

ART IN BRIEF

OSAMU KANEMURA: Spider's Strategy

Cohen Amador Gallery

Pedestrians are few and far between in the street photography of Osamu Kanemura, whose first New York exhibition in more than a decade is on view at Cohen Amador Gallery. The artist is more interested in the jostling network of systems and surfaces that constitutes the commercial districts of Tokyo, Osaka, and Yokohama. For him, drama lies in the delirious clash of pattern and line: scaffolding, fences, facades of buildings; zebra-striped crosswalks, mullions, handlebars; and the ubiquitous, criss-crossing tangle of telephone cable.

Mr. Kanemura plunges the viewer into a huge, vertiginous, unfathomably complex machine of innumerable rhythms and functions. Framed to include looming foreground elements beyond which the viewer's attention is guided, some of the pictures make conspicuous their stealthy point of view, lending them a furtive, slightly menacing air. Titled "Spider's Strategy," the show includes work spanning between 1995 and 2002; many of the images are included in the 2001 monograph of the same name published by Osiris.

"All the Needles on Are Red" (1998) recalls the fragmented complexity and linear approach of Lee

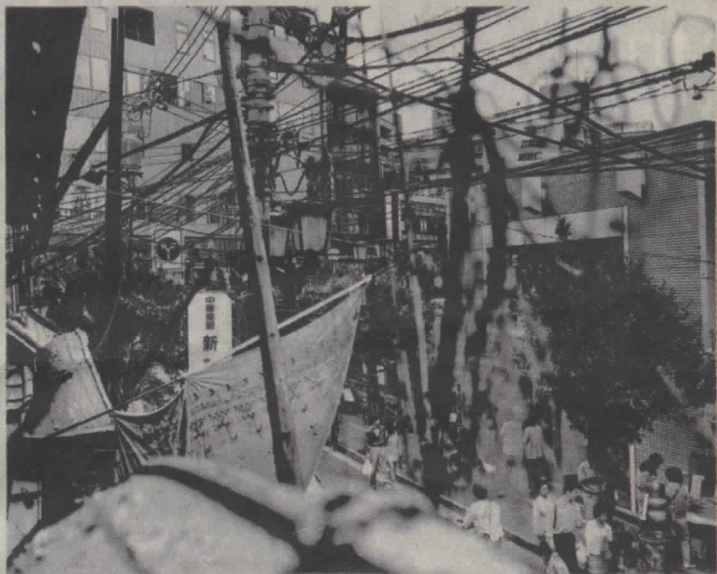
Friedlander. But Mr. Kanemura typically composes around a central, anchoring pictorial device, such as a rapidly receding street, which provides visual egress from the surrounding clamor. Somewhere in the reeling jumble, a stunted vista promises to open just enough to let off a little pressure, producing a whiff of spatial order, a hint of method to the madness of the metropolis.

Mr. Kanemura works with a medium-format rangefinder, allowing him a photojournalist's detailed depth of field. He prints dark,

so his inky blacks and shimmering midtones are punctuated by just a few pearly highlights. All prints are 20 inches by 24 inches; a wall-filling grid of 32 of them, called "Stravinsky Overdrive" (2002), ups the retinal ante. In this dazzling body of work, the din of endlessly proliferating commercial signage renders the care-torn, crassly material realm an uncharted psychic territory.

Stephen Maine

*Until June 2 (41 E. 57th St. at
Madison Avenue, 212-759-6740).*



COHEN AMADOR GALLERY

Osamu Kanemura, 'Untitled (Tokyo Swing)' (1995).