

## TOP Collection: Learning Into the Pictures

May 12 – Aug. 5, 2018

The TOP Collection is an ongoing series of exhibitions presenting works from the collection of the Tokyo Photographic Art Museum. This edition deals with the theme of “Enjoying and Learning.”

The type of learning that occurs in a museum is a different experience from learning something at school or from a book. The type of total-body learning that arises from the spatial atmosphere of the building, the rhythm of the works on the wall, and the presence created by the actual size of the works is wholly unique to the museum.

If you look closely at the works showing things that are interesting to you instead of seeing them as documents from a given era or sources of information, you may realize something about the works that you hadn't noticed in the past. Discovering something you don't understand and simply enjoying that feeling is another way of learning at the museum.

Drawing on the museum's vast collection of over 34,000 items, this exhibition introduces a host of outstanding works from a wide range of times and places, inviting you to enjoy the rich and diverse types of learning that are possible at the museum. Both those who are well-versed in photography and those who are visiting for the first time are sure to enjoy and learn something new.

Okay, are you ready? Let's enter the pictures!



Robert Doisneau, Les pains de Picasso, 1952,  
Gelatin silver print  
©Atelier Robert Doisneau/Contact

60 artists, including KIMURA Ihee, KUWABARA Kineo, NAKAHIRA Takuma, NARAHARA Ikko, SUZUKI Risaku, UEDA Shoji, Diane ARBUS, Bernd and Hilla BECHER, Henri Cartier-BRESSON, Cindy SHERMAN, Robert DOISNEAU, Elliott ERWITT, Lee FRIEDLANDER, Minor WHITE, Garry WINOGRAND and more.



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- 1) Elliott ERWITT, Brask, Siberia, U.S.S.R. 1974, Gelatin-silver print ©Elliott Erwitt / Magnum Photos
- 2) Garry WINOGRAND, San Marcos, Texas 1964, 1964, Gelatin-silver print
- 3) Henri CARTIER-BRESSON, New York, America, 1937, Gelatine silver print ©Henri Cartier-Bresson / Magnum Photos
- 4) KIMURA Ihee, Nakanoshima Park, Osaka, 1955, Gelatin-silver print
- 5) SUZUKI Risaku, from the series Between the Sea and the Mountain - KUMANO, 2005, Chromogenic print
- 6) Minor WHITE, Two Barns, Dansville, New York, 1955, Gelatine silver print

## Into the Pictures

When we go to the museum, we often read the captions and explanations, absorbing factual information about the works before we actually look at them. And recently, after a quick look at the work, some people take pictures of it with their camera or smartphone before moving on to the next one.

How long do you usually spend looking at a work? When we focus on the caption and explanation, we have a tendency to confirm each piece of information. And once we have completely that task, we feel as if we have finished looking at the picture.

What would happen if you had a discussion with some children who had no information about the works as you looked at them? These are some of the things a group of elementary school students said about Robert Doisneau's *Les Pains de Picasso* (work no.1).

The children made their way into the photograph by examining the hand-like loaves of bread on the table. After that, they noticed that the man's forehead looked shiny. This made them think about where the light was coming from. They decided that there must have been a window in the direction that the man was looking. One child, who was interested in the things on the table, suggested that there must be another person who was not visible in the picture because two places had been set at the table. Another child imagined that because there was a basket on the shelf behind the man, there must be a woman in the house. Another child suggested that the unnaturally black, impenetrable appearance of part of the shelf and the wall on the left was due to the fact that the work was monochrome, and that it might not look so black if the picture was color.

"In that case, the stripes on the man's shirt might not be black either." "What color were the other things in the picture? Which colors looked dark in black and white?"

In the course of the conversation, the children identified various characteristics of photography, and also went so far as to imagine things about the man, his circumstances, and the conditions of the place. They spent at least ten minutes looking at each photograph, devoting much more time to them than they would have by focusing on the basic facts about each work. The children examined every nook and cranny of the pictures and also considered what might lie outside of them. In the process, they discovered things that were not included in the explanations and enjoyed getting inside the photographs.

This exhibition is designed to allow you to interact with the works in an instinctive and subjective way, and to provide you with an enjoyable viewing experience.

We hope that you will use your imagination and look carefully at each of the works, which are derived from a multitude of places and periods, and exchange ideas with others to deepen your understanding of the pictures. Many exciting discoveries await you.

Are you ready? Let's go into the pictures!

