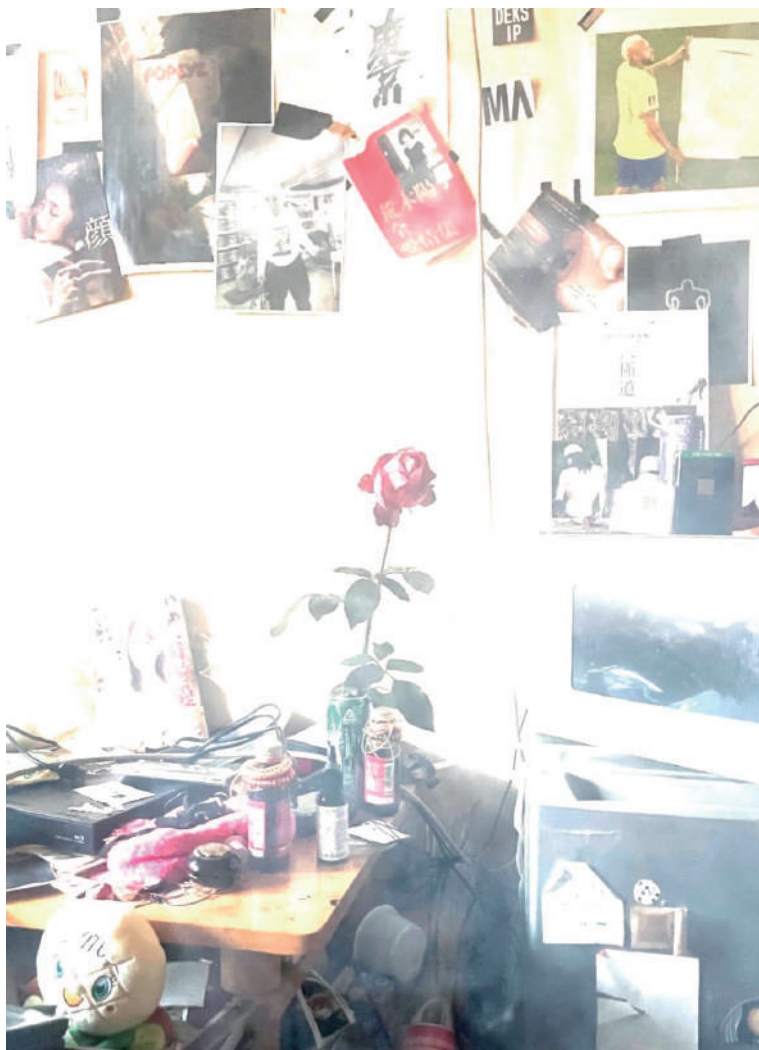


Yuji Amano “ I Want You to Be Here ”

Dates : Thursday 15th May - Sunday 8th June, 2025

Venue : SAI

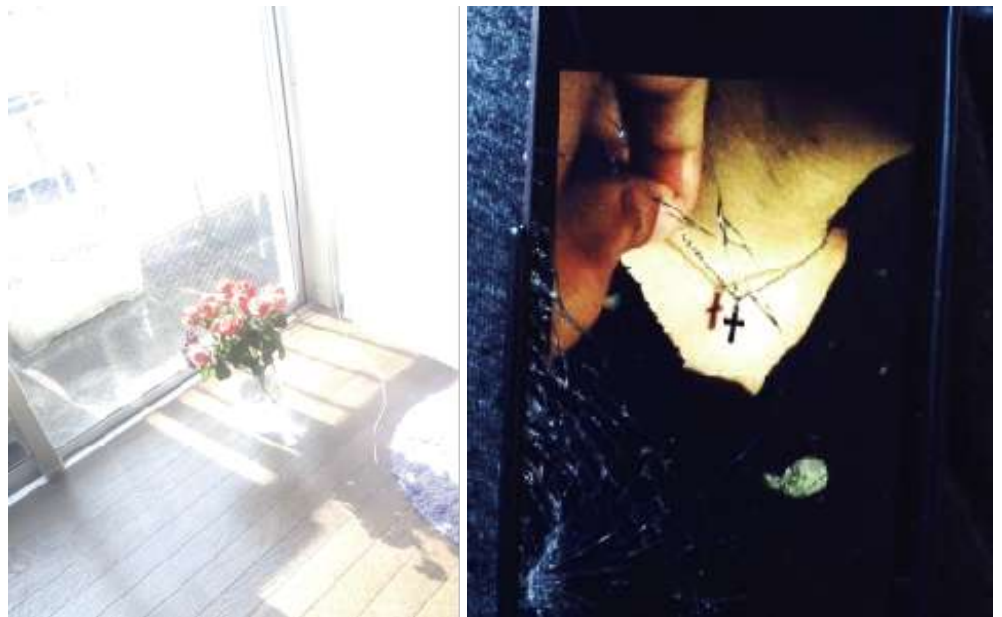


www.saiart.jp

SAI presents the solo exhibition “I Want You to Be Here” by the artist Yuji Amano.

Born in 1978 in Kitakyushu city, Fukuoka, Japan, Amano began taking photographs around 30 and made a strong debut in photography in 2009 when he won the Grand Prix at the Shioyama Photo Festival. For 17 years, he has been traveling around Japan, sleeping in a Kei car, announcing dates, times, and locations on social networking services, and showing his self-published photo book to visitors on a one-to-one basis. Around 2020, Amano opened his house, which used to be a love hotel in Omuta, as a library and gallery, where anyone can visit at any time. He has greatly expanded the scope of his activities beyond the boundaries of being a photographer.

