

HOTSHOE

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MIRACLE CURE FOR MEMORY LOSS - NIKON D1-H PART 1

PORTFOLIOS - PAUL STEWART - ERROL

JOHN-FRANCOIS LEROY EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW: VISA POUR L'IMAGE

PHOTOGRAPHY - FOR PROFESSIONALS BY PROFESSIONALS



Out of Japan. Victoria and Albert Museum. 20th September - 3rd February (collections) are shown repeated twice the grainy quality of the work enhancing its eeriness, writes HSi Arts Editor Jean Wainwright.

Out of Japan in the Victoria and Albert's Canon photographic Galleries focuses on three important photographers working in Japan from the 1860's to the present day. Felice Beato with his images of Japanese life in the 19th Century photo-documentary style contrasts sharply with Masahisa Fukase and his emotional and brooding photographs of Ravens (1975-1985) or Naoya Hatakeyama with the secret life of Japan's canal systems. Their diverse photographic styles illuminate essential elements of Japanese life and their visual relationship with their country. Beato's works show the Japanese social system. In his portraits of Kuboto Sentaro, a well loved commander of the British garrison at Yokohama who fell from grace into despair; the conflicts between between East and West are illuminated, as he poses with his traditional Samurai accoutrements.

Sleeping Beauties (1868) contrasts the formality of dress codes with domestic practicalities. Awkward hard pillows are shown which preserve the elaborate hair styles of the sleepers are shown as well as a long pipe for smoking tobacco. The unit lamp where the paper shade has been raised for compositional reasons are all potent symbols of Beato's photo-documentary style as well as the first opportunity for British audiences to see a display of Beato's documentary prints in modern times.

Symbolism is used in quite a different way in Masahisa Fukase's brooding black and white photographs of Ravens (crows). This is very personal work, a train journey with his camera to the northern island of Hokkaido echoing his personal state of mind after his divorce from his wife. Fukase's photographic of crows with their claws, beaks and wings seem to be full of foreboding and symbolism. Moving and sinister these disturbing studies often echo the rhythms of calligraphic brush strokes. A flock of birds perches on a tree, their eyes gleaming in the dusk, the grainy quality of the work enhancing its eeriness. When

Fukase extended his journey other images emerge, yet there are resonances of the former, in the black hair of a schoolgirl which flaps in the wind spreading like the wings of a wild bird with a life of its own.

Naoya Hatakeyama's photographs are portraits of water and the secret life of a tamed Japanese river. The artist writes eloquently about her response to her subject matter of River, Underground and Detail describing how she goes

be light years away, I look up and see buildings towering'. These photographs with their reflected light on the water are an abstraction of the world above. In Detail and Underground the viewer is taken closer into the subterranean world only illuminated by Hatakeyama's camera. These dark dank places he posits are "a world that can exist with or without light. I am the alien wanting something that is not there". This need to see, to photograph, to illuminate, are the link that unites these three



down to the stream in central Tokyo surrounded by concrete. 'Only five metres below the ground it seems to

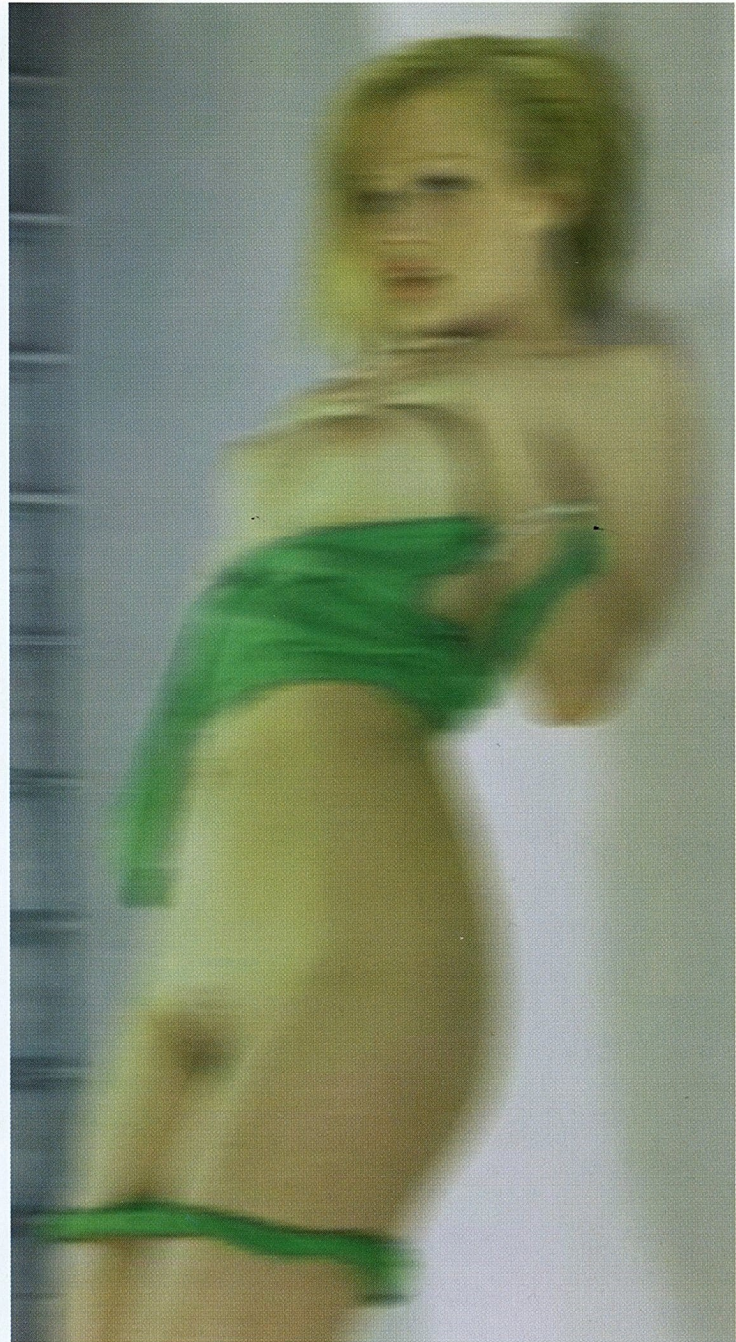
Japanese photographers in their search to convey the essence of their artistic drives and influences. **HSi**



