to Tokyo from the Northern rural Tohoku region in 1952 and worked blue-collar jobs to support his dance pursuits. As his rural accent set him apart from Tokyo's urbanites, Hijikata filled his time reading French writers, such as Jean Genet, Antonin Artaud and Georges Bataille. Aesthetically, he looked towards artists such as Egon Schiele, Hans Bellmer and Willem De Kooning. Hijikata's provocative performances stemmed from this exploration of eros, debauchery, disease and death, evoking the rarely seen dark half of the human psyche. With awareness of German Expressionist dance and technical capabilities in Modern dance genres including jazz, flamenco, classical ballet and pantomime, Hijikata felt the imperative to develop a new dance form, and with the underlying notion of the anti-establishment, Hijikata's *Butoh* stands as a form of anti-dance. The exhibition's organizer, Takashi Morishita has written "Hijikata's Butoh... is body art whose expression is a "convulsion of existence".

As an artist working in performance with relationship to Happenings, a popular in his times, Tatsumi Hijikata became a central figure in Japan's avant-garde and achieved lasting global influence. At Nonaka-Hill, Hijikata's archival material including video, photography, posters and ephemera will be featured, resulting from collaborations with and documentation by Genpei Akasegawa, Nori Doi, Hideo Fujimori, Masahisa Fukase, Roku Hasegawa, Eikoh Hosoe, Masuo Ikeda, Kenji Ishiguro, Yukio Mishima, Hiroshi Nakamura, Natsuyuki Nakanishi, Tadao Nakatani, Makoto Onozuka, Kiyoshi Otsuji, Keiya Ouchida, Yutaka Takanashi, Ikko Tanaka / Hiroshi Yamasaki, Ryozen Tori, Tadanori Yokoo, Ruiko Yoshida and unknown others.

Tatsumi Hijikata is the first exhibition in the United States dedicated to Tatsumi Hijikata (1928-1986). Organized by Takashi Morishita and Butoh Laboratory, Japan, with cooperation of Keio University Art Center, Tokyo. Special thanks to Yoshiko Shimada. The exhibition and brochure is made possible by a grant from The Pola Foundation.

Eikoh Hosoe: Collaborations with Tatsumi Hijikata

The celebrated photographer, **Eikoh Hosoe** (1933) was a long-time friend and collaborator of Tatsumi Hijikata, having first met in 1959 at Hijikata's debut *Ankoku Butoh* performance, *Forbidden Colors* (Kinjiki), based on the novel by Yukio Mishima, with whom Hosoe would also create significant collaborations. Hosoe was then a member of the independent photo agency, VIVO along with Kikuji Kawada, Ikko Narahara, Akira Sato, Akira Tanno, Shomei Tomatsu. The VIVO photographers steered away from then popular objective realism towards a more subjective and expressive approach. In 1960, Hosoe founded the Jazz Film Laboratory (*Jazzu Eiga Jikken-shitsu*) to produce multi-disciplinary artworks. Featuring Tatsumi Hijikata in his early career, Hosoe's intense black and white short film *Navel and A-Bomb* (*Heso to genbaku*), 1960 contemplates a new beginning provoked by the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

As Japan urbanized in the economic boom period in the decades following WWII, Hosoe felt a growing sense of urgency to revisit the rural Tohoku region where he had been evacuated as a child to escape Tokyo air-raids. The photographer enlisted dancer Tatsumi Hijikata, who is from the same Tohoku region, to enact the "sickle-toothed weasel", a vicious god of local folklore and a threat that terrorized the young displaced Hosoe, who also associates his time in that region with an innocent happiness within an otherwise dark period. Hosoe said:

In the village, he played with children, was laughed at by farmers along the roadside, shat in the middle of a field, attacked a bride, kidnapped a baby, and ran through the rural landscape. Almost all the shooting was done guerrilla style in a flash. This was something that could only be achieved through photography. No other medium — film, television, painting, or novel — could have been used in its place. At that moment, I was certain of the superiority of photography.

Eikoh Hosoe, "Foreword" in *Kamaitachi*¹

Indeed, Hosoe's high-contrast and theatrical photographs perfectly emphasized the corporeality of Hijikata's impromptu performances and the rough-hewn textures of the mostly rural locales. While exploring a shared affinity for a specific place, the artists co-created a suite of images, light-hearted and brooding, and abundant of metaphor. The *Kamaitachi* photographs (1965-1968) were published as a book by the same name in 1969, which has since been re-issued numerous times.

Eikoh Hosoe (1933 -) is one of the best-known photographers of Japan's post-war era. His work has been the subject of numerous solo and group exhibitions in Japan and abroad, and is held in innumerable public collections. Hosoe is the recipient of several awards, including The Medal with Purple Ribbon (1998), The Royal Photographic Society (England) Special 150th Anniversary Medal Award (2003), The Order of the Rising Sun (2007), the Mainichi Art Award (2008), and was designated as a Person of Cultural Merit by the Ministry of Education in 2010. Since its opening in 1995, Hosoe has served as Director of The Kiyosato Museum of Photographic Arts, Hokuto, Yamanashi Prefecture, Japan .

1 Eikoh Hosoe, "Kamaitachi," *Shashin Hosoe Eikoh no sekai* (Eikoh Hosoe Photographs 1951 – 1988), Shashin Hosoe Eikoh no sekaiten jikkō iinkai, 1988