

Anton Kern Gallery

Nobuyoshi Araki and Roe Ethridge

May 12 - July 2, 2026

Anton Kern Gallery presents *Nobuyoshi Araki and Roe Ethridge*, a photography exhibition selected and sequenced by Ethridge, that brings together two series from Araki's archive alongside works by Ethridge, both new and revisited.

For the exhibition, Ethridge has created new prints for his series *Floral Arrangements* (1995–1997/2026): pinhole photographs of carnations, daisies, and other flowers bought in bulk and arranged in thrift store vases that he painted, against floral textile fabrics. For each image, he worked directly onto the textiles using acrylic paint, editing their existing patterns—filling in visual “noise,” establishing a palette, and reconfiguring the ground before introducing the vase and selecting the flowers. Suburban decorative codes and memories of his mother's floral arrangement calendars are reframed through flattened pictorial space. His use of the pinhole lens softens detail and disperses focus, giving the images a kind of “Pop Pictorialism”: a synthesis of the flat affect of pop with the dreamy impressionistic intentions of the late 19th and 20th-century photography movement.

For Ethridge, his *Floral Arrangements* are in an unintended dialogue with Nobuyoshi Araki's *Painted Flowers* (2004), in which bouquets and foliage were dripped with Liquitex before being photographed. Though not included in the exhibition, the memory of *Painted Flowers* sparked Ethridge's decision to reengage the pinhole flower images for *Nobuyoshi Araki and Roe Ethridge*. In both series, painterly intervention is integral, and the photograph becomes not an objective record but a site of layered construction.

From Araki's archive, the exhibition includes works from *Flower Cemetery* (2017)—cut flower bouquets arranged with plastic figurines like dinosaurs and action figures, and other uncanny objects—and *Tokyo Nude* (1989), which pairs female nudes with mundane views of the city. In both series, meaning emerges through juxtaposition: Tokyo's backstreets—its “naked” face—are set against the naked female body, collapsing private and public experiences within a single work. In *Flower Cemetery*, the bouquets read less as still lifes than as psychological assemblages, animated by the residual charge of their embedded figures and disrupting any straightforward notion of beauty.

Two of Ethridge's new works on view, *Romantic Hand with Goossens Crystal Flowers* and *Egyptian Funerary Mask and Me*, were part of a 2025 commissioned series of still life images for the inaugural issue of Chanel Arts & Culture Magazine. In these tableaux, Ethridge combines materials from Chanel's historical archives, as well as artifacts and objects from Gabrielle Chanel's apartment at 31 rue Cambon with set design elements. Also on view is *Sculptures on a Shelf, 1st Floor, Joel Shapiro Studio, September 2025, 2026*, made in the late sculptor's studio, which presents a wooden shelf holding painted objects, irregular blocks and forms in pastels, black, and white, that register as provisional sculpture. Together, the works trace the afterlives of objects and the formal connections to works in the exhibition by both Araki and Ethridge.

Landing in Tokyo, 2026, an image made with Ethridge's iPhone upon his arrival in Japan (for his exhibition *Fugue* at 31 rue Cambon), recalls the diaristic, spontaneous mode Araki has long practiced and theorized as “I-photography” (shi-shashin): the camera as a record of presence, before the image has time to become deliberate. Simultaneously, it invokes a more universal, contemporary gesture that we almost all participate in: the taking of a picture out of an airplane window. In Ethridge's version, the blue clouds and Tokyo Bay appear in a monochrome, with Mount Fuji floating in the distance; the scene both ordinary and sublime. The image connects to the diaristic sensibility of the *Tokyo Nudes* as well as the atmospheric and Pictorialist qualities of the pinhole flowers.



Nobuyoshi Araki, *Untitled (Flower Cemetery)*, 2017, Signed, unnumbered edition of 10, C-Print, 43 1/4 x 55 1/8 inches (110 x 140 cm)