

ARSENAL WIEN

FOTO

FOTO ARSENAL WIEN
MQ, Museumsplatz 1, 1070 Wien

Aug 31, 2023

Press Information

Mari Katayama: Mine and Yours

FOTO ARSENAL WIEN will inaugurate the first Austrian exhibition to focus on the acclaimed Japanese photo artist Mari Katayama on August 31.

"How much of this is you, and how much is not you? Who do I and you belong to, and where are we?" (Mari Katayama)

At the core of Katayama's practice is the everyday experience of living within her own body, which she uses as a living sculpture, mannequin, and a lens through which to reflect society. In her elaborate self-portraits, she places herself among an array of painstakingly constructed objects such as a life-sized doll and decorated boxes she has made herself. The combination of Katayama's hand-sewn objects, sculptural pieces, and photography challenges viewers to question the body and its complex relationship with the surrounding environment and society. From September 1 to November 19, 2023, FOTO ARSENAL WIEN will present the first solo exhibition of the artist's work to be shown in Austria. The exhibition features a selection of self-portraits encompassing different series from 2015 to the present, including the 2016 trilogy *shadow puppet*, *bystander*, and *on the way home*, as well as *study for caryatid*, developed in 2023. The exhibition also showcases a large, multilimbed hand-sewn object from the *bystander* series, which appears in several self-portraits wrapped around and entangled with Katayama's body.

On Beauty and the Difficulties and Power of "Living Together"—Am "I" Mine or Yours?

After the amputation of her lower legs due to tibial hemimelia at the age of nine, Katayama hid her physical impairment so that she could live like "everyone else." It was only at the age of sixteen that she consciously started to create and see herself as an artist. Since then, Katayama has used her body, which keeps changing its shape, size, and roles in society, as a creative agent to approach, reflect, and connect to society as well as explore her own curiosity about our common obsession and desire for (artificially created) beauty.

ARSENAL WIEN

FOTO

Katayama's creative activity gradually expanded from self-portraits taken in her own room to going outdoors, photographing other people's bodies, and inviting the help of others. For example, in 2016 she frequently went to Naoshima island to create the *bystander* series, in which she photographed the hands of puppeteers at Onna-bunraku, a female-only Bunraku puppet theater company, resulting in a collection of photographs and hand-sewn objects, some of which are on view. This was the first time that Katayama featured the bodies of others in her work. In 2023 the second edition of *Katayama's High Heel Project*, which she initiated in 2011, was completed after long-term collaboration with many individuals and corporations to create custom-made high heels. These experiences, along with the gradual expansion in her working style, made Katayama understand both the difficulty and power of "living together," while also realizing that she cannot say she owns her body, whose vitality is only made possible by numerous people and support mechanisms, including prosthetists who know her body better than she does, social support from the disability welfare system, and her family and friends. Although Katayama's work takes personal matters as its starting point, these personal matters are not her themes. The essence of the questions and perspectives that emerge from her works and her activities are always directed toward society.

Katayama explains, "I am not aware that the person in the self-portraits is me. There is something in me that is the same as you. I am you." This leads viewers to question who is pictured in the portraits and who their body belongs to, as well as encouraging them to reflect on why they might think this way. Today anyone can easily post and share images on social media, including information about their appearance, whereabouts, behavior, and even their past doings. "How much of this is you and how much is not you? Who do I and you belong to, and where are we?" The answer to these questions seems to have become even more unclear.

Katayama's images and objects engage viewers in fundamental questions about the body, and the complex issues around bodies such as biased gazes, social labels, and what is considered correct or incorrect. Just as Katayama feels when she proceeds with making objects stitch by stitch with a needle and thread, experiencing her work could allow viewers to confirm their contours, shapes and roles in society, as if reflecting them into a mirror.

Mari Katayama (b. 1987) lives in Gunma, Japan. In addition to her creative activity as an artist, she works as a fashion model, singer, and keynote speaker. Katayama has been awarded numerous prizes; over the last fifteen years her work has been included in around fifty international solo and group exhibitions. Following major presentations at the fifty-eighth Venice Biennale in 2019 and at the Maison Européenne de la Photographie in Paris in 2021, her first exhibition in Vienna includes around thirty photographs and installations.

marikatayama.com

ARSENAL WIEN

FOTO

Basic Information about the Exhibition

Mari Katayama: Mine and Yours

September 1–November 19, 2023, daily except Monday, 11 a.m.–7 p.m.

MQ_Salon, MuseumsQuartier Wien

The exhibition is curated by Felix Hoffmann (artistic director of FOTO ARSENAL WIEN).

Tickets available at the ticket counter and at the MQ_Shop: 10 euros (regular), 5 euros (reduced)

Opening: August 31, 2023, 7 p.m., with Veronica Kaup-Hasler, City Councilor of Cultural Affairs and Science in Vienna

Side events

(Participation with exhibition ticket, without registration, no additional costs for guided tour/talk)

Sep 1, 2023, 6 p.m., MQ_Salon:

Guided Tour Mari Katayama

Sep 3, 2023, 1 p.m., MQ_Salon:

Guided Tour Mari Katayama

Funded by

Stadt Wien Kultur

Supported by

Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation

Media Partners, Cooperations

Camera Austria; EIKON; FOTOGESCHICHTE; artmagazine.cc; ORF III; Volkstheater; Austrian Filmmuseum; Kunsthalle Wien; Hunger auf Kunst und Kultur

About FOTO ARSENAL WIEN

FOTO ARSENAL WIEN is the new center of photography and lens-based media in Vienna, Austria. Initiated by the city of Vienna in autumn 2022, the institution presents contemporary photography in all forms and uses. The temporary venue at the MuseumsQuartier Wien will be replaced by an exhibition space of its own at the Arsenal in late 2024. FOTO ARSENAL is also the platform that organizes FOTO WIEN, Austria's largest biennial festival of photography, which is held within the framework of the European Month of Photography (EMOP). Felix Hoffmann is the artistic director of FOTO ARSENAL WIEN and FOTO WIEN.

ARSENAL WIEN

FOTO

Image material is available for downloading on fotoarsenalwien.at and on request to presse@fotoarsenalwien.at.



PRESS CONTACT

Fleur Christine Vitale, MAS
Head of public relations

FOTO ARSENAL WIEN
Museumsplatz 1
1070 Vienna
Austria
fleur-christine.vitale@fotoarsenalwien.at
+43 (0) 699 12195185
+43 (0) 676 3431367