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# OLIVIER RICHON

## Aka Yagara

January 13th > February 24th 2018

Olivier Richon  
*Aka Yagara*

Exhibition from January 13th to February 24th 2018

Bendana | Pinel Art Contemporain is pleased to present Olivier Richon's second solo exhibition « Aka Yagara ».

In *Praise of Shadows*, written in 1933, is an essay on the Japanese interior by the writer Jun'ichirō Tanizaki. Here the shadow is an aesthetic device that forms the view and also the taste. The visible becomes edible as much as the food is also a visual form. The interior is this dark room that is also reminiscent of the camera device of the Camera Obscura.

The starting point of the work is a photograph of the kitchen of Villa Savoye (1931) built by Le Corbusier. A fish placed in the foreground offers a link between architecture and food. This image will be staged in the kitchen of a modest Soba restaurant in Kyoto. Oscillating between still life and document, this image is also a conversation between the clarity of the cuisine of Villa Savoye and the shadows of that of Kyoto. The clarity of an interior is problematic for Tanizaki, *since the cleanliness of what can be seen only causes thoughts of what can not be seen*. The dirty, however, becomes an aesthetic attribute when dirt, soot and the ravages of time produce surfaces that absorb light. This gives the interior a cold elegance. And in this case, *if indeed the elegance is frigid, it can also be described as dirty*, says Tanizaki.

In another photograph, the viscous *aka yagara*, the elongated fish whose eyes look at us without seeing us, also recalls this frigid elegance of which he speaks. The viscous and wet, as well as the ice block on a work table are the signs of the arrested movement of sea water.

The photographs show an interest for simple objects: strings, dry seaweeds, fish just out of the sea, molluscs drying in the sun. In the manner of Francis Ponge in his *Le parti pris des choses* (1942), the photographs focus on detail and show us the complexity of the banal. The documentary bias of the photograph and the constructed views coexist. Vegetables wrapped in newspaper are photographed in the dim light of the hotel room where Tanizaki was staying in Kyoto. The camera does not capture the objects but receives them. The objects pose, motionless. In English *still life* means a quiet, silent, and motionless nature. Dried algae and molluscs are edible for the mouth as much as for the eye.

In some photographs, the paper is present as background; the gray paper that absorbs the light becomes a simple decoration that recalls some Japanese interiors. For Tanizaki, *'Japanese paper gives a feeling of warmth, calm, and rest. Western paper rejects the light, while our paper seems to absorb it, wrap it gently, like the thin surface of a first snowfall'*.

Paper, viscosity and humidity are signs that also remind us of the photographic process, transforming the still life into a rested nature, where the sensitive surface receives the objects to absorb them and transform them into representations.

Olivier Richon (Lausanne, Switzerland, 1956) lives and works in London, United Kingdom

**EXHIBITIONS (Selection)** : «Sequenzia Sismica», Fondazione

Fotografia Modena, Modena, Italy (2017) | «Vers le neutre», Centre d'art et photographie de Lectoure, France (2015) | Le Bestiaire Imaginaire, l'animal dans la photographie de 1850 à nos jours», Palais Lumière, Evian, France (2010) | «Teaching Photography», Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany (2010) | «365 Days», Bendana | Pinel Art Contemporain, Paris, France (2009) | «Zoo, La Centrale électrique», European Centre for Contemporary Art, Brussels, Belgium (2006) | «Das Fotografierte Tier», Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany (2005) | «Fotografia Trilogia», Galleria Civica di Modena, Modena, Italy (2004) | «Ein Blicke in Privat Sammlungen», Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany (2004) | «Sans commune mesure - image et texte dans l'art actuel», Musée d'art moderne, Lille, France (2002) | «Seeing Things», Canon Gallery, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, United Kingdom (2002) | «Cinema India», Contemporary Space, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, United Kingdom (2002) | «L'oeuvre Démultipliée», Musée d'art moderne, Lille-Métropole, France (2001) | «M Family», Musée Migros, Zurich, Switzerland (2001) | «Eat, fuck, die», Platform, London, United Kingdom (2000) | **PUBLIC COLLECTIONS** : Musée national d'art moderne, Paris, France | Arts Council of Great Britain, United Kingdom | Victoria and Albert Museum, London, United Kingdom | Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France | Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations, France | Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain des Pays de la Loire, France | Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain Bretagne, France | Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain Rhône-Alpes, France | Cabinet des Estampes, Geneva, Switzerland | Musée de L'Elysée, Lausanne, Suisse | Brooklyn Museum, New York, United States | National Gallery of New South Wales, Australia | National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, Japan | DG Bank, Allemagne | Kunstring Folkwang, Essen, Germany



*Cuisine, Kyoto*, 2016  
Color Photography, silver print type C  
100 x 120 cm  
Edition: 5 + 2 AP



*Gôya, Nagasaki*, 2016  
Color Photography, silver print type C  
65 x 80 cm  
Edition: 5 + 2 AP



*Konbu, Kyoto, 2016*  
Color Photography, silver print type C  
100 x 120 cm  
Edition: 5 + 2 AP