

# KIRIN Big in Japan!

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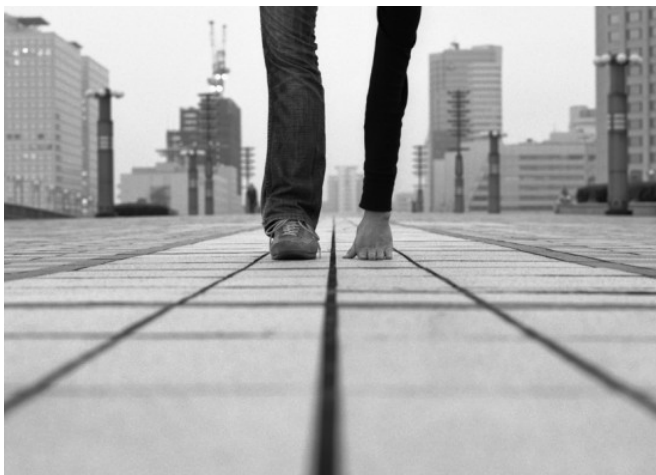
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Yuko Kamei's images provide a meeting point for the motion and temporality of dance and the freezing of movement and time that characterizes photography. Focusing on release-based techniques and contact improvisation, she had spent many years training in classical ballet, martial arts including aikido and capoeira, and modern dance schools of Limón and Cunningham before she moved into photography.

"Initially I was working with video," she says, "but my works gradually became short and looped, and finally settled in a photographic space." This photographic space she conceives of functions as a stage for exploring the interaction between bodies and built environments. In 2009 she took to the new 'burbs of Tokyo for her *Brand New Town* series (above), intervening the excessively paved and planned lifeless streets by walking through them, armed (legged?) with wooden stilts.

Prior to that her *in the grid* project (below) focused on the ubiquitous straight lines of urban spaces with the lines of the human body. "I think both human body and architecture are intentional constructions which reflect our ideals," she says. "The built environment regulates how we move and behave, but at the same time we can be active and creative in utilising the structure. The simple presence of a human body can bring up numerous unexpected aspects of any given space."



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Yuko's most recent series (below) has focused on the movement of balance, which she defines as a continuous adjustment between structure and gravity. The act of balancing requires you to get the right alignment and then settle on it, allowing your attention to travel outwards. "You can see what is *out there* while the body anchors you *where you are*," she says, "and I think the experience of looking at the photographs is similar – you see what the body does, then look at the space around it and come back to the body again, making connections in between. The body continues to balance in the same position while the viewer's eyes travel across the surface, and the brief moment of performative action expands as long as the viewer's attention exists."



[Yuko](#) is currently completing a one-year residency at [Tokyo Wonder Site](#).

All images copyright Yuko Kamei:

1. Brand New Town, Mogusaen, Japan, c-type print, 2009.
2. Brand New Town, Higashimurayama 2, Japan, c-type print, 2009.

3. *in the grid\_#2, silver gelatin print, 2008.*

4. *in the grid\_#3, silver gelatin print, 2008*

5. *in the grid\_#4, silver gelatin print, 2008.*

6. *Untitled, c-type print, 2009.*

7. *Untitled, c-type print, 2009.*

Posted by [amelia groom](#) 5:58 PM, August 9th, 2010 [0 comments](#)

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