

Yamamoto Masao

*Ambrotypes*

November 16, 2023 – January 6, 2024



The emotional power of photography – and the ability of an image to evoke memories – will be illustrated in an exhibition of new photographic work by Japanese artist Yamamoto Masao. The artist's exhibition, *Ambrotypes*, titled after a 19th century process that produces a one-of-a-kind image on glass, will be on view at Yancey Richardson from November 16, 2023, through January 6, 2024. An opening reception will be held on Thursday, November 16 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

In his seventh exhibition with the gallery, Yamamoto captures intimate moments that become visual haiku, using a range of subject matter from the nude female body to wildlife he encounters in the Japanese countryside. His images, which at times can appear otherworldly, are inspired by the beauty of the natural world, overlooked details, spirituality, and Japanese aesthetic traditions. His ambrotypes of birds recall the genre of Japanese bird-and-flower paintings dating back to the 14th century.

To make ambrotypes, Yamamoto uses the collodion process – widely practiced in the mid-19th century – which requires the glass to be coated, exposed, and developed within a matter of minutes. Thus, the element of time is critical to Yamamoto's process; he works quickly in the moment as the collodion is coagulating to realize

an image, which is then forever fixed. The resolution of images produced by collodion, which serves as a photosensitive emulsion, has a quality that is no less than the high resolution of digital technology today.

As Yamamoto explains, *"I apply collodion to a glass plate and capture the image before the plate dries. The transparency of glass gives depth to the projected image. It is as if you are peering into a different world through a small window. The fluidity of the collodion shows me an accidental, unknown world. I feel the time has been rewound, and I am traveling back to the origin of photography."*

Born in Gamagori-City, Japan, in 1957, Yamamoto is based in Yamanashi, Japan. His work has been exhibited in international institutions including the High Museum of Art, Atlanta; George Eastman House, Rochester; Carrousel du Louvre, Paris; Galerie de Moderne, Munich; and Museum of Photographic Arts, San Diego; Instituto Figueiredo Ferraz, Brazil; and Kiyosato Museum of Photographic Art, Japan. Yamamoto's photographs are included in the collections of the Victoria & Albert Museum, London; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; International Center of Photography, New York; and the Sir Elton John Collection, among others. His monographs include *Bonsai: Microcosms Macrocosms*, T&M Projects, 2019; *Tori*, Radius Books, 2016; *Fujisan*, Nazraeli Press, 2008; *"é"*, Nazraeli Press, 2005; *Omizuo*, Nazraeli Press, 2003; *Nakazora*, Nazraeli Press, 2001; and *A Box of Ku*, Nazraeli Press, 1998.

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Image above: *Untitled (AM #64)*, 2023. Collodion ambrotype, 7 x 5 1/8 inches.