

NEWS RELEASE

Exhibition: *War Bonds: Yuichi Idaka and László Moholy-Nagy, photographs from 1925 to 1946*
Dates: March 15 - May 6, 2023
Address: 16 Main Street, Ground Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11201

Higher Pictures presents *War Bonds: Yuichi Idaka and László Moholy-Nagy, photographs from 1925 to 1946*.

While many may have heard of László Moholy-Nagy—the legendary Hungarian artist and photographer best known for his work at the Bauhaus, and for the 1937 founding of the New Bauhaus, later called the Institute of Design in Chicago—fewer know of Yuichi Idaka. The son of Japanese immigrants, Idaka studied at Moholy-Nagy's school from 1942 to 1945. In 1945, Idaka was hired by Moholy-Nagy to teach film and photography at the school. During the time, at Moholy-Nagy's request, Idaka printed a number of images that Moholy-Nagy had made in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s. These prints, alongside Idaka's work from the 1940s, are the subject of the exhibition.

Idaka's close collaboration with Moholy-Nagy took place during a brutal time for Japanese Americans. The United States' internment of Japanese people began in 1942 and ended in 1946, and anti-Japanese persecution was rampant. One can only imagine that Moholy-Nagy—as a Jewish person who had fled Nazi Germany less than a decade prior—saw echoes in the U.S. of what he had just left behind in Europe. (Moholy-Nagy's work was in fact featured in the infamous "Degenerate Art" exhibition organized by the Nazi Party in 1937, which purported that such art was of a primitive, inferior quality.) Moholy-Nagy, almost 20 years Idaka's senior, seems to have taken the young photographer under his wing and supported Idaka's creative output during a time of real political danger.

As if to encapsulate this parallel, Moholy-Nagy asked Idaka to print images of Germany that he had taken not long before leaving the country for good. In one oblique photograph shot from the Berlin Radio Tower (perhaps the only existing print of this image, as the negatives are believed to have been lost) the line of a fence curves and bisects the landscape, a dizzying abstraction of the snow-covered ground. Idaka's later curving abstractions—photograms à la Moholy-Nagy—reflect this geometry, which he then brings with him to the streets of Chicago and beyond. In the gallery, the two artists' work is exhibited side by side, perhaps for the first time since 1951, when both photographers were featured in the "Abstraction in Photography" exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art.

László Moholy-Nagy (1895-1946) was a Hungarian artist and a faculty Bauhaus Master from 1923-1928. In 1937, Moholy-Nagy founded the New Bauhaus in Chicago, since 1944 known as the Institute of Design, which in 1949 became a degree granting department at the Illinois Institute of Technology. Moholy-Nagy wrote several books including *Painting, Photography, Film* (1927) and *Vision in Motion* (1947). In 2003, the Moholy-Nagy Foundation was created to foster and share knowledge about the artist's life and work. In 2016, he was the subject of a major retrospective at the Guggenheim Museum in New York City.

Yuichi "Eugene" Idaka (1914-2012) was born to Japanese immigrants in Seattle, WA. After spending significant time during his childhood in Japan, he moved to Chicago in 1928 and helped run a Japanese Camera Club in the city. Idaka studied at the Institute of Design in Chicago from 1942-45 and taught there part-time from 1945-47 while working as a freelance photographer. He opened his own photography and design studio at 49 West Ontario - along with Angelo Testa and Edgar Bartolucci, fellow students at the Institute of Design - and later specialized in architectural photography. His work was featured in publications including *Florida Architecture* magazine, *Architectural Digest*, and *The New York Times*.

For more information please contact the gallery at office@higherpicturesgeneration.com.