The Essor Gallery, a new commercial exhibition space two minutes from the Tate Modern, chose Thomas Ruff for its inaugural show.

This was a rare opportunity to see a considerable number of Ruff's images exhibited together, including his new work, reinforcing why he is considered such an important photographic artist commanding very high prices in the auction rooms. Ruff's oeuvre is about artifice, manipulation and control over his medium, he enjoys having a dialogue with the properties of photographic reproduction. Ruff strives to find a new way to deal with the plethora of electronic and media images that inhabit our lives to interrogate the way we see. Whether grabbing pornographic images from the internet and turning them into sensitive painterly works full of movement, or working

with negatives from scientific studies of the stars. Using his own photographs or manipulating the work of others - his drive is to subvert and bend the medium to his artistic vision. He prefers to work in series. The *Porträt 2001* series is a continuation of an abiding passion first begun in 1981. The sitters stare impassively (they have been asked to appear as normal as possible) at the viewer, everything superfluous has been removed. Every pore is exposed to scrutiny in these huge images. This is work that gives you permission to stare, Old Master painting reanimated by Ruff's compositions for the electronic present. The standardisation of size and treatment only serves to make one curious about the differences between his subjects, their stasis arresting the viewers gaze. Ruff's *Nudes* from 2001 are the polar opposite of his portraits



These painterly images of bodies undressing, entwined or generally engaged in sexual games are taken from porn sites downloaded from the internet and then manipulated. There is a potent exchange as these degraded images are given the dignity of art historical intervention, the bodies reclaimed and repositioned to produce seductively sensual works. Ruff's night sky photographs continues his concern with seriality. Technically Ruff did not have a good enough camera to photograph the night sky as he wished; practically the pollution would have prevented the clarity which he sought. He solved the problem by buying copies of negatives

in the archives of the European Southern Observatory (ESO) a collection of photographs of the night sky in the Southern Hemisphere of the Andes taken with a specialist telescope. Ruff changed the scientific works into the realm of art by careful composition, selection of detail and enlargement. Works with titles such as *06h 18m / -20 C* (c print 1992) the only obvious link with the photograph's past.

Ruff relies on our memories and curiously to arrest our gaze and fix our attention, delighting in this show with his bold computer manipulated dialogues.



