

Press Release

Yoshi Takata

Looking at Paris 1955—1987

2 March—23 April 2022
Opening 2 March 2022, 6PM—8PM

Thaddaeus Ropac
Paris Marais
7, rue Debelleye, 75003 Paris



1. Yoshi Takata, *Pierre Cardin* collection, 1966

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2. Yoshi Takata, *Les bouchers*, 1962

The mystery of a great photograph is to open our eyes to the real and then to leave us there, surprised in the process of surprising, in front of an aspect of the world to which we will never have the key, and yet equipped with an irreplaceable certainty. — Robert Doisneau

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This special project at the Thaddaeus Ropac Paris Marais gallery retraces thirty years of the Japanese photographer Yoshi Takata's Parisian career. Through a selection of original prints that explore not only the fashion photography for which she became known but also her portraits and street photography, the exhibition invites us to rediscover the work of an artist with a remarkable trajectory and an unconventional approach.

Born in 1916 near Tokyo, Japan, Yoshi Takata began her career as an assistant interpreter at Agence France Presse in Tokyo, where she met photographer Ihei Kimura, who introduced her to the medium. When she left AFP in 1954, Kimura asked her to accompany him on a trip to Paris and it was there that she became acquainted with the well-known humanist photographers Édouard Boubat, Brassai, Henri Cartier-Bresson and Robert Doisneau.



Yoshi Takata

3. Yoshi Takata, *Alberto Giacometti et Annette*, 1964

Discovering Paris at their sides, Yoshi Takata refined her practice, inspired by their ability to capture poignant moments of poetic realism. With the eye of an outsider finding her place in the bustling capital, her surrealist approach set her apart. In search of peculiar and incongruous moments of Parisian life, her photographs are often animated by a strange force and a sense of humour that distinguish her work from that of her contemporaries. She catches butchers mid-movement as they try to hold up a carcass, their outstretched arms unconsciously echoing the animal's legs. The Eiffel Tower, in turn, is transformed into a mirage on the horizon by the white atmosphere of a foggy day and by Yoshi Takata's singular view of a city that is often described as the cradle of street photography.

Making a place for herself in post-war Paris, Yoshi Takata also took intimate portraits of those around her, including Japanese painter Tsuguharu Foujita next to a canvas in progress, American actress Gloria Swanson at the Cinémathèque Française, and Swiss sculptor Alberto Giacometti seated next to Annette Arm, his wife and muse. Yoshi Takata's documentation of the great artists, writers and political figures of the time, around dinner tables or in their studios, forms an important bridge between the Parisian, Japanese and international artistic and intellectual scenes.



4. Yoshi Takata, *Religieuses au jardin du Luxembourg*, 1958

Shortly after her arrival in Paris in 1954, Yoshi Takata met fashion designer Pierre Cardin, to whom she would become a collaborator and close friend. Encouraged by Cardin, she began working as a fashion photographer, which would remain her profession for over forty years, all while continuing to photograph Paris and take portraits of her wide circle of acquaintances. In her fashion photographs, Yoshi Takata retains her gift for capturing the unexpected. Often leaving the studio to shoot outdoors, in *Pierre Cardin Collection* (1966) she has a model pose on a construction site and immortalises a passing worker as he steals a furtive glance at the scene before him. Combining her eye for street photography with her sense of humour, she draws on surprising associations to create modern and original images. As her friend Robert Doisneau wrote in a letter about their shared passion, 'in a photograph, each one takes and shows the facet or the moment of this reality that suits them best, to prove to others that their poetic universe exists, to let them share the wonder of a moment.'



Portrait of Yoshi Takata

About the artist

Yoshi Takata was born in Yusima Mikumi-cho, near Tokyo, in 1916. Coming from a large industrial family, she took an interest in journalism and got her first job as an assistant interpreter at Agence France Presse in Tokyo in 1947. Having practised drawing for several years, it was in 1954, when she left for France, that she received her first Nikon camera and decided to devote herself to photography. Later that year, Yoshi Takata met Pierre Cardin, with whom she worked as a fashion photographer until the end of her career. In Paris, where she lived until her death in 2009, she formed a large corpus of photographs of the city and portraits of her acquaintances, which she continued to develop throughout her life.

Yoshi Takata's first solo exhibition was held at the Nikon Salon, Tokyo, in 1975. Her work has notably been shown in exhibitions at the Espace Pierre Cardin, Paris in 1991; the Grand Palais, Paris in 1993; the Maison de la culture du Japon, Paris in 2000, and the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography in 2003. Her work can also be found in renowned collections such as those of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and the Bibliothèque historique de la ville de Paris, France.

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1. Yoshi Takata, Pierre Cardin collection, 1966. Silver print. 50,9 x 39,8 cm (20,04 x 15,67 in) © Yoshi Takata. Courtesy Pierre Pelegry **2. Yoshi Takata, Les bouchers, 1962.** Silver print. 60,6 x 50,5 cm (23,86 x 19,88 in) © Yoshi Takata. Courtesy Pierre Pelegry **3. Yoshi Takata, Alberto Giacometti et Annette, 1964.** Silver print. 39,7 x 50,3 cm (15,63 x 19,8 in) © Yoshi Takata. Courtesy Pierre Pelegry **4. Yoshi Takata, Religieuses au jardin du Luxembourg, 1958.** Silver print. 30,5 x 40,4 cm (12,01 x 15,91 in) © Yoshi Takata. Courtesy Pierre Pelegry.