

## Kenji Toma Solo Exhibition “Artificial Flowers”

- Period           Saturday, March 30th, 2019 - Saturday, April 27th, 2019  
                      \*Temporarily closed during Thursday, April 11th - Saturday, April 13th
- Venue            KANA KAWANISHI PHOTOGRAPHY  
                      2-7-5-5F, Nishiazabu, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-0031 / Tel: +81 3 5843 9128
- Hours            Tuesdays through Fridays, 13:00-20:00  
                      Saturdays, 12:00-19:00 (closed on Sundays, Mondays, and National Holidays)

### ▼ OPENING RECEPTION

Saturday, March 30th, 2019 18:00-20:00



*Peony-A\_a2*, from the series *Artificial Flowers*  
2019 | archival pigment print © Kenji Toma, courtesy KANA KAWANISHI GALLERY

KANA KAWANISHI PHOTOGRAPHY is pleased to announce the opening of Kenji Toma’s solo exhibition *Artificial Flowers* from Saturday, March 30th, 2019.

In his previous series *The Most Beautiful Flowers*, Toma sublimed his long-time adoration towards the 19th century botanical artworks as an homage by using the camera, and connoted the universal aesthetics of real flowers by evenly applying the focus to every details as though works described by the human hand as paintings. The series attained high recognition not only in Germany where the same-titled monograph was published, and United States where the artist currently lives and works, but also in Japan, the United Kingdom, Korea, India, and many other cities in various different cultures.

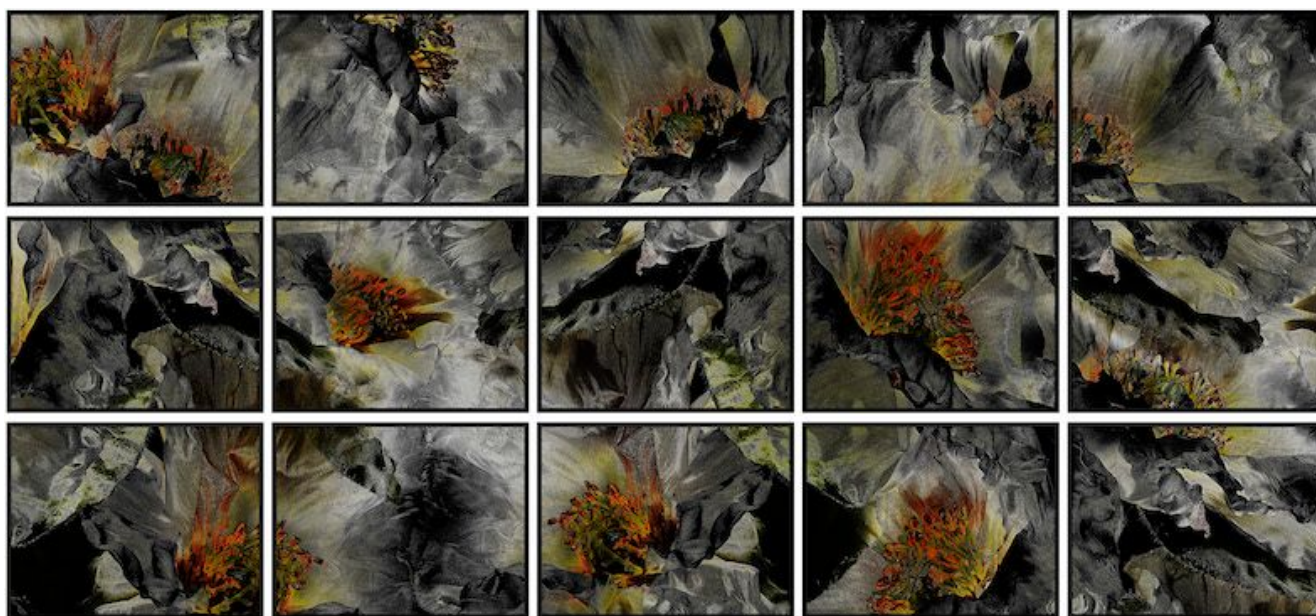
Now Toma’s latest series, *Artificial Flowers* will be disclosed for its very first time at this exhibition at KANA KAWANISHI PHOTOGRAPHY. The works are photographs of silk flowers, which are artificially made by the hands of humans. However in Toma’s

■Please contact below for any image enquiries■

works, they vividly seem as though opposing to their destinies of withering and brilliantly blooming with vital lively energy with determination.

