

Mayumi Suzuki Solo Exhibition “HOJO”

- Period Saturday, February 18th, 2023 - Saturday, March 25th, 2023
*temporarily closed during March 8 (Wed) - 11 (Sat)
- Venue KANA KAWANISHI PHOTOGRAPHY
2-7-5-F, Nishiazabu, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-0031 / Tel: +81 3 5843 9128
- Hours Wednesdays through Fridays, 13:00-20:00
Saturdays, 12:00-19:00 (closed on Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays, and National Holidays)

▼TALK EVENT

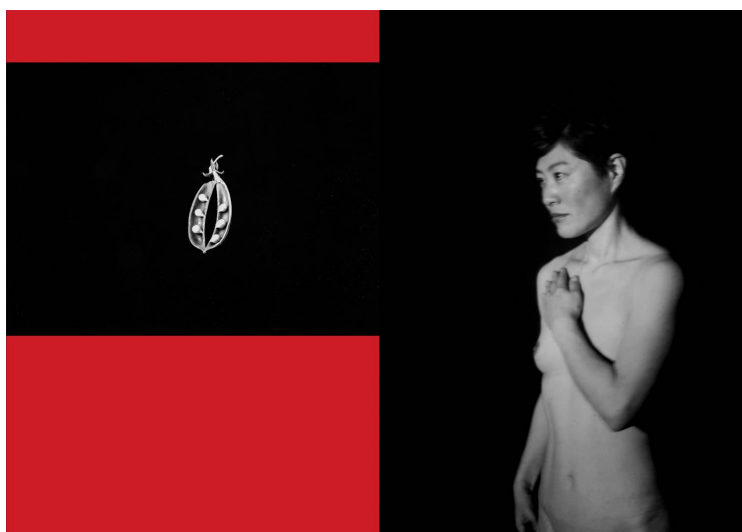
- Date & Time: 17:00-18:00 | Saturday, February 18th, 2023
- Venue: KANA KAWANISHI PHOTOGRAPHY
- Speakers: Mika Kobayashi (Photo Researcher), Mayumi Suzuki (photographer)

admission free | no reservation required

*Kindly note the talk will be held in Japanese language only.

▼OPENING RECEPTION

February 18th (Saturday), 2023 18:00-19:00



from the series, *HOJO*

2020-2021 | archival pigment print | © Mayumi Suzuki, courtesy KANA KAWANISHI GALLERY

KANA KAWANISHI PHOTOGRAPHY is pleased to announce the opening of Mayumi Suzuki's Solo Exhibition, *HOJO* on Saturday, February 18th, 2023.

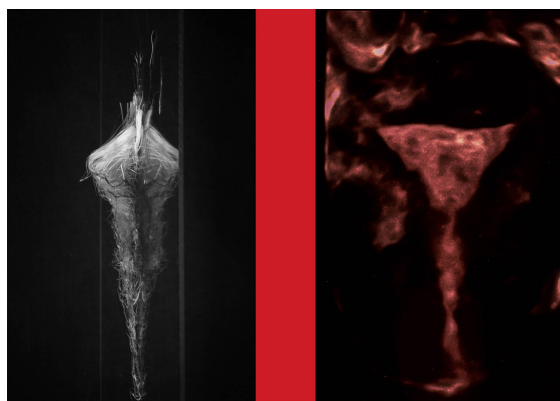
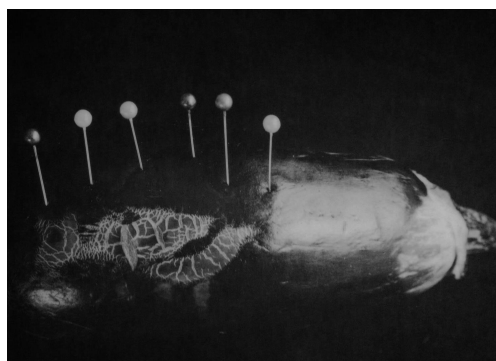
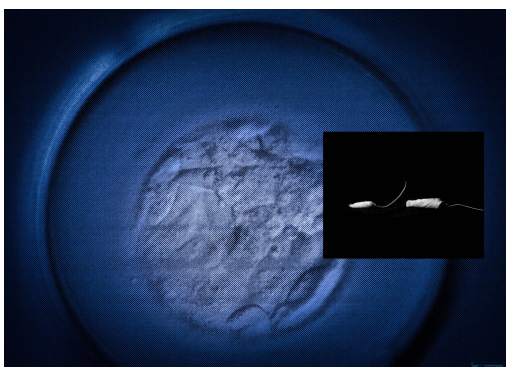
Mayumi Suzuki was born in Onagawa, Miyagi Prefecture, to a photography studio that has been in operation for generations. Being deeply connected to photography from childhood, the narratives spun by her photographs have allowed viewers to find liberation through expression. Her debut series, *The Restoration Will*, was an intimate body of work where the artist calmly accepted the incidents that had happened to her and her family in the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake, and gently, yet straightly, raised her head and looked forward. Her following series, *HOJO*, meaning “fertility” in English, is also based on his own experiences.

