

February 24, 2010
Mori Building Co., Ltd.

MEDIA SHIP Omotesando Hills

LESLIE KEE 「SUPER TOKYO」 PHOTO EXHIBITION

~"LOVE & POWER" of 1,000 lives in TOKYO~

Tokyo, February 24, 2010 – Omotesando Hills announces that "LESLIE KEE 「SUPER TOKYO」 PHOTO EXHIBITION" will be held at Omotesando Hills from Friday, April 23rd to Friday, May 7th. The "SUPER TOKYO" project displays Leslie Kee's photographic portraits of 1,000 people in Tokyo, under the themes of love, peace and generations. The exhibition venue showcases approx. 700 photographs, and will also be selling the photo collection "SUPER TOKYO". A part of the proceeds will be donated to the "Safe Motherhood Initiatives" campaign by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

◆ LESLIE KEE 「SUPER TOKYO」 PHOTO EXHIBITION

Dates: Friday, April 23rd – Friday, May 7th

Time: 11:00-21:00

*Closes at 20:00 on Sunday & Holiday except Wednesday, May 5th

Place: Omotesando Hills Space O on B3F of the main building

Admission: Free

Organizer: SUPER TOKYO

Telephone inquiries: 03-3497-0310 (Hours 11:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.)

Main Participating Artists: Ai / Nanase Aikawa / Aozora Kyuji Kouji / Yoshihiro Akiyama / Yuko Arimori / Seiji Iinuma / Hiroyuki Ikeuchi / Kyoko Iwasaki / Kaoru Uno / Anna Umemiya / Yuki Ota / Masamichi Katayama / Karina / Kazuaki Kiriya / Christopher Daniel Pepler / Yosuke Kubozuka / Kururi / Meisa Kuroki / Yoshio Kojima / KONISHIKI / Daichi Sawano / Jesse McFaddin / SHIHO / Tsurubei Shofukutei / Jon Kabira / Edward Suzuki / Keiji Suzuki / TAKAKO / Noriyuki Tanaka / Rena Tanaka / Tetsuji Tamayama / Char / Kurara Chibana / Telly Ito / Don Konishi / Yukie Nishimura / Ai Haruna / Taihei Hayashiya / Itaru Hiram / Jun Fubuki / Noriko Maeda / Miyuki Matsuda / Keita Maruyama / Takashi Miike / Jessica Michibata / Emiri Miyasaka / Musashimaru / Keiji Muto / Michihiko Yanai / RIKACO / Leah Dizon / LiLiCo ... and more



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◆ Leslie Kee profile

Born in Singapore in 1971. Graduated from the Photography department of the Tokyo School of Visual Arts before beginning his photographic career, producing work for fashion magazines, advertisements and CD covers in Japan, New York and across Asia. Attracted media attention in 2006 when he published the photo collection "SUPER STARS", which featured 300 celebrities from Asia as a charity project to help victims of the 2004 Sumatra Earthquake.

For information, please contact:

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LESLIE KEE INTERVIEW

Leslie Kee is an international photographer based in Tokyo. His work appears in a variety of fields, such as advertisements, fashion magazines, CD covers and a diverse range of other media. He is now an essential photographer for Japan. In April, his photo exhibition "Leslie Kee 「SUPER TOKYO」" will be held at Omotesando Hills. 700 portraits of 1,000 people in Tokyo in a multitude of fields are the visual reflection of his dedication as one of Asia's top photographers.

— Thanks to many people through my photography

I was born in Singapore, but it has been 12 years since I started my career as a photographer in Tokyo. Meeting with many people, developing relationships of trust, and the generous affection I received have helped me make it through the years. It was my encounter with Japanese culture that convinced me to relocate to Tokyo. I was raised in a single-parent household by my mother. When I was 13, she passed away. So, I had to work at a Japanese-owned factory to earn enough money for living and my sister's education. That was where I discovered Japanese music, which healed the pain of losing my mother and gave me some hope.



Japanese culture gave me the strength to carry on and a goal to work towards. "SUPER TOKYO" is my way of saying "thank you" through photography to people who have supported me in Japan.