For this series, the flowers are photographed in a cluster, different from the previous series in which each flower were taken one by one. The flowers bunched together will not only be presented as one photograph, but also as “half-automatically separated pieces” as a new trial. The half-automatically divided pieces, which include close-ups of flowers even beyond the artist’s intention, captivate the viewers with unexpected beauty as if they were called by the inner voices of the imitated flowers.

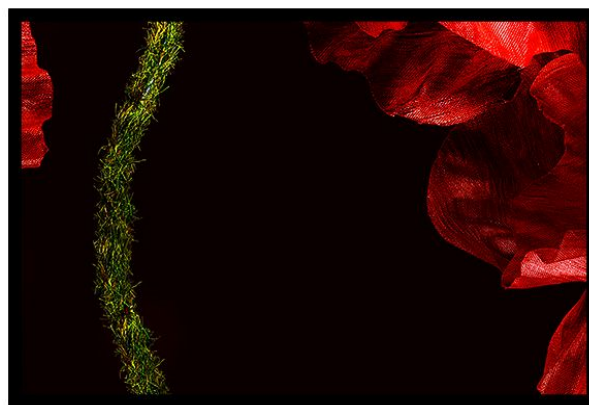
As we face a period in which artificial intelligence may reach the point of singularity, Toma’s new series *Artificial Flowers* re-questions the concept of organic beauty, which now sways in between the vague border of natural and artificial.



*Black Poppy\_a1~e3*, from the series *Artificial Flowers*  
2019 | archival pigment print © Kenji Toma, courtesy KANA KAWANISHI GALLERY



*Morning Glory\_a4*, from the series *Artificial Flowers*  
2019 | archival pigment print  
© Kenji Toma, courtesy KANA KAWANISHI GALLERY



*Red Poppy\_e5*, from the series *Artificial Flowers*  
2019 | archival pigment print  
© Kenji Toma, courtesy KANA KAWANISHI GALLERY

■Please contact below for any image enquiries■

---

## Artist Statement

---

*“Fake”—this is the first word that comes to one's mind when finding out a flower is artificial. However, if you change your perspective in viewing a man-made subject, the beauty characteristic of artificial perfection comes into play. Presenting this element became the drive for this body of work.*

*On one hand, there are natural flowers with the color and form of a miracle that would be the creation of God, and those flowers increase their beauty because of the transience of their lives. On the other, there are silk flowers that will not decay over time. Human hands are added to the silk cloth, the details are devised, artificial flowers made close to the living flowers even a little. However, when we take away the concept of genuine substitute products and put more intimate inspection on each artificial flower, there is a moment where they show beauty beyond the boundaries of "natural" and "artificial." Flowers that do not grow, nor decline—beauty exists even in such places.*

*Is the beauty of immortal flowers that will never die be a virtual image? Is there authenticity in beauty? What is the beauty of truth, the beauty of falsehood? They might be just the values we humans have dominated by the concept of time. I cannot help but think of these flowers in my work seem like flowers blooming in another different dimension somewhere from this world.*

*This is not about trying to find "natural" within "artificial" by photographing silk flowers. This will be a search for the beauty unique to Artificial Flowers and contradiction of their beauty.*

—Kenji Toma

---

## Artist Profile

---

Born in Niigata, Japan. Toma has resided in New York since 1990.

His major solo exhibitions include *π - 3.14 / LITH PRINT* (Monochrome Gallery RAIN, Tokyo, 2018) and *The Most Beautiful Flowers* (Gallery 916, Tokyo, 2017). His first monograph with the same title was published from Kehrer Verlag (Germany) in 2017. His works have been acquired by Fundación Centro Ordóñez - Falcón de Fotografía (San Sebastián, Spain) and others.

■Please contact below for any image enquiries■