

## Kenta Cobayashi "#copycat"

Duration : 9/13 (Sat.) - 10/12 (Sun.), 2025

Opening Reception : 9/13 (Sat.) 6-8pm

Venue : WAITINGROOM (1F-2-14-2 Suido, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 112-0005, JAPAN)

\*We are open on Wed. to Sat. 12-7pm and Sun. 12-5pm

\*Closed on Mon., Tue. and National Holidays

\*Artist, Kenta Cobayashi will be present at the opening reception on 9/13, Sat. 6-8pm and the exhibition opens at noon before the reception.

WAITINGROOM (Tokyo) is pleased to present "#copycat," a solo exhibition by Kenta Cobayashi from September 13th (Sat.) to October 12th (Sun.), 2025. Known for his vivid photographic works—dramatically transformed through digital manipulation of his own images—Kobayashi explores the question, "What does it mean to capture the truth?" within the shifting terrain of urban imagery and the fluidity of memory in the digital environment. The exhibition title, *copycat*, means "imitator," and is also a catchphrase given to Cobayashi by the AI agent "MIRA." For this exhibition, the artist presents a new series in which past work data is fed into a generative AI and overlaid with the image of a cat, unfolding across the gallery space. In this series, Cobayashi positions both AI and cats—entities that elude human control—as "other species that gaze upon humanity." The contemporary rise of AI, along with the meme-driven fascination with cats, is reconsidered here as a latent human desire to discern the contours of our own species through the eyes of another, as well as a reflection of the modern human condition's longing for such a gaze.



"#copycat"  
Visual Images

### About the artist, Kenta Cobayashi

Born in Kanagawa, Japan, in 1992, Kenta Cobayashi graduated from Tokyo Zokei University with a BFA in Painting in 2016. Currently based between Tokyo and Shonan. He grew up in the GUI environment of the 1990s, interacting with the family Macintosh and software such as Purikura photo booths and KID PIX, and describes himself as "GUI native." Through photography and digital editing, he has pursued the question, "What does it mean to capture the truth?" His signature #smudge series employs Photoshop's smudge tool to stretch photographic pixels, establishing "the act of editing itself" as a form of visual expression. This approach has expanded into a variety of media—including computer graphics, sculpture, video, and installation—through which Cobayashi investigates the fluidity of memory in urban imagery and the digital environment. Recent exhibitions include the group show *AI / POST PHOTO* (Art Golden Gai, Tokyo, 2025); *HYPER\_IMAGE\_SCAPE* (Boogie Woogie Art Museum [Ulsan Art Museum], Ulsan, South Korea, 2023); solo shows *EDGE* (Agnès b. Galerie Boutique, Tokyo, 2022), *THE PAST EXISTS* (Mitsukoshi Contemporary Gallery, Tokyo, 2022), *Tokyo Debris* (WAITINGROOM, Tokyo, 2022), *Space-Time Continuum* (Seibu Shibuya, Tokyo, 2022), #smudge (ANB Tokyo, Tokyo, 2021); group shows *COMING OF AGE* (Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris, France, 2022), *I am here by WAITINGROOM* (CADAN Yurakucho, Tokyo, 2021), *Photo 2021: The Truth* (Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne, Australia, 2021); solo show *Live in Fluctuations* (Little Big Man Gallery, Los Angeles, USA, 2020); solo show *The Magician's Nephew* (rin art association, Gunma, 2019); group show *Hello World: For the Post-Human Age* (Art Tower Mito, Ibaraki, 2018); solo show *Automobile Insect Theory / What is Beauty?* (G/P gallery, Tokyo, 2017); and group show *GIVE ME YESTERDAY* (Fondazione Prada Osservatorio, Milan, Italy, 2016). In 2019, he collaborated with Dunhill under the direction of Mark Weston for its Spring/Summer 2020 collection, and produced campaign images for Louis Vuitton's 2019 Fall/Winter Men's Collection under the direction of Virgil Abloh.