— Behind-the-scenes staff taking center stage; The happy and smiles of 1,000 people with their loved ones

I took photographs of 300 people for my previous photo collection "SUPER STARS". This time, I wanted to inspire more people and deliver a greater impact. That is why I developed my idea of photographing 1,000 people in Tokyo. I was more interested in photographing the people who believed in my work, rather than celebrities. So, the collection features my manager, stylists, makeup artists, art directors, video cameramen, and many other staff members.

All photographs were taken at my office. Over a 16-month period starting September 2008, all weekends were spent doing the "SUPER TOKYO" photo shoot. I opted for nude photography to capture their inner depth. Some usually-confident people became suddenly shy after taking their clothes off; while others, after some initial hesitation, became completely liberated and open once they bared it all. This was an interesting experience. Many of the models were accompanied by their families, partners, or friends; this made it easier for them to show the true selves that are normally hidden while at work, putting on happy and affectionate smiles that they would only share with those closest to them.

— A revolutionary vibe by the collaboration of nude and Hello Kitty

I wanted to combine the concept of "graphics" and the culture of "photography" to create something extraordinary. After finalizing on the theme of the project, I knew I had to have Japanese original character that the world would recognize and embrace. That is why I made an offer of involvement to the character "Hello Kitty". There is nothing surprising about nude photographs, but adding Hello Kitty on naked people should give off a revolutionary vibe. I hope to achieve inter-generation communication through Hello Kitty.



— Thanks to mothers around the world through the "Safe Motherhood Initiatives*" campaign

Part of the proceeds from the photo collection will be donated to the "Safe Motherhood Initiatives" campaign by the United Nations Population Fund. I desire to show the gratitude I could not convey to my own mother to mothers all around the world. That's why I support for this campaign.

A mother dies every minute from complications associated with pregnancy and childbirth each day, increasing the number of children who, like myself, have to grow up without their mother. I recently visited the Philippines, one of the countries benefiting from the campaign, to see with my own eyes the current local situations and where campaign donations are appropriated. In villages outside the city, 80% of women cannot deliver their babies in hospitals because of extreme poverty. The images of mothers and children recorded during my trip in Philippines will be also placed at the upcoming exhibition.

Everyone has a mother. All of the models participating in this project would not have been born without their mothers. Giving birth is something only women can do. As a photographer, I will continue to photograph women - the source of life - and capture their vitality in every single shot I take.

— Photography. That is about returning love and affection.

The love and trust I received from numerous people through photography are invaluable to me. I intend to repay this kindness, and my involvement in charity projects is one way of doing so. In 2006, I participated in the charity for victims of the 2004 Sumatra Earthquake; and this time, I chose the "Safe Motherhood Initiatives" campaign. I will keep on sending these messages as my personal mission. By the age of 50, I see myself teaching photography to young people. People talk about "give and take", but you should be able to keep on "giving" indefinitely. By passing my skills to the younger generation, I can learn new things as well. I want to share my experiences with others.

— Omotesando Hills, linking reality with fantasy

In this photo exhibition, I want visitors to feel the artistic side of Omotesando Hills. In the modern world, everything has become realistic. That's why we should get into the world of fantasy sometimes.

Omotesando Hills is an example of a positive collaboration between the realistic "retail" aspect and the artistic "sound and visual" aspect. I hope people come here after their usual shopping experience to enjoy the world of fantasy through this photo exhibition. Omotesando Hills should continue pursuing this approachability.

****"Safe Motherhood Initiatives" campaign**

Every minute, another woman dies in pregnancy or childbirth. With a mission of saving as many mothers around the world as possible, the UNFPA Tokyo Office is running the "Safe Motherhood Initiatives" campaign. It aims to educate people of the plight of mothers in other parts of the world. Various events are planned during the campaign period, in conjunction with support organizations.

<http://www.unfpa.or.jp/mothers/> (UNFPA Tokyo Office)

- **Contact below for queries on this article, or request for Leslie Kee's own portrait or images of his works.**
- **When publishing images of his works, please accompany it with the copyright statement "©1976, 2010 SANRIO CO.,LTD. APPROVAL NO.S503513"**
- **The main text of this interview may be freely quoted.**
- **Contact below to make a request for media coverage.**

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