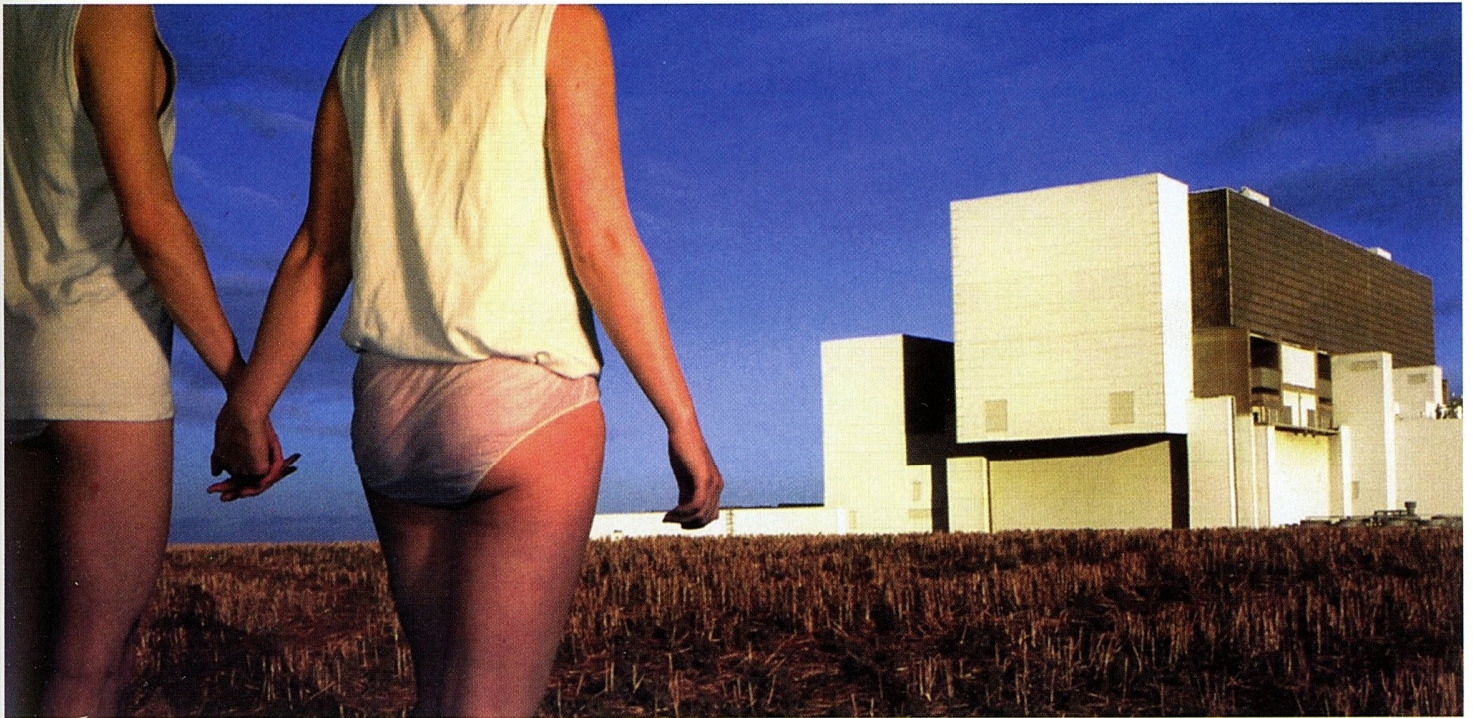
Art Forum Berlin, now in its sixth year, is rapidly establishing itself as an international contemporary art fair not to be missed.

This year there was an even greater presence of art photography and video. International art fairs are an excellent place to spot trends and there was an impressively

high standard of works on display. Rainer Borgemeister postulated in the catalogue that 'the practice of the art market is based on a lacework of multilateral relationships that are closely related to the economic situation as well as the system of cultural values'. It would appear that culturally photography is the preferred medium now for many artists

both here and internationally. Galerie Akinci (Amsterdam) showed the work of Emmanuelle Antille a young video artist. Radiant Fantasy 2000 held the viewer's attention for sixteen minutes with its beautifully shot strange surreal scenes of sexuality and performance - her editing and images provocative and alluring. The

Kicken Gallery (Berlin) had an impressive exhibition entitled Face to Face. Works by August Sander, Diane Arbus, Richard Avedon and Arnold Newman among others entranced with their portraiture. Agnes B's du Jour gallery also specialises in photography with Lucien Herve, Jonas Mekas and Massimo Vitali represented at the fair. Vitali's images of the



rites and rituals of contemporary leisure a wealth of compelling detail. One of the personal highlights for me was to see more of the work of Arnold Odermatt at the Springer and Winckler Gallery (Berlin). His photographic chronicles representing the events which he confronted in his everyday life as a policeman in a small town in Switzerland. Odermatt encountered a certain astonishment when he showed up at the scene of an accident with this Rolleriflex camera in order to supplement police documentation. His work is very different from Weegee and his dramatic moments or Warhol and his Death and Disaster series. A car rests in a lake in Buochs (1965). The stillness of the lake is not disturbed by the car which rests battered and semi submerged but rather resonates as a symbolic presence of man's intervention with nature. Odermatt's love of symmetry and literal restraint is also evident in his portraits of ordinary policemen carrying out their ritual duties. He is a photographer existing in a symbiotic relationship with his profession. In Stans 1965 a Police officer sits at his desk typing, a copy of the Highway Code neatly beside him, a map of the Swiss landscape behind him. The concentration and

formal qualities, the extraordinary in the ordinary, recalls Vermeer's interiors.

The wealth of photographic imagery presented by the galleries also highlighted the recurring themes which are dominating art photography. Architectural space, romantic and wistful landscapes adolescent ennui and the darker sides of life together with an interrogation of a medium in a constant state of flux.

Jean Wainwright,
Arts Editor

Pic above left:
Arnold Odermatt

Pic above:
Kate Gray

Pic right:
Bill Beckley

