

## 'where they met'

an ongoing dialogue

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*"I dared to associate the word 'tender' with 'melancholy' rather than the word 'suffocating'; this is what Yamamoto's photos reveal to me - a tender melancholy."*

*"The crossing of our works enabled me to seek and find in my own work moments of suppleness, breaths of fresh air, bubbles of movement, explicit slowness, and moments borrowed, no longer stolen."*

ARPAÏS du bois

*"In her drawings, I recognize an unfettered spirituality that defines the essence of the human act of drawing... I want to breathe in the ki of her drawings, which will let me breathe out something new. "*

Yamamoto Masao

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'**where they met**' is the harmonious merge of the work of the Japanese photographer Yamamoto Masao and the Belgian artist ARPAÏS du bois. This exhibition at **Fifty One Fine Art Photography** is the culmination of an intense synergy, which previously resulted in the book 'Where we met' (Lannoo Publishers).

The aesthetic power of the pictures of **Yamamoto Masao** (Japan, 1957) is unique. Refined, subtle and powerful at the same time. He succeeds to unfold the photographic medium into his own world, far off leading standards. The photo prints are small, sometimes even minuscule, and require a profound observation. The manual modifications by the artist provide an experimental look, with frayed edges and color additions. His photographs seem to be marked by time, but that impression is the result of a balanced and accurate intervention by the artist. The technique of mixed media and the exceptional prints generate a close connection with the object. Yamamoto narrates no prefabricated story. He offers a glimpse into a harmonious world that is visible for everyone, but not perceived by everybody. For Yamamoto, harmony is the constant interaction between man and nature. Yamamoto's work is anchored in that direct relationship with his environment.

According to Dan Leers\*, Beaumont and Nancy Newhall Curatorial Fellow of the Department of Photography at The Museum of Modern Art in New York, the dynamism in the work of Yamamoto is outstanding. *"With photographs that leave a trail, yet allow us to set our own pace, Yamamoto invites us to follow him on these journeys,"* says Leers. *"Yamamoto is always changing course and directing our attention to some easily overlooked detail."*

The work of **ARPAÏS du bois** (Belgium, 1973) opens a door to a similar world. Her drawings are a personal response to the excessive overload of impressions in everyday life and a method to escape the chaotic reality. She creates an emptiness to counterbalance that overload. The restrained simplicity of her work is a response to the intensity of the experience. The regularity and discipline of her work process keeps the

artist going on. She gathers her doubts and considerations in sketchbooks and while drawing, she keeps a grip on her surroundings.

Claire Gilman\*, curator at The Drawing Center in New York, stresses the importance of the work process of the artist. *"For Arpaïs, the space between drawing and when she stops, looks up from her paper and gazes around the room in which she finds herself, is as much a part of image-making as the drawn lines themselves,"* notices Gilman. *"This is the 'in-betweenness' that grounds existence in the world; the 'in-betweenness' that lets her put pencil to paper and move on."*

The book 'Where we met' came into existence after a sequence of events. Many years ago, ARPAÏS du bois discovered the work of Yamamoto. She began a correspondence that, with the help of Roger Szmulewicz, was several years later exposed to the Japanese photographer. This led to the project of a dialogue in book form. Both artists manage to offer so much information and emotion with such a minimum of resources. The delicate soul of both oeuvres is remarkable and universal. Although they are thousands of miles apart, they recognise and find each others world in their very own language.

With 'where they met' Fifty One Fine Art Photography reopens the dialogue between photography and graphic arts. After the acclaimed Saul Leiter show, where both aspects of his artistic language were emphasized, this exhibition brings together two artists in a very intimate dialogue and it paves the way to other fascinating confrontations.

*From 27 January until 10 March 2012 at Fifty One Fine Art Photography.*

*Opening on Thursday 26 January 2012 from 6pm.*

*\*Source quote Dan Leers: Yamamoto, M & Du Bois, A (2011), WHERE WE MET: Introduction by Dan Leers, p8, Tielt, Belgium: Lannoo Publishers*

*\* Source quote Claire Gilman: Yamamoto, M & Du Bois, A (2011), WHERE WE MET: Introduction by Claire Gilman, p11, Tielt, Belgium: Lannoo Publishers*