



Taka Ishii Gallery

Photography / Film

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Ryuji Miyamoto “Unreal Shibuya”

Dates: Nov 1 – Dec 6, 2025

Location: Taka Ishii Gallery Photography / Film

Opening reception: Saturday, Nov 1, 18:00 – 20:00

Taka Ishii Gallery Photography / Film is pleased to present “Unreal Shibuya”, a solo exhibition of photographs by Ryuji Miyamoto, on view from November 1 through December 6, 2025. This will be Miyamoto’s third solo exhibition at Taka Ishii Gallery and will feature approximately 30 works from his latest series, which captures the urban spaces of Shibuya, Tokyo, as they undergo large-scale redevelopment.

Situated in a valley where the Shibuya River and the Udagawa River converge, Shibuya has recently undergone major redevelopment that has transformed it both functionally and visually. It began with the renovation of Shibuya Station, where numerous train lines intersect, and high-rise complexes such as Shibuya Scramble Square and Shibuya Hikarie have opened, concentrating offices, commercial spaces, and cultural facilities around the station. Meanwhile, newly created plazas and parks enrich the public environment. Building on its history as a center for creative industries, Shibuya has seen a surge of new art and fashion hubs, and as a global epicenter of youth culture, it draws countless visitors from both Japan and abroad.

I cannot find a word to describe the Shibuya of today. So, I tried to connect this elusive Shibuya to the term “Unreal City.” The buildings surrounding the scramble crossing emit loud noises and are inundated with advertising images. Unreal Shibuya continues to provoke the crowds that flow in and out of the city, exposing its unrealistic character. Will the urban transformation of Shibuya result in the creation of a vibrant, unknown reality?

Ryuji Miyamoto

Unreal Shibuya, Inscript, 2025, p.117

Miyamoto, who has long recorded the transformation of cities by photographing architectural spaces, has been documenting the changing face of Shibuya from 2020 to 2025. This series brings together works that strikingly capture exposed structural elements such as concrete frames and steel beams laid bare during renovation, paired with street shots of the diverse people moving through Shibuya. The city’s fabric, demolished and rebuilt each day, and the countless passersby who converge and disperse in overwhelming numbers, each with their own purpose, together reflect the current state of Shibuya as its flux and evolution continue at an unprecedented scale and speed. The exhibition title “Unreal Shibuya” takes its name from “Unreal City,” a line in *The Waste Land*, the long poem known as T. S. Eliot’s masterpiece. The “unreal”

Shibuya formed by the clamor of crowds, towering advertisements, and construction sites is captured in Miyamoto's photographs and frozen as a series of static images. In doing so, the works open up a dimension distinct from the direct experience of the city, in which Shibuya oscillates in ever-changing ways between "real" and "unreal."

Ryuji Miyamoto was born in Tokyo in 1947. After graduating from the Graphic Design Department of Tama Art University, and working as an editor at architectural magazines, he began working independently as a photographer. Miyamoto has photographed, from a unique perspective, the city and its buildings as they are transformed, ruined, and revived. His works, such as "Architectural Apocalypse" (1986), in which he shot building demolition sites, and "Kowloon Walled City" (1988), in which he photographed the titular high-rise slum in Hong Kong, have received critical acclaim both domestically and internationally. His solo exhibitions include "Ryuji Miyamoto Retrospective," Setagaya Art Museum, Tokyo (2004); "Urban Apocalypse," Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin (1999); "KOBE 1995 After the Earthquake+," Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt, Frankfurt (1999); "Architectural Apocalypse," Hillside Gallery, Tokyo (1986). He is the recipient of the 55th Award of the Ministry of Education in the Art Encouragement Prizes (for his solo exhibition at Setagaya Art Museum, 2005); Golden Lion Prize of the 6th International Architecture Exhibition Venice Biennale (for the exhibition "KOBE 1995 After the Earthquake," 1996); the 14th Kimura Ihei Memorial Photography Award (his photo-books *Architectural Apocalypse* and *Kowloon Walled City*, as well as his exhibition "Kowloon Walled City," 1989). His works are included in the collections of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (San Francisco); Deutschen Centrum für Photographie (Berlin); the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (Tokyo).

For further information please contact:

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Gallery hours: 12:00 – 19:00 Closed on Sun, Mon and National holidays



Ryuji Miyamoto, "Unreal Shibuya", 2025

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