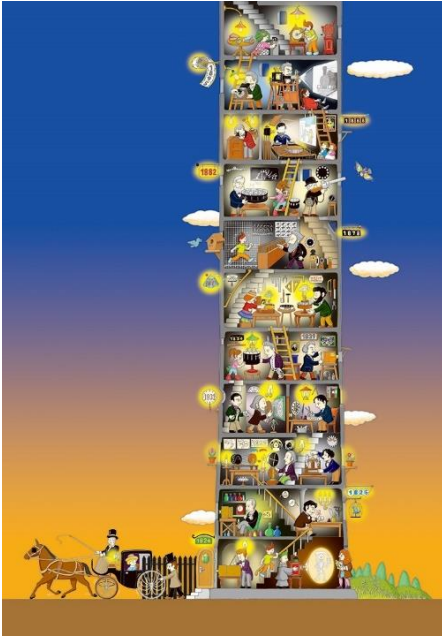


PRESS RELEASE

Iwai Toshio × Tokyo Photographic Art Museum presents
The Light and Movement House with 100 Stories
- Connecting Visual Devices in the 19th Century and Media Art

Jul. 30 - Nov. 3, 2024



Left:
Iwai Toshio, Original Drawings *The house with 100 stories* - the dawn of visual devices, 2024 © Iwai Toshio

Right:
Iwai Toshio, *Piano - as image media*, 1995, Collection of the artist

Exhibition Objectives |

Today, we are so accustomed to seeing digital images every day on computers and smartphones that we seldom pause to consider when and how moving images first appeared before humankind. However, the thrill of watching still images come to life is one we can vicariously share with those who first uncovered these principles, by experiencing the devices they created firsthand.



Iwai Toshio, widely recognized recently as a beloved children's book author, is also among Japan's foremost media artists. His well-known *Time Stratum* series was created by synthesizing the basic mechanics of moving images with new technology. Meanwhile, since its inception, the Tokyo Photographic Art Museum has housed a vast collection of early visual devices from the 19th century. In this exhibition, with Mr. Iwai's cooperation, we explore the inner workings of these devices. Gaining an understanding of their foundational principles will, in turn, open new avenues of appreciation for Mr. Iwai's media works. Our hope is that this ignites a passion for moving-image media in a new generation, who will continue pushing forward the evolution of these technologies.

Iwai Toshio, *A mirror house of 100 stories*, 2022, Collection of the artist

Exhibition Summary |

19th-Century Visual Devices

The origins of visual devices can be traced back to the 19th century, a time when the technologies underlying today's ubiquitous photographs and moving images were invented concurrently and often serendipitously. Some innovations sprang from mundane discoveries, while others emerged from a burning desire to witness phenomena up close. The more one investigates this era, the more one is inspired by the passion and insatiable curiosity of its scientists and artists. It is also important to recognize how these inventions and discoveries interconnected across both time and national borders. Here, we will explore key milestones in the history and development of visual devices, with a focus on items in the Tokyo Photographic Art Museum's collection.



Zoetrope, 19th century,
Collection of Tokyo
Photographic Art



Praxinoscope-Théâtre, 19th century,
Collection of Tokyo Photographic
Art Museum

The Media Art of Iwai Toshio

Iwai Toshio was born in 1962, about two months before the premiere of Japan's first TV anime series, *Astro Boy*. Iwai grew up captivated by anime and *tokusatsu* (special effects-heavy live action) TV programs, and naturally gravitated toward both flipbooks and electronics experimentation. In junior high school, he aspired to be a manga artist or animator, and by the time he was in high school, he had developed a passion for art and design. In his second year of high school, he was profoundly impressed by an encounter with the phenakistiscope in a book of works by illustrator and animator Furukawa Taku. Iwai subsequently enrolled in the School of Art and Design at the University of Tsukuba, where he began creating art seriously. His early experiences with flipbooks, his fascination with 19th-century visual devices, and his active integration of emerging computer and video technologies into his works all shaped his unique trajectory in media art.



Iwai Toshio, *Time Stratum III*, 1989,
Collection of the artist



Iwai Toshio, *Time Stratum II*, 1985,
Collection of Tokyo Photographic Art
Museum

Iwai Lab: Reinventing the 19th Century

The phrase "reinvent the wheel" is used, particularly in the tech industry in recent years, somewhat pejoratively and to describe the seemingly unnecessary act of developing from scratch a technology that is already well-known and established. However, is reinventing the wheel always a waste of time? As we have seen, while some visual devices invented in the 19th century evolved and significantly contributed to the advent of cinema, others vanished for various reasons and are now only known through scant historical documentation. What did the scientists and artists of the 19th century envision before the emergence of cinema? To explore this, Iwai Toshio is revisiting and endeavoring to reinvent some of these pioneering visual devices.



Iwai Toshio, *Phenakisti-scope Table*, 2024
Photo: Hashimoto Norihisa

Outline of exhibition |

Dates: July 30- November 3, 2024

Closed: Mondays (except when Monday falls on a holiday, in which case the museum is open and closed the following day)

Venue: B1F Exhibition Gallery, Tokyo Photographic Art Museum
Yebisu Garden Place, 1-13-3 Mita Meguro-ku Tokyo 153-0062

Open Hours: 10:00-18:00 (Thu. / Fri. 10:00-20:00)

*10:00-21:00 (Thu. / Fri. between July 18 and August 30)

*Final admission 30 minutes before closing.

Admission: Adults ¥ 700/ College Students ¥ 560 / High School and Junior High School Students, Over 65 ¥ 350

*Admission is free for children in elementary school or younger; junior high school students living or attending schools in the Tokyo metropolitan area; holders of Japanese disability identification cards (shogaisha techo), along with up to two caregivers; and holders of the museum's annual passport.

Organized by: Tokyo Metropolitan Government, Tokyo Photographic Art Museum operated by Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture, Nikkei Inc.

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For Press |

If you have any press enquiries about this Exhibition, please contact our Department of Public Relations.

High-resolution images for publication are also available by e-mail.

press-info@topmuseum.jp

<https://topmuseum.jp/e/contents/index.html>