## Expanding Spatiotemporal Perception through Media — Muybridge, Yoshiyuki Tomino, and Kenta Cobayashi

By Yoshida Yamar (Independent Curator)

Kenta Cobayashi is an artist who has persistently pursued the fundamental questions: “What is photography?” and “What is truth?” From an era in which the camera was believed to faithfully capture objective reality, we have entered a time when the rise of photo manipulation and AI-generated images has made the boundary between truth and fabrication easily blurred. Furthermore, like in Ryunosuke Akutagawa’s short story “In a Grove”, we now live in an age in which not only do individuals tell their own versions of the truth, but each also visualizes their own perception of it.

Even before the arrival of such a multilayered human society—one that resonates with the concept of “Umwelt” proposed by biologist Jakob von Uexküll—Cobayashi had been exploring expressions deeply intertwined with technology. In his representative #smudge series, he uses the smudge tool in Photoshop, deliberately exposing rather than concealing the digital interface that edits “truth,” and pursuing a form of visual art born from the interplay of response and action.

In the new works presented in this solo exhibition, #copycat, Cobayashi uses the AI image generation service “Midjourney.” Due to the interface’s specification—where four variant images are simultaneously generated from a single text prompt—Cobayashi presents multiple variations originating from one instruction as belonging to a single work, suggesting an alternative form of reproduction art in the AI era.

Just as new interfaces brought about by AI can spark new forms of expression, a similar innovation took place in the 19th century. Photographer Eadweard Muybridge succeeded in capturing sequential photographs using 24 cameras, breaking down the motion of horses in a way imperceptible to the naked eye. This exposed the objective reality of a horse’s gallop and, with his invention of the “zoopraxiscope” to project sequential images, Muybridge became a technological forerunner of cinema. His work represented a breakthrough that offered humanity a new way to visualize “time.”

“To see time” is an iconic phrase from the Mobile Suit Gundam series, but the concept of the “Newtype” as defined by director Yoshiyuki Tomino refers not simply to a person with supernatural abilities, but to a human capable of mutual understanding through the sharing of sensations and emotions beyond language. In the 2025 latest installment, Mobile Suit Gundam GQuuuuuuX, though directed by another, the phrase endures, carrying forward the Newtype’s multidimensional perception of time. Just as Muybridge’s physical camera technology decomposed time to grant humanity a new sense of perception, technology today extends the scope of individual human cognition, making multidimensional perception possible.

I have come to see Cobayashi’s provocation as part of a lineage of efforts to expand human perception—Muybridge through the physical medium of photography, Tomino through the medium of science-fiction animation—while also recognizing it as an artistic practice that prompts a redefinition of our spatial perception in the age of AI.



## Kenta Cobayashi

1992 Born in Kanagawa, Japan  
 2016 Tokyo Zokei University, Bachelor's degree, Painting  
 Currently lives and works in Tokyo and Shonan area.

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2022 *EDGE*, agnès b. galerie boutique, Tokyo, Japan  
*THE PAST EXISTS*, Mitsukoshi Contemporary Gallery, Tokyo, Japan  
*Tokyo Débris*, WAITINGROOM, Tokyo, Japan  
*Space-Time Continuum*, Seibu Shibuya, Tokyo, Japan  
 2021 *#smudge*, ANB Tokyo 6F Studio1, Tokyo, Japan  
 2020 *CALENDAR*, People, Tokyo, Japan  
*Live in Fluctuations*, Little Big Man Gallery, Los Angeles, America  
 2019 *The Magician's Nephew*, rin art association, Gunma  
*Kenta Cobayashi. Portraits*, curated by Marcella Manni, Nonostante Marras, Vogue Photo Festival, Milan, Italy  
*Photographic Universe*, curated by Francesco Zanot, Fotografia Europea 2019, Reggio Emilia, Italy  
*Rapid Eye Movement*, IMA gallery, Tokyo, Japan  
 2017 *Insectautomobilogy / What is an aesthetic?*, G/P gallery, Tokyo, Japan  
 2016 *#photo*, G/P gallery, Tokyo, Japan



Solo Exhibition "Tokyo Débris" (2022, WAITINGROOM, Tokyo)  
 installation view, Photo: Shintaro Yamanaka (Qsyum!)

## GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2025 *AI / POST PHOTO*, curated by Shigeo Goto, as part of Art Golden Gai, NOX Gallery, Tokyo, Japan  
 2024 *Art Squiggle Yokohama 2024*, Yamashita Futo, Yokohama, Japan  
 2023 *HYPERR\_IMAGE\_SCAPE*, Boogie Woogie Art Museum (Ulsan Art Museum), Ulsan, Korea  
*RE: FACTORY - Meet Your Art Festival 2023*, w/ WAITINGROOM, Warehouse Terrada G1/G3 Building, Tokyo, Japan  
*EAST EAST\_*, w/ TAV Gallery, Science Museum, Tokyo, Japan  
*elective affinities Part1*, agnès b. galerie boutique, Tokyo, Japan  
 2022 *Human Behaviour*, Teppei Kaneiji x Kenta Cobayashi, RICOH ART GALLERY, Tokyo, Japan  
*Asama International Photo Festival 2022 - Photo MIYOTA*, MMoP, Nagano, Japan  
*COMING OF AGE*, Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris, France  
*Opening Reception*, TAV GALLERY, Tokyo, Japan  
*Structure of a Flow*, Metronome, Modena, Italy  
*ART FAIR TOKYO 2022*, w/ WAITINGROOM, Tokyo International Forum, Tokyo, Japan  
*SHIBUYA FASHION WEEK 2022 SPRING*, Shibuya Scramble Square, Tokyo, Japan  
*SPRING SHOW*, WAITINGROOM, Tokyo, Japan  
 2021 *I am here by WAITINGROOM*, CADAN YURAKUCHO, Tokyo, Japan  
*constellation#02*, rin art association, Gunma, Japan  
*Shape of Gaze.02*, WAITINGROOM, Tokyo, Japan  
*New Existentialism*, Unexistence Gallery, ONLINE / HULIC & New UDAGAWA, Tokyo, Japan  
*Photo 2021: The Truth*, Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne, Australia  
 2020 *SOURCE/ADIT: Studio TOKYO PHOTOGRAPHIC RESEARCH, ENCOUNTERS*, ANB Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan  
*Nature is Not your Household*, ONLINE  
*constellation #01*, rin art association, Gunma, Japan  
 2019 *The Shape of Things to Come: Technology - AI and the Human*, Aoyama Gakuin University, Tokyo, Japan  
*Asama International Photo Festival 2019 - Photo MIYOTA*, Nagano, Japan  
*n e w f l e s h, curated by Efrem Zelony-Mindell, The Light Factory, North Carolina, America*  
*TENNOZ ART FESTIVAL 2019*, Tennoz isle, Tokyo, Japan  
*#005 PHOTO Playground*, Ginza Sony Park, Tokyo, Japan  
*Arte Fiera 2019*, Bologna Exhibition Center, Bologna, Italy  
 2018 *BRAVE NEW WORLD - 2018 SEOUL PHOTO FESTIVAL*, SeMA + Buk-Seoul Museum of Art, Seoul, Korea  
*Unseen Amsterdam 2018*, Amsterdam, Netherlands  
*Breda Photo Festival*, Breda, Netherlands  
*Asama International Photo Festival 2018 - Photo MIYOTA*, Former Mercian Karuizawa Museum, and surrounding area, Miyota, Japan  
*From My Point of View*, Metronom, Modena, Italy  
*Hello World - For the Post-Human Age*, ART TOWER MITO, Mito, Japan  
*Tokyo Before/After*, The Japan Foundation, Toronto, Canada  
 2017 *Forever Fornever*, Bannister Gallery, Providence, America  
*Unseen Amsterdam 2017*, Amsterdam, Netherlands  
*Guangzhou Image Triennial 2017*, Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China  
*FORMAT International Photography Festival*, Derby, UK  
 2016 *GIVE ME YESTERDAY*, Fondazione Prada Milan Osservatorio, Milano, Italy  
*asdfghjkl; 'x < あわせdrftgyふじこる, 3331 Arts Chiyoda*, Tokyo, Japan  
*New Rube Goldberg Machine*, KAYOKOYUKI + Komagome SOKO, Tokyo, Japan  
*New Material*, Casemore Kirkeby, San Francisco, America  
*Close to the Edge: New Photography from Japan*, MIYAKO YOSHINAGA, New York, America  
*NEW VISIONS #2*, G/P gallery shinonome, Tokyo, Japan

