

OPEN EYE GALLERY
15 SEPTEMBER – 25 NOVEMBER 2012



MAIN EXHIBITION
KOHEI YOSHIYUKI: THE PARK & LOVE HOTEL

ARCHIVE EXHIBITION
MARK MORRISROE: LATE PHOTOGRAMS

WALL WORK
SINTA TANTRA: TOGETHER, YET FOREVER APART

Kohei Yoshiyuki: *The Park & Love Hotel*

First exhibited in Tokyo in 1979, **Kohei Yoshiyuki's** (Japan, b. 1946) twin projects *Love Hotel* and *The Park* ignited furious debate about photography, voyeurism and the sexual politics of contemporary Japan. The exhibition was an underground success, but the public controversy was too much for the photographer. Yoshiyuki (a pseudonym - his real name is still not widely known) went to ground and did not exhibit his work again for almost thirty years. He is rumoured to have destroyed many of his photographs.

Love Hotel (1978) captures frozen images from sex tapes made by the clients of an infamous Tokyo book-by-the-hour hotel. The blurred stills are explicit but for the most part barely legible. "The grainy vagueness of these still images... alternately invites and frustrates, underscoring all the more forcefully that the truth about eros lies not in what you see, but, ultimately, in what you fail to" (Debra Kuan, *Artforum*, 2007).

Yoshiyuki is best known for his earlier project *The Park*. He was working as a commercial photographer in Tokyo in the early 1970s when he and a colleague walked through Chuo Park in Shinjuku one night. They noticed a couple on the ground, then spectators lurking in the bushes.

Fascinated by the illicit games of cat and mouse that they had happened upon, Yoshiyuki spent the next six months becoming a participant. "To photograph the voyeurs", he later wrote, "I needed to be considered one of them". He returned with his camera, loaded with infrared flashbulbs and film, and proceeded to photograph in three different Tokyo parks over a number of years. The resulting body of work captures heterosexual and homosexual couples engaged in sexual activity, and the peeping toms who stalked them. Open Eye's installation of *The Park* echoes the original exhibition in 1979 at Komai Gallery in Tokyo, where prints were shown inside a darkened space, illuminated by the torches of visitors.

This is Kohei Yoshiyuki's first UK solo exhibition.

ARCHIVE EXHIBITION

Mark Morrisroe: *Late photographs*

American artist **Mark Morrisroe** was 30 years old when he died from an AIDS-related illness in 1989. In the final years of his short life, Morrisroe produced photographs using x-ray imagery of his own body alongside cuttings from pornographic magazines and other ephemera.

"As his disease advanced, Morrisroe sometimes worked in a makeshift darkroom in his hospital bathroom... Garish colors, overlapping nudes, truncated typography, and jagged abstractions converge with the messy vitality of a life spent much too quickly." (R. C. Baker, *Village Voice*, 2011).

Morrisroe was a driving force in Boston's 1980s punk scene and a prolific artist whose wide-ranging practice focused on photography and performance. His photographic work revolved around the friends and lovers of his everyday milieu, and the exploration of his own image and identity. He experimented ceaselessly with the medium of photography, foregrounding its material characteristics through the manipulation of materials and processes.

Morrisroe was born in Massachusetts in 1959 and attended the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston from 1977 to 1981. He died in New Jersey in 1989.

This is the first exhibition of work by Mark Morrisroe in the UK.

WALL WORK

Sinta Tantra: *Together, Yet Forever Apart*

Using colour as her primary material, **Sinta Tantra** creates architectural interventions on a grand scale. Tantra's new commission *Together, Yet Forever Apart* reflects upon how buildings welcome or repel us, and how bodies navigate environments shaped from light, colour and physical structures.

Together, Yet Forever Apart explores the idea of falling in love and the roles that physical spaces can play within it. Pink light and reflective golds echo idyllic sunsets, alluding to hidden love and to that which is left unsaid. Other inspiration for the colour scheme includes a study of the film *In the Mood For Love* by Wong Kar-wai, as well as the colours of the late artist Mark Morrisroe's photographs, showing inside Open Eye.

Together, Yet Forever Apart was commissioned by Open Eye Gallery and Mann Island for Liverpool Biennial 2012.

THE LIVERPOOL BIENNIAL

The Liverpool Biennial is the largest contemporary art festival in the UK. For ten weeks every two years it commissions the most exciting artists from around the world, attracting over 600,000 visitors in 2010 and contributing £27m to Liverpool's economy.

Notes to Editors:

Open Eye Gallery

19 Mann Island, Liverpool Waterfront, Liverpool L3 1BP

Tel: +44 (0)151 236 6768

www.openeye.org.uk

Gallery open: 10.30am to 5.30pm, Tuesday to Sunday. Closed Monday. **FREE ENTRY**

Image credits, L to R:

- Untitled, 1973 © Kohei Yoshiyuki, Courtesy Yossi Milo Gallery, New York
- Untitled, c. 1987 © Mark Morrisroe. Courtesy of The Estate of Mark Morrisroe (Ringier Collection) at Fotomuseum Winterthur (1)

About Open Eye Gallery

Open Eye Gallery has been one of the UK's leading photography spaces since 1977, and is the only gallery dedicated to photography in the North West of England. In November 2011 Open Eye opened its brand new purpose-built home twice the size of its former incarnation, reinforcing the gallery's position as one of the most significant exhibitors and collectors of photography in the UK.

Located in a development on Liverpool's Waterfront, the new gallery is a stone's throw from Tate Liverpool and the Albert Dock, in the heart of the city's rich cultural quarter.

Funding

Open Eye Gallery receives regular funding from Arts Council England and Liverpool City Council. The new gallery Capital Project has received generous support from several major funders along with grants from trusts and foundations, corporate support and individual donations. Major funders include Liverpool Vision / Northwest Development Agency and the National Lottery through Arts Council England. Support for this current exhibition has also been received from Signs 2000 and Mann Island.

Press enquiries

Katie Lucas

Open Eye Gallery

katie@openeye.org.uk

T: 0151 236 6768

M: 07949 11 55 21

Phoebe Moore

Bolton and Quinn

phoebe@boltonquinn.com

T: 020 7221 5000

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