

W. Eugene Smith and New York: The Loft Era

March 17(Tue)–June 7(Sun), 2026

01

W. Eugene Smith, *Untitled*, from the series
'As from My Window I Sometimes Glance...,'
c.1957-59 Collection of Tokyo Photographic
Art Museum
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The Tokyo Photographic Art Museum is pleased to present a solo exhibition of W. Eugene Smith (1918–1978), one of the most renowned American documentary photographers of the 20th century.

Born in Wichita, Kansas, Smith developed an early passion for photography, influenced by his mother. After working for the local newspaper *Wichita Eagle*, he dedicated himself fully to photojournalism in the 1940s. During World War II, he covered fierce battlegrounds such as Okinawa and Saipan as a correspondent for *Life* magazine. Smith remained affiliated with *Life* for several years after the war and produced many series that closely documented people's lives, including *Country Doctor*, *A Man of Mercy*, and *Minamata*. These works cemented his position as a pioneer of the photo essay, a genre that weaves together multiple images and brief text to tell a compelling story.

After leaving *Life* in 1954, Smith moved to an apartment in Manhattan known as the Loft. The space became a hub for a wide range of artists, from musicians such as Thelonious Monk and Miles Davis to the Surrealist Salvador Dalí, Abstract Expressionist painters, and photographers including Robert Frank and Diane Arbus. Smith photographed the frequent jam sessions and vibrant interactions that unfolded there. Smith's work from this period reaches beyond the conventions of journalism and is strongly marked by a sustained search for photography's artistic potential. This exhibition focuses on the Loft era and the years before and after, exploring Smith's work not only as a photojournalist but also as an artist, and offering opportunities to reexamine his work from fresh perspectives.

We hope this exhibition allows visitors to discover new aspects of Smith's work and experience the fusion of reportage and art that he so passionately pursued.

Exhibition Structure

Introduction

Chapter 1: The Great City

Chapter 2: Loft Era

Chapter 3: Let Truth Be the Prejudice

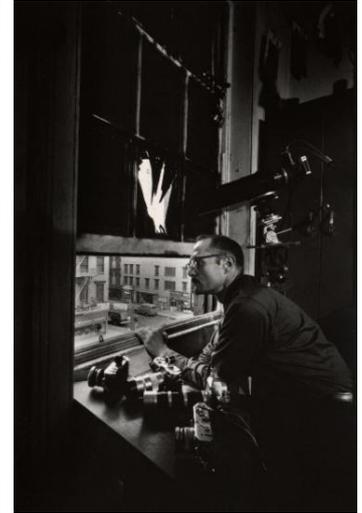
Chapter 4: Minamata — The Fusion of Journalism and Art



02



03



04



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06



07



08

02, 03 : W. Eugene Smith, *Untitled*, from the series 'As from My Window I Sometimes Glance...,' c.1957-59 Collection of Tokyo Photographic Art Museum ©2026 The Heirs of W. Eugene Smith / 04 : W. Eugene Smith, *Self-portrait*, c.1957 Courtesy of Center for Creative Photography, The University of Arizona: W. Eugene Smith Archive ©1957, 2026 The Heirs of W. Eugene Smith / 05, 06 : W. Eugene Smith, *Untitled*, from the series 'The Loft from Inside In...,' c.1958-65 Collection of Tokyo Photographic Art Museum ©2026 The Heirs of W. Eugene Smith / 07 : W. Eugene Smith, *Steelworker with Goggles*, from the series *Pittsburgh*, 1955 Collection of Tokyo Photographic Art Museum ©1955, 2026 The Heirs of W. Eugene Smith / 08 : W. Eugene Smith, *Untitled (Jimmy Stevenson)*, from the series *Jazz and Folk Musicians*, c.1958-65 Collection of Tokyo Photographic Art Museum ©1962, 2026 The Heirs of W. Eugene Smith



09



10

09 : W. Eugene Smith, *Untitled (Fishing in Minamata Bay)*, from the series 'Minamata,' 1972 Collection of Tokyo Photographic Art Museum ©Aileen Mioko Smith / 10 : W. Eugene Smith, *Untitled (Patients and Relatives Carry Photographs of Their "Verified" Dead)*, from the series 'Minamata,' 1972 Collection of Tokyo Photographic Art Museum ©Aileen Mioko Smith

Outline of exhibition

Exhibition Title: W. Eugene Smith and New York: →The Loft Era

Dates: March 17(Tue)–June 7(Sun), 2026

Closed: Mondays (except May 4) and May 7

Venue: 2F Exhibition Gallery, Tokyo Photographic Art Museum Yebisu Garden Place, 1-13-3 Mita Meguro-ku Tokyo 153-0062

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

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

*Admission is free for junior high school students or younger, 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 (Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture)

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