### 1. Gazes

Try focusing on people's gazes in the works. Gazes tell us something about a person's intentions, feelings, and thoughts. What are the people gazing at? What kind of feelings do they seem to have?

By considering the object of someone's gaze, we can understand something about the kind of place and the conditions in the picture as well as some things outside of it.

Using people's gazes as an entrance, try entering the world in these photographs.

### 2. Getting Closer

What sort of people are depicted in the works? What kind of things do they like and what kind of jobs do they do? What were they doing and how did they feel at the moment the picture was taken?

We can understand something about their feelings not only from their gazes but also from their expressions, clothes, actions, and sometimes the way they look from behind. Try making connections between various elements in the pictures and getting closer to the people's feelings and situations.

### 3. A Given Scene

Photographs capture a moment. We can find all kinds of different stories in them. What kind of scenes are these? What is happening in them? Why do the people look like they do, why are they there, what are they looking at, and what are they doing?

Try thinking about these things as you look carefully at people's appearances, the relationship between everyone in the picture, and the overall atmosphere of the work. If you look closely as you consider how the situation occurred and what happened afterward, you might be able to understand why the artist clicked the shutter in a given scene.

### 4. Hearing Conversations and Sounds

Photographs are just scenes, but as we look at some works, we also start to hear things. Before we know it, things like people talking and laughing, and the sound of a crowd pass through our eyes and into our

minds, and it seems like we can hear things.

What sort of sounds can you hear? What kind of conversations are going on? Are the people speaking in big voices or small whispers? As you listen to these sounds in your imagination, take a careful look at what's going on in the pictures.

#### 5. Signs

What do you see when you focus on the signs and stories related to the things and landscapes in the pictures? Whose were the owners of these worn-out shoes and this abandoned jacket?

This table, which someone didn't bother to clean up after they finished eating, tells you something about the missing people, the state of the room, the scenery outside the window, and the image of the room reflected in it.

When you look at this sublime mountain landscape with a river flowing through it, you can imagine what happened later and what kind of life the people living in the house led based on the appearance of the room, ornamented with Christmas decorations.

By considering what might have happened before and after, and the fact there shouldn't be any people there, you start to understand what the artist was attempting to embody based on this photograph, which captures a particular place at a particular moment.

#### 6. Here and There

There is the world that stretches out in front of the camera and another one beyond that. There is the world in the photograph and another one beyond that. There is the world that we inhabit as we are looking at a photograph and another one that we can only see in the work. When we look at these works, we can experience all kinds of different heres and theres.

Try to interpret the photographs by comparing the heres and theres in each of the works, and imagining how things are in the unknown beyond.

Usually, the world behind the camera never appears in the picture, but on rare occasions it does. When this happens, we can see even more in the picture, and sometimes we can catch a glimpse of the artist.

In some cases, the artist, who is normally taking the picture, appears in it. Whether they appear or not, there is always an artist who creates a link between here and there in the photograph. Thinking about the existence of the photographer can help us discover other things about the work.

#### 7. Emerging Things

In a museum, you can look at more than one work at the same time, allowing you to expand your imagination and ideas. When you simultaneously look at several works in the same series, things emerge that are not actually in the pictures.

When you first look at Nakahira Takuma's *Everyday Life*, there doesn't seem to be any connection between the two pictures. But when they're lined up next to each on the wall, a strange relationship develops between them. What kind of relationship exists between pictures that are next to each other? When you look closely at them, you can find a variety of similarities and connections.

Luigi Ghirri's *Atelier Morandi* is a series depicting the artist Giorgio Morandi's studio. Taken from a variety of distances, the pictures show motifs and materials in a room, a number of rooms with different images, and furniture and tools in a space. When we look at several pictures at once, we can imagine something about Morandi's personality and life. What kind of person do you think he was? What kind of pictures do you think he painted? And what kind of life did he live?

Homma Takashi's *Tokyo and My Daughter* is a series of portraits of a young girl and landscapes of Tokyo. The girl is not actually the artist's daughter, but the pictures make it look as if they are related. Each of the photographs is more than a portrait of a girl; they are imbued with the unique essence of a family photograph. What is it that creates this special quality?

Open Hours 10:00 to 18:00 (20:00 on Thursdays and Fridays). Last entry 30 minutes before closing.

Closed Mondays (however open on July 16 [Mon]), July 17

Admission: Adults ¥ 500 / College Students ¥ 400 / High School and Junior High School Students, Over 65 ¥ 250

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