



NEW RELEASE

Hanayo Keep an Eye Shut

Texts by Kai Althoff, Takahiro Ito
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The work of thirty years by iconic Japanese artist Hanayo

Keep an Eye Shut summarizes thirty years of the activities of Japanese photographer, artist, musician, and model Hanayo Nakajima. In 1989, at the age of 19, she became a Hang-yoku (younger geisha), and began to take pictures using her father's old camera. Her vivid and fresh images became a forerunner of »girly photography« in Japan. Later she was featured on the cover of *The Face* magazine and modeled for Gaultier. She moved to Berlin in 1999 where she worked with the film director Christoph Schlingensiefel. Hanayo has collaborated with international musicians, her single *Joe le taxi* has been featured on many music compilations.

Hanayo has published several books including *Hanayome*, *MAG-MA*, and *berlin*, and has exhibited worldwide including at Palais de Tokyo (Paris), Taka Ishii Gallery (Tokyo), Mori Museum (Tokyo), Documenta X (Kassel). She is based in Berlin and Tokio.

From the text by **Kai Althoff**:

I cannot recall seeing Hanayo ever taking a picture with a camera. Maybe it was indeed a camera I noticed once in a murky crevice of the bag she travelled with, and had opened to pull out cherished gifts for us.

I got to the conclusion the camera to her is obsolete, for these pictures are taken only by the means of her very eyes, which are made of lenses that expose the seen onto designated plates, themselves making up the floors of many-a-room in her soul, and the chemicals to develop these negatives evolving, now flooding these rooms, are originating to parts from her heart and her brain, controlling the ratio and quality of their neurological consistency. The pictures will thus be of such, as if you view them in their truest

essence, in the way only those get to experience them, who are granted the abode inside her, between her clavicles, employed by her in assistance, in awe of what they are to witness upon its making.

From the text by **Ito Takahiro**, Curator, Tokyo Photographic Art Museum:

In 2002, she held a solo exhibition at Palais de Tokyo in Paris, organised by director Jerome Sans. At the centre of the venue was a long hanamichi and a canopied sofa titled Hana chambre, where Hanayo performed in a kimono and footage capturing the situation was shown. In this way, the show sought not only to exhibit her photographs, but to also utilise the entire space as a means by which to convey the personality of Hanayo. In *Cities on the Move* and her solo show at Palais de Tokyo, Hanayo as a personality and the work of Hanayo became indistinguishable due to the growing number of photos capturing moments surrounding her vibrant daily life.

(...)

Looking back on Hanayo's 30-year career in turn, I was always amazed at how effortlessly she remained active across numerous different genres at the same time. Presumably, she will continue to engage in a wide range of activities, since that is the mode of artistic expression that comes most naturally to her. At times, I often wonder if there has ever been a photographer such as Hanayo, whose life and work are so freely intertwined that I often find myself forgetting that she is a photographer.

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