

KATZ CONTEMPORARY

BIJIN GA

8 June - 17 August 2013

**Opening: Saturday, 8 June 2013, 11 am – 5 pm
during the Open House Weekend**

KATZ CONTEMPORARY is proud to present traditional and contemporary Japanese art by **Hashiguchi Goyō** (1880-1921, Japan) and **Nobuyoshi Araki** (*1940, Minowa, Tokyo, lives and works in Tokyo, Japan) in the new exhibition *BIJIN GA*. Hashiguchi Goyō's woodcuts will be presented opposite works by **François Berthoud** (*1961, Le Locle, lives and works in Zurich, Switzerland). As the exhibition's title suggests, all exhibited pieces focus on *Pictures of Beautiful Women*.

Under the title *Bijin Ga – Pictures of Beautiful Women* – the front room of the gallery holds Hashiguchi Goyō's woodblock prints and François Berthoud's new works, which have been inspired by Goyō. Goyō's delicately conceived compositions reveal subtle hints of desire and sexuality which are pushed further by the graphic realizations and illustrations in François Berthoud's unmistakable style. Berthoud, known for his illustrations of dresses, shoes, bags, perfumes and accessories, also illustrated *The Boudoir Bible*, which will be presented on occasion of the exhibition. Betony Vernon, the author of *The Boudoir Bible*, offers a fresh look on sexuality in the 21st century. Vernon is a sex anthropologist, designer and consultant for fashion editors and magazines, such as the French *Vogue*, *GQ* or *The New York Times*.

The artworks in the back room are linked to the publication's subject: Ten pieces from the *Bondage* series by world-renowned Japanese artist Nobuyoshi Araki are presented. Disturbingly explicit photographs of an imagined Japanese reality. Araki's photographs trade under the name 'Bondage' in Western society, the term for erotic tying and binding. Nobuyoshi Araki comments on that: „Bondage is to hold somebody captive. ‚Kinbaku‘ (‚tight-binding‘) [on the other hand] is like an embrace, an act of love“. Araki succeeds in translating endless creative energy to erotically charged photographs which refer to the tradition of so-called ‚Shunga‘ (any kind of image, which shows sexual acts in an explicit way) woodcuts from the 18th century as well as the afore-mentioned ‚Kinbaku‘. Thus a kinship between Araki's works and those of his artistic great-grandfathers becomes evident – and also point to the works by Hashiguchi Goyō in the front room of the gallery.

Araki does not attempt a clear-cut judgement through his photographs: „They don't offer a final conclusion. Everything remains completely open. My pictures don't aim at anything, they're just there.“ Still, the focus is inevitably drawn to the interaction between sex, death and beauty. Just as with Hashiguchi Goyō and François Berthoud, however, Araki's work is much more than provocation through bare skin or depictions of the exposed female body.

Raphaella Arnold

In addition to the exhibit, woodcuts by Hiroshi Yoshida will be shown in a separate room. Travelling the world, Yoshida captured exotic places like the Alps, Chinese villages or Indian sceneries in his very own style, elating the Japanese public.

Hiroshi Yoshida – Wanderer Between Worlds

When Commander Perry forced Japan to open to the West in 1858, art started to change rapidly. While Japanese culture used to draw mainly from China and Korea, Western and Russian influences became more dominant in the second half of the 19th century. The Japanese-Western dialogue in the arts worked both ways: Japanese woodcut technique immediately influenced the development of modernity and artists such as Monet, Van Gogh or Jawlensky drew inspiration from the abundant pool of shapes and colours of *Ukiyo-e* (literally translated: ‚pictures of the floating world‘).

The century was coming to an end as Hiroshi Yoshida (1876-1950) was studying European painting in Kyotō under Tamura Shoryu and art was rapidly changing. He traveled extensively during the first two decades (America, Europe, India and China) and fell in love with Impressionism. The studio had been the traditional place of art production in Europe as well as in Japan and the Impressionists' idea to study the subject „en plain air“, was exciting to Yoshida, a passionate mountain climber and hiker.

He developed his own style of gouache and frequently used Japanese as well as European design elements. Fluent colour gradients are contrasted with rather sharp, black outlines, creating an effect that reminded many of his contemporaries of Hergé's Ligne Claire. When Yoshida began turning his drafts into woodcuts in 1925, he revived a medium that had become marginalized due to the immense success of photography in Japan. Through Hiroshi Yoshida and other artists like Hashiguchi Goyō or Hasui the genre of woodcut gained new popularity and became known under the term *Shin Hanga Undō* („new print movement“).

The depiction of exotic places like the Alps, Chinese villages or Indian sceneries captivated the contemporary Japanese audience as the country modernized at an extreme speed - and the Western audience could not withdraw from the fascination, either. During the 1920s, Hiroshi Yoshida already had successful exhibitions in Detroit, Boston and Paris, soon selling as many woodcuts abroad as in Japan. As a mediator between different art historical traditions – as a „wanderer between worlds“ – he represented an important, cosmopolitan position, which strongly contrasts the nationalist paroles and movements that flare up in Japan and Europe at the same time.

For picture material and more informations please contact the gallery:
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EVENTS

Book Launch: *The Boudoir Bible: The Uninhibited Sex Guide for Today*, Rizzoli New York 2013
By Betty Vernon, illustrated by François Berthoud
Talk with the author and book signing: 9 June 2013, 4 pm

Open House Weekend: Saturday & Sunday, 8 & 9 June 2013, 11 am – 5 pm

PREVIEW

Season opening on 29 August 2013 with the artists **Feipel & Bechameil** from Luxembourg.