

## JAMES KELLY CONTEMPORARY - PRESS RELEASE

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1601 Paseo de Peralta - Santa Fe, NM 87501 - 505.989.1601

### **Arnold Odermatt** - Concurrently showing with Ryuji Miyamoto **Aftermath**

**Opening Reception:** Friday, April 23, 2004, 5:00-7:00 pm

**Exhibition:** Friday, April 23, 2004 through Saturday, May 29, 2004

**Contact:** David Marshall - david@jameskelly.com



James Kelly Contemporary is proud to present the photographs of Swiss traffic police chief, Arnold Odermatt. This exhibition consists of both black and white images of traffic accidents, as well as color images of staged police procedures.

Born in Oberdorf, Switzerland in 1925 Arnold Odermatt worked as a baker until he joined the Swiss police force in 1948. He photographed traffic accidents for 40 years until he retired with the rank of First Lieutenant, Head of Traffic Police and Deputy to Commander of the Nidwalden police in 1990. This is Odermatt's second ever gallery exhibition in the United States, after his 2003 show at Paul Morris Gallery in New York. His first museum exhibition in the States, currrated by James Rondeau, was held at the Art Institute of Chicago in 2002. Odermatt's photographs have been shown throughout Switzerland, Germany, the United States, France and Itlay, including the 2001 Venezia Biennale, currated by Harald Szeemann.

For 40 years, from 1948-1990, Arnold Odermatt photographed traffic accidents on the rural roads of the Swiss canton of Nidwalden. Although not formally trained as a photographer, Odermatt's tremendous attention to composition and strong use of narration give witness to disaster, resulting in ghostly romantic scenes of wreckage. Sports cars wrap themselves effortlessly around

telephone poles while overturned trucks spill glass and cargo across wet pavement. The viewer can only join the other onlookers as they follow the chalk lines that trace screaming skids to where VWs dangle off cliffs.

"magically lucid" -Ken Johnson, The New York Times

"...weirdly bloodless, black and white shots of Swiss auto accidents, reduced to abrupt, detached and meticulously composed narratives that center around pieces of found metal sculpture." -Vince Aletti, The Village Voice

Odermatt's color photographs of police procedures compliment the traffic images. The impeccable order and correctness of the staged scenes are a direct counter point to the chaos of the black and white photographs. These images remind us of the correct way to fulfill a job's description within a strict Swiss regimen.

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"Buildings in the process of demolition detach themselves from human expectation or plan as the building itself asserts its own sense of existence. Ruins and slums deviate from everyday conventions and possess their own form of natural order." - Ryuji Miyamoto, Tokyo, August 5, 2000

James Kelly Contemporary is proud to present the recent work of Japanese photographer Ryuji Miyamoto. This is Miyamoto's first exhibition in Santa Fe and consists of 13 black and white photographs recording the aftermath of the earthquake that devastated the city of Kobe, Japan.

5:46 am, January 17, 1995. An earthquake with a magnitude of 7.2 woke the city of Kobe with tremendous force. 15 seconds later, as the city and its inhabitants peered through a nightmare of flash fires, live wires and parades of sirens, 5,000 people lay dead with over 100,000 homes and buildings destroyed. After the fires and chaos ceased, the once thriving city of Kobe had been reduced to a surreal wasteland.

Shortly after the renovation process began, Ryuji Miyamoto arrived in this void where there had once been a city with his large format camera and began his own process of documenting the wake of the disaster. His quiet, meditative approach to these destroyed monuments result in mysterious records of a thriving city's plunge into "contemporary ruin." Miyamoto's black and white images remind us that nature's way is both unpredictable and powerful.

"In Tokyo, one finds no real or lasting ruins - empty, functionless places preserved that way over time - as they only exist for a short moment, like an air pocket, and then they disappear." - Ryuji Miyamoto, Tokyo, August 5, 2000.

Miyamoto achieved international success in the late 1990s as one of Japan's most influential contemporary photographers, with major solo exhibitions in Tokyo, Paris, Rome and Berlin. He won the Kimura Ihee Award in 1989 and in 1996 received the Leone d'Oro prize at the 1996 Venezia Biennale for the best national pavilion at the International Architecture Exhibition.

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- high resolution images available upon request -