

Yamamoto Keiko Rochaix

PRESS RELEASE

His Last Bow

Erika Kobayashi

6 September - 21 November 2019

Private view and opening reception: 5th September 2019, 6pm - 9pm

Yamamoto Keiko Rochaix is pleased to present "His Last Bow" of Erika Kobayashi, the first showing of the Tokyo-based artist in the UK, comprising works of photography, moving images, texts, drawings and printed materials.

Kobayashi is a singular artist: not only active in visual art exhibiting internationally, she is also a full-fledged manga creator as well as a respected author in her country, regularly contributing to literary and other magazines. The themes the artist treats stay constant across diverse media, and the artist develops the issues based on historical incidents and subtleties of personalities involved, intricately weaving them with passages from the diaries of her late father, a psychiatrist and a renowned Sherlock Holmes scholar, with nonchalant daily conversations with friends, or with life of imaginary young girls who symbolise the contemporary society. Juxtaposed episodes appeal to sensitivities and emotions common across cultures and generations, as they slowly merge and guide the perspective towards the social awareness.

Radiation, uranium, Marie Curie, and the pioneer scientist's life and works form an important part of the lifework for Kobayashi which represent the comprehensive and paramount subject matter for all of her creation. Her first full-length novel 'Breakfast with Madame Curie' (Shueisha, 2014), shortlisted for the prestigious Akutagawa Literary Prize, and the series "Children of Light: Luminous" (LITTLEMORE, 2013 - present) first distributed on the Web then published in the book form, are examples of fruit of years of research. In these publications, the artist draws the readers' attention to the fact that the uranium was called 'fairy light' for its light emitting property and that it shines beautifully in the dark, and she imagines that the initial excitement surrounding the discovery of the chemical element must have been innocent and pure with no apprehension or suspicion for its potential contribution to making of nuclear weapons and other controversial uses.

The present exhibition is constructed upon the undercurrent provided by the newly written text "His Last Bow" that speaks of universal sentiment of fathers, referring to the three generations of fathers, including her own father, his father who is her grandfather, and the father of her daughter, and to historical events and episodes concerning the uranium and radiation. Throughout the show, constant is the idea that light as a metaphor for presence, though in some of the works, the perpetual concept may be lurked below the upper layers referring to human emotions deemed insignificant within epoch-making turns of history. Kobayashi projects light, as a torch, over the tiniest of incidents or the smallest of emotions that actually took place but have been largely overlooked in the broad context of History, and by doing so, she gives rise to hopes and expectations towards the world we live in at present and in the future.

Erika Kobayashi (b. 1978, Tokyo)

Lives and works in Tokyo

Kobayashi creates works that are inspired from things that are invisible, time and history, family and memory, and the traces of place. In 2014 she was nominated for the 27th Mishima Yukio Award and the 151st Akutagawa Award for her novel, "Breakfast with Madame Curie", published by Shueisha. In parallel, she has presented installation works both in Japan and overseas, which enable viewers to re-experience various scenes in which the elements of fiction and documentary from her writings drift back and forth between personal narrative and social reality.

Recent solo exhibitions include: "1F in the Forest of Wild Birds" Yutaka Kikutake Gallery, Tokyo (2019), "Trinity" Karuizawa New Art Museum, Nagano (2017). Group exhibitions include "Image Narratives: Literature in Japanese Contemporary Art" The National Art Center, Tokyo (2019), "Women Imagining Rooms: About the Diary of Lady Sarashina" Ichihara Lakeside Museum Chiba (2019), "Roppongi Crossing 2016: My Body, Your Voice," Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (2016); "Living Locally –Reconsidering Critical Regionalism," ARTS MAEBASHI (2015), "Your Dear Kitty, the book of Memories," collaboration with The Future, Lloyd Hotel and JCC, Amsterdam (2015), and "The Radiants," Bortolami Gallery, New York (2015). Residency with the Asian Cultural Council, NYC (2007-2008).

Publications include the collection of short stories "She Looks into the Mirror" (Shueisha, 2015), a nonfiction "Your Dear Kitty" (Littlemore, 2011) inspired by the diaries of Anne Frank and based on the diary of the artist's father, the graphic novel "Children of Light: Luminous" volume 1, 2 and 3 (2013, 2016 and 2019) which trace the history of the atom and of radiation, and a collection of her recent texts, drawings, and comics, "I Can't Forget" (Seidosha, 2012).

Erika Kobayashi's father is a psychiatrist and a Sherlockian Tsukasa Kobayashi. He and her mother, under the pen-name Akane Higashiyama, co-translated all sixty short stories and novels featuring Sherlock Holmes into Japanese, as well as publishing numerous scholarly works on the subject.

For further information, images or to arrange interviews please contact:

+44 (0)755 136 0056

press@yamamotokeiko.com

Title: His Last Bow

Artist: Erika Kobayashi

Address: 19 Goulston St, London, E1 7TP

Dates: 6th September - 21 November 2019

Private View: Thursday 5th September 2019

Opening Hours: Wednesday to Saturday, 11am – 6pm

Travel: Aldgate East, Aldgate, Liverpool Street

Twitter: twitter.com/yamamotokeikor

Facebook: facebook.com/yamamotokeikorochoaix

Instagram: instagram.com/yamamotokeikorochoaix

Website: www.yamamotokeiko.com