■Please contact below for any image enquiries■

The starting point of *HOJO* was Suzuki's encounter with unsold vegetables, such as a two-legged carrot she found on her way home from fertility treatment (IVF) that she had given up on. The work shows the chain of life by confronting the subject for approximately 60 seconds for a long exposure, a very short time for an internal examination, yet a carefully experienced time for photography.

A female nude, a deformed vegetable, and a fertilized egg, all of which at first glance appear to be independent subjects, are treated equally and inevitably in this work, and we are reminded that they are all the same as forms of life. The work also evokes a kind of freshness that does not resist things that transcend human knowledge.

This exhibition will not only be the first time Kana Kawanishi Photography introduces Mayumi Suzuki but also her very first solo exhibition at a commercial gallery. Marking a turning point for Mayumi Suzuki, who has been expanding her activities both in Japan and abroad by sublimating her photographic expression into a narrative that reaches the core of our lives, we cordially welcome all to this exhibition to experience her expression at full scale.



from the series, *HOJO*

2020-2021 | archival pigment print | © Mayumi Suzuki, courtesy KANA KAWANISHI GALLERY

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Artist Statement

In Japanese, 豊穰 (HOJO) refers to an abundance of land or a good harvest. In English, it usually is translated as “fertility.” In Japan, women have traditionally been worshiped as goddesses of HOJO. The ideal of being blessed with abundant crops and many children has been associated with them.

This project is based on my experience with in-vitro fertilization (IVF), which I started at the age of 41. I am trying to acknowledge my existence as an outlier. Photographing myself in the dark with a spotlight on me and an exposure of about 60 seconds gave me time to take a long, hard look at myself. At times, it reminded me of the anxious moments on the doctor’s examination chair, the pain of egg retrieval, and the faint anticipation of implantation. In other moments, I felt a sense of calm.

The doctor uses 60 seconds to examine the patient on the examination chair. He doesn’t take much time to examine each woman. There are many of them coming to the clinic, one after the other. I had hoped to be examined more carefully. On my way home from the clinic, at the market, I found deformed vegetables that had not been sold. They looked miserable, like my own inability to conceive. So I thought of photographing and handling each vegetable gently. For the process, I use Direct Positive Paper, and I work with a 4x5-inch camera. This method allows me to control the exposure to recreate the time of an examination at an IVF clinic.

I also used pictures of fertilized eggs that I received from the clinic. They are rough, pixelated pictures. From them, it’s hard to tell the difference between a fertilized egg that can get pregnant and one that cannot. When you zoom in, it’s just a dot. If there is a factor in the hundreds of millions of cells in my body that is preventing me from conceiving, I have to look for that outlier. I am reminded of endless infertile land.

In this day and age, women can choose how they want to live. But sometimes they have to accept a fate that they have no control over. Even if my own body is not “fertile,” I want to be proud of it because this is my life.

Mayumi Suzuki

Artist Profile

Mayumi Suzuki was born in 1977 in Onagawa Town, Miyagi Prefecture, and currently lives and works in Zushi, Kanagawa Prefecture. After graduating, she worked as a freelance photographer, focusing on portraits. The Great East Japan Earthquake struck on March 11, 2011. Suzuki’s hometown of Onagawa was destroyed by the tsunami, and her parents lost their lives. Since then, she has frequently returned to her hometown to record the efforts of people in the area to move forward from the disaster. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Photography in the photography department at the Nihon University College of Art.

Suzuki’s recent solo exhibitions include “The Restoration Will/The Place to belong” (2018, Galeria Miejska Arsenal, Poznań, Poland), “The Restoration Will” (2018, SPAZIO LABO, Bologna, Italy), “The Restoration Will” (2017, REMINDERS PHOTOGRAPHY STRONGHOLD, Tokyo).

Group exhibitions include KYOTOGRAPHIE “10/10 Celebrating Contemporary Japanese Women Photographers” (2022, HOSOO GALLERY, Kyoto), “Biennale de Photographie en Condroz” (2021, Belgium), and “Twilight Daylight Contemporary Japanese Photography vol.17” (2020, Tokyo Photographic Art Museum, Tokyo).

Suzuki received the Award at the PHotoESPAÑA 2018 Best Photography Book of the Year (2018, Spain), and was selected as the Grand Prize for the Photobox (2018, Italy), among others.

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