



Araki: Eros Diary

Text by Cat Gough

'Why do they come across as erotic? Because I shot them. That's what my photos are.' Playful yet intense sexuality has been a staple theme throughout the six decade long career of the illustrious Japanese photographer, Nobuyoshi Araki. The Anton Kern Gallery in New York has just opened **EROS DIARY** – a series of 77 new images from the artist.

At 75, Araki has amassed a back-catalogue of over 400 books composed of his original photographs. His images have been exhibited at over 280 shows during his career, repeatedly displaying his ability to eroticise any subject of his choosing – from the most beautiful Japanese women to pomegranates and flowers alike. In this series, the prolific image maker takes a clear break from his traditionally overt rumination on eroticism, in favour of an unusually sombre introspection.

Time-stamping his photographs in reference to the anniversary of his marriage to late wife Yoko (who died in 1990) he gives them a mournful quality that had been previously absent in his work. Persistently repeating this date in the 77 images, Araki demonstrates his reverence for his original muse and highlights her absence in his life. Despite the introspective slant on this body of work, the images in **EROS DIARY** are, at times, unnervingly playful – his perky eroticism juxtaposed with some deeply sober touches.

The monochrome aesthetic used in the **EROS DIARY** series reflects a theory he explained to Nan Goldin back in 1995: 'Photography was destined to be involved with death. Reality is in colour, but at its beginnings photography always discoloured reality and turned it into black and white. Colour is life, black and white is death. A ghost was hiding in the invention of photography.'

Eros Diary is open until August 7 at Anton Kern.