His photographs capture fragments of the world he is alive: Light drifting in the darkness, the sea of unknown journeys, clasped hands, indoor landscapes, spilled blood, blades, and medicines. Taken with a mobile phone camera, his photographs avoid the traditional act of looking through a viewfinder. He even uses selfies and screenshots to record the raw immediacy of the moment. Yet, these photographs do not fit neatly into the genre of 'private photography'. They are more abstract, and more poetic, and draw the viewer into Amano's worldview with a cinematic immersion.



www.saiart.jp

Amano's statement that 'Perhaps the real world lies in the endless darkness that spreads beyond the thinking minds of you and me' seems to present, through a single photograph, the vast expanse of past and future—of life and death—that stretches beyond it. Having had severe depression for more than 30 years, the artist has always lived with death as a familiar presence. His photographs, as if carved out of the world through struggle, bear the marks of something deeply inscribed—images that are harsh, ephemeral, and imbued with a beauty that cannot be replicated.

Divided into four sections at the gallery, this is the largest exhibition of his work, including his most recent work.

We look forward to welcoming you to the exhibition.

● STATEMENT

'Righteous Farewell of the Eye'

I' m saying this now, only to you who are reading this.

That place—just like anywhere else.

Doesn' t matter who did what, or what was what—it' s all the same.

It's not a photo exhibition.

If you' re coming, you better look up the word "respect."

Or grab your hair, drag you out back, you hear?

I' m a man who was never meant to belong in the so-called proper society.

those filthy-faced, domesticated carrion — they aren' t even worthy of being our enemies, we are sharp beasts.

but in a world like this, where it's hard to tell which side is the front and which side is the back, there's not much we can do.

you feel it too every day, don't you?

ever since I was a child, death has never let go of me.

the blood running in me—it's not the blood of a human.

I don' t need women or children. I don't want my loved ones to be sad.

well, now that you know me, go and buy one of my pictures.

I want to pass it on—to the families, children, and women of those who went away before me, leaving their loved ones behind.

this might be the last time.

a man like me—

tonight, somewhere out there, in some back alley of the night like any other,

I'll end up murdered, alone, with no one there to see me off.

I'm not leaving you anything. Please forget me.

● SPECIAL COMMENT

"To end the night"

If Taneda Santoka can be called haiku poet wanderer and Kiyoshi Yamashita a painter wanderer, then Amano Yutaka is a photographer wanderer.

Despite winning awards shortly after debuting as a photographer, Amano never had a studio, never held exhibitions, and never published photo books. Instead, he roamed all over Japan in a kei car, living out of it, tweeting "I'm in this town today," and waiting for "viewers" in cafés, family restaurants, bars, or parks. He would place a "photobook"—a bundle of photos printed at a convenience store—on the table. When someone came along, he'd show them the book one-on-one, charging "1,000 yen per book." The viewing fee covered food and petrol, and he'd move on to the next location. Every day is a journey, every day is a photo shoot, every day is a once-in-a-lifetime, private exhibition. Amano-kun had been living like this for five years when I met him in 2017. I heard his health has made it harder now, but once he recovers, I'm sure those wandering days will be back.

The essence of travel isn't about how many places you visit—it's about keeping on moving. The essence of traveling is not to visit many places, but to keep moving. There are things you can't find unless you stop to look for them, but there are also sights you can't see unless you are running. Amano, who has been capturing these moments, is a photographer who was born on the street and lives on the street. There are probably people who were surprised to hear that Yutaka Amano would be holding an exhibition at the white cube gallery. Some must have felt uncomfortable.

Displaying large prints in clean frames with generous margins in a polished gallery, publishing a hefty hardcover photobook, smiling and chatting at a stylish opening party... Amano had turned his back on the art photography system that embodies all that. I can imagine how conflicted he must have felt when he first heard about the idea for this exhibition.

Still, after years of working with Amano's photographs, I started to think—I want to throw this work right into the centre of that polished industry. I suspect the gallery organisers felt the same. Because it's precisely those people—the ones who think they already know everything about photography—that we want to confront with these images.

Amano's photography has always existed outside of the system—for those outside the usual circles of art and photo enthusiasts. To someone like me, lingering on the edges of the photography world, his way of surviving has felt like a miraculous and enviable act of resistance. But what if, just once, we pulled those precious, intimate photographs out of their closed-off world, and brought them to the field he's seen as the "enemy"—to an away game, where he has no supporters, and decided to play by their rules?

Are Amano's photographs so fragile that their power fades just because of the space or format in which they're shown? Or are they able to run through all the awkwardness with an elegant feint and score a beautiful goal?

We're about to find out.

- Kyoichi Tsuzuki, Photographer and Editor -

●The exhibition information

Yuji Amano “ I Want You to Be Here ”

DATES : Thursday 15th May - Sunday 8th June, 2025

VENUE : SAI

ADRESS : RAYARD MIYASHITA PARK SOUTH 3F, 6-20-10
Jingumae, Shibuya, Tokyo, 150-0001

TIME : 11:00 - 20:00 everyday

PHONE : 03-6712-5706

MAIL : info@saiart.jp

Instagram : [@sai_miyashita](https://www.instagram.com/sai_miyashita)