## GROUP EXHIBITIONS (CONTINUED)

2015 *Trans-Tokyo / Trans-Photo*, JimeixArles East West Encounters International Photo Festival, Xiamen, China  
*Gestaltkreis*, HAGISO, Tokyo, Japan  
*The Devil May Care*, Noorderlicht Photogallery, Groningen, Netherlands  
*hyper-materiality on photo (Photo London)*, Somerset House, London, UK  
*hyper-materiality on photo*, G/P gallery SHINONOME, Tokyo, Japan  
*New Japanese Photography*, DOOMED GALLERY, London, UK  
*ISLAND IS ISLANDS*, NORIKO NAKAZATO x Psychic VR Lab x Kenta Cobayashi, G/P gallery shinonome, Tokyo, Japan  
*TOKYO FRONTLINE PHOTO AWARD NEW VISIONS #1*, G/P gallery SHINONOME, Tokyo, Japan

2014 *Multi(Multi)(ple(s))*, The Container, Tokyo, Japan  
*The Exposed #7*, G/P gallery SHINONOME, Tokyo, Japan  
*PICTURE-PARTY 2*, TAV Gallery, Tokyo, Japan  
*PICTURE-PARTY 1*, SHIBUHOUSE, Tokyo, Japan

2013 *MEGA MAX GIGA GREAT ZERO ZILLION NEBULA NOVA*, TANA Gallerybookshelf, Tokyo, Japan  
*THE NEW BLACK*, UltraSuperNew Gallery, Tokyo, Japan  
*GIMENTA 2013: IKERU-KIGASURU*, curated by SHIBUHOUSE, HIGURE 17-15 cas, Tokyo, Japan

## SELECTED COLLABORATIONS / CAMPAIGNS

2022 Adidas 'Kenta Cobayashi x adidas SPORTSWEAR', Tokyo, Japan  
Louis Vuitton 'LV DREAM', wallpaper, Paris, France  
Summer Sonic 2022, main gate, Tokyo, Japan  
GINZA SIX, window display & campaign images, Tokyo, Japan  
Seibu Shibuya, window display & campaign images, Tokyo, Japan

2021 TOYOTA Corolla Cross, TV commercial & campaign images, Tokyo, Japan

2020 Dunhill 'Blue Capsule Collection' by Mark Weston, collaboration, London, UK

2019 Dunhill 'Men's Spring/Summer 2020' by Mark Weston (collaboration), London, UK  
Louis Vuitton 'Men's Fall/Winter 2019' by Virgil Abloh (campaign images), Paris, France

2018 Unseen Amsterdam 2018 (campaign images), Amsterdam, Netherlands

## AWARD

2015 TOKYO FRONTLINE PHOTO AWARD 2015, Grand prize

## PUBLIC COLLECTION

Asian Art Museum, San Francisco  
Tokyo Before/After, The Japan Foundation  
Amana Collection  
Takahashi Collection

## ARTIST WEBSITE

<https://www.kentacobayashi.com>



Solo Exhibition "#smudge" (2021, ANB Tokyo 6F Studio1, Tokyo)  
installation view, Photo: Taisuke Koyama

## **\*Inquiry about the exhibition and artist**

WAITINGROOM

(Owner & Director: Tomoko Ashikawa)

Address: 1F-2-14-2 Suido, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 112-0005

Hours: Wed. to Sat. 12-7pm Sun.12-5pm

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Tel : +81-3-6304-1010 email: info@waitingroom.jp

Website : <http://waitingroom.jp>