



Araki: Tokyo Lucky Hole

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Welcome to the era of the no-panties coffee shop: Tokyo "entertainment centers" in the early 1980s photographed by Araki

It started in 1978 with an ordinary coffee shop near Kyoto whose waitresses famously wore no panties under their miniskirts and see-through pantyhose. As word began to spread, similar establishments popped up across the country. Men lined up outside these cafés waiting to pay three times the usual price for coffee served by a panty-free young woman, hoping to catch a fortuitous glimpse. Within a few years, a new craze took hold: the no-panties "massage" parlor. Competition for customers led these new types of businesses to offer an increasingly bizarre range of services: fondling clients through holes in coffins whilst they lie naked inside playing dead, interiors catering to commuter-train fetishists, young virgin role-playing, etc. Amongst these many destinations was a Tokyo club called Lucky Hole. Here, the premise was ridiculously simple: clients stood on one side of a plywood partition, a hostess on the other; in between them was simply a hole big enough for a certain part of the male anatomy to pass through.

Nobuyoshi Araki was a frequent visitor to the sex clubs of Tokyo's Shinjuku neighborhood, and he photographed them profusely until the golden age of Japan's sex industry came to a screeching halt in February 1985, with the enactment of the New Amusement Business Control and Improvement Act. In over 800 photos, *Tokyo Lucky Hole* documents the free-for-all spirit of those clubs via Araki's lens.

Text in English, French, and German

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Nobuyoshi Araki was born in Tokyo in 1940. Given a camera by his father at the ripe age of twelve, Araki has been taking pictures ever since. He studied photography and film at Chiba University and went into commercial photography soon after graduating. In 1970 he created his famous Xeroxed Photo Albums, which he produced in limited editions and sent to friends, art critics, and people selected randomly from the telephone book. Over the years, his bold, unabashed photographs of his private life have been the object of a great deal of controversy and censorship (especially in his native Japan), a fact that has not fazed the artist nor diminished his influence. To date, Araki has published over 400 books of his work.

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