

ROMAN ROAD

PRESS RELEASE DAISUKE YOKOTA *EMERGENCE*

Private View:

Wednesday 27 September 2017, 6pm – 9pm

Exhibition:

Thursday 28 September – Saturday 11 November 2017

Opening Hours:

Wednesday – Friday, 10am – 6pm

Saturday, 12pm – 5pm and by appointment

Following the success and sensation of Daisuke Yokota's work in Asia and Europe, Roman Road is delighted to present *Emergence*, the first solo exhibition by the celebrated Japanese artist in London. Bringing together three distinct projects, which explore his meticulous approaches to photography and video art, the exhibition examines how he tests the limits of his media, pulling apart their composite anatomies to expose their layers and materiality. His intuitive interventions bestow his photographs with an unexpected texture, emerging a new and unimagined sense of depth and tactility. *Emergence* offers a rare opportunity to see unique photographic works that have been produced by the artist's hand. The exhibition also includes a video work displayed across five monitors, adding an element of dynamism and an insight into the three-dimensional complex processes that go into the production of all Yokota's work.

Winner of the prestigious Foam Paul Huf Award 2016, Yokota is at the vanguard of young Japanese experimental photographers. His visceral and subversive investigations of the medium hark back to an avant-garde tradition that emerged in Tokyo in the late 1960s through the work of the Provoke generation. Unified under a manifesto that sought to break the rules of traditional photography, the work of the Provoke members has been described in Japanese as 'are-bure-boke' (rough, blurred, and out of focus), a visual language that is certainly echoed in the work of Yokota. His process is complex and painstaking; he captures his images on a digital camera, prints them, and rephotographs them on medium-format film. He then reprints them, again and again, using light and heat, or often open flame or acid to mark and manipulate his images. The creative process and end results of Yokota's works possess an equal and curious intensity.

For his first exhibition at Roman Road, Yokota presents a collection of recent experimental camera-less photographic works. These large-scale works are unique, which is unusual among Yokota's oeuvre, where he often makes use of editions. With these works, Yokota investigates the chemical reactions caused by exposing photographic emulsions. Employing copious amounts of the light-sensitive colloids, which he purchased in bulk through an online auction, he liberally painted photographic papers and exposed them to light. The wet texture on the surface of the papers introduces an unexpected visual depth which contrasts with the flatness of the works' surface. The resulting opaque and intensely black photographs are distinguished by small variations that only become apparent on close viewing. They have a mysterious magnetism, augmenting a sense of nocturnal darkness. Yokota often creates works at night that evoke a dreamlike state, contrasting the flat world of reverie with the three-dimensionality of reality.

Also exhibited in *Emergence* is a video installation comprising five monitors showing a single film in five different speeds. Using a trail camera, the artist documented the production process of his *Matter/Vomit* (2016), an installation composed of 100,000 inkjet prints coated in wax and stacked in a monumental pile. Resonating with the creative process of his photographic works, Yokota made a copy of his digitally recorded video on videotape and re-digitalised it again. By repeating this process, his video was purposely degraded and the sound gained more noises. With his video installation, Yokota imparts a critical approach towards the perfection we pursue in our digital age and ensues an abstract meditation on creation and consumption, destruction and ephemerality. The work helps viewers to visualise the layers of development and depth of meaning behind Yokota's processes of production, and points to the motion inherent beneath the surface of his static pieces.

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The exhibition lastly includes 53 photographs from Yokota's *Taratine* (2015). A profoundly intimate and nostalgic project, *Taratine* charts a new and starkly different direction in Yokota's work. Taking its title from an ancient ginkgo tree found in northern Japan, which has been worshipped by generations of women for its fertility-enhancing abilities, Yokota's *Taratine* is an ode to his mother and long-time girlfriend, the most important women in his life. Nonetheless, like much of his other work, the photographs are laden with an ethereal and sensory language. Often blurry with a coarse, visible grain; scratched, or with hair or smut strewn over the surface; the images materialise a fragile yet distinctive tactility.

Beyond the discernible kindred aesthetic that can be said to resonate with the work of the Provoke pioneers, Yokota's photographs also uncover a different, radical photographic vocabulary. By way of complex process and execution, his practice is driven by his personal and everyday experiences and his original explorations bestow to photography the ability to interpret such sensations through its own deconstructed anatomy.

Daisuke Yokota's *Emergence* opens on Wednesday 27 September from 6pm-9pm and will be on display at Roman Road until 11 November 2017.



Daisuke Yokota, *Untitled* (from *Taratine*), 2015. Inkjet print on UltraSmooth Fine Art paper, 30 x 22 cm with frame, edition of 8. © Ollie Hammick

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ABOUT THE ARTIST

Daisuke Yokota (b.1983) is a Japanese artist who majored in photography at the Nippon Photography Institute in Tokyo. As the winner of the first Outset | Unseen Exhibition Fund at the Unseen Photo Fair 2013, he presented a solo exhibition at Foam Photography Museum in Amsterdam in 2014. In the same year, his book *Vertigo* (Newfave, 2014) was shortlisted for the Paris Photo - Aperture Foundation PhotoBook of the Year award. In 2015, Yokota was featured at Shashin Festival: Photography from Japan (New York), and participated in *In the Wake: Japanese Photographers Respond to 3/11* (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston); *Another Language* (Rencontres d'Arles, Arles); and *Trans-Tokyo / Trans-Photo* at the Jimei x Arles: East West Encounters International Photo Festival (Xiamen, China). His works are included in the collections of the Foam Photography Museum, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the SFMOMA. In 2016, Yokota received the prestigious Foam Paul Huf Award and recently presented his solo exhibition *Matter* at Foam Photography Museum.

ABOUT ROMAN ROAD

Roman Road was founded in 2013 by Marisa Bellani and initially began as a project space. The peculiarity of the premises has had a direct impact on the gallery's programme since its beginning. Tall and with a small footprint, the space led the director to challenge artists to employ the architectural elements in order to develop or restructure a body of work. Artists have frequently been asked to use the exhibition as a medium and have managed to transform the gallery room into a unique work of art. In 2014, the building underwent refurbishment to instate an additional private viewing space that gathers varied works by the gallery's represented artists, which are viewable by appointment. Since completing this renovation in 2015, Roman Road has established a qualitative programme, including participations at art fairs, and has seen its represented artists, especially Antony Cairns, become internationally recognised by institutions and collectors.

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