

**Collection Exhibition 2013:  
The Aesthetics of Photography--Five Elements**  
2013.5.11(sat)—7.7 (sun)

---the photographs of the missing being...will touch me  
like the delayed rays of a star.

from Roland Barthes "Camera Lucida"  
translated by Richard Howard,  
Vintage Books, London



photographer unknown (Portrait of a  
woman and boy) 19th century,  
handcolored on daguerreotype

Organized by: Tokyo Metropolitan / Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography  
Sponsored by Toppan Printing Co., Ltd.  
Venue: Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography 3F Exhibition Gallery

The Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography sets a different theme each year and then carefully selects from its collection masterpieces that relate to the theme. This year's theme is the "aesthetics of photography." We will present in three phases various trends in photographic expression from early 19th-century photographs to contemporary works that explore the aesthetics of photography. The first phase called "Five Elements" will start in May.

The 18th-century German philosopher, Baumgarten, was a proponent of the discipline of aesthetics, which he defined as the "science of sensibility." Aesthetics eventually reached Japan where it was translated into Japanese as *bigaku* (science of beauty). Nowadays the Japanese use the word "este" or "esthetic" generally to refer to cosmetology or beauty treatments, but the word originated in Europe in the 18th century to refer to the academic discipline of aesthetics. Aesthetics is not just about making the human body beautiful. It is a means of perceiving as beautiful the phenomena of the natural world and the various things outside of ourselves, and also a means of developing a mind that understands beauty.

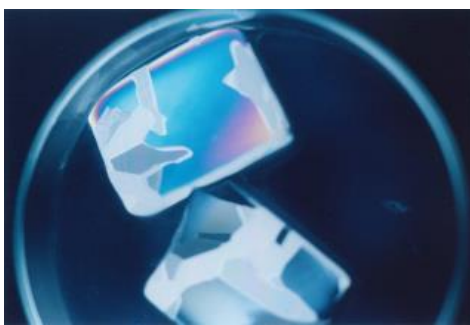
The theme of this exhibition is "Where lies the beauty in a photo?" As the curator of the exhibition I have selected from the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography's collection of more than 29,000 photographs the best examples of what I perceive as the beauty in photographs and divided them into five elements. Those five elements are luminous, reflection, surface, sense of loss, and reference.

From the first ever photographs emerging in the 19th-century to those from the modern day, through the museum's collection of photographs we will look at the various ways in which beauty has been expressed in photographic form.

The Japanese characters for "photograph" (*shashin*) literally means "to reflect the truth." Sometimes perceiving an ever-expanding beauty through photographs is more important than knowing "the truth". It is our hope that exploring the aesthetics of photography will open up in viewers' hearts and minds new channels of perception of beauty.

Exhibition Curator, Ishida Tetsuro (Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography)

## 01\_luminous

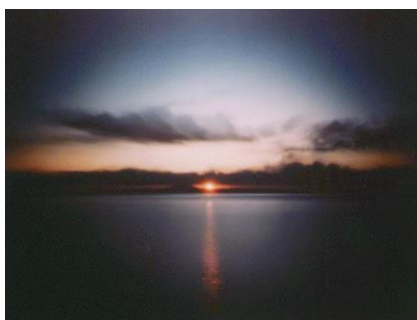


L) Sato Tokihiro 《Breath-graph #155 YUBARI》 1992, gelatin silver print

R) Kawauchi Rinko 《iridescence》 2009, chromogenic print

Light is primordial, it is life-giving. The essential nature of photographic equipment is to allow light from the outside world to pour into a dark room, and thereby conflate images.

## 02\_reflection



L) Suzuka Yoshiyasu 《 Rises and Falls on the Horizon #672 Bise, Okinawa 》 1993, chromogenic print

R) Yamawaki Iwao 《 Reflection in Mirrored Ball 》 1932, gelatin silver print

An image of light reflected in the water or the world reflected in the glass and a window. The images drift along the boundary between what is real and what is illusion, generating an atmosphere, a feeling, a rich overlapping.

## 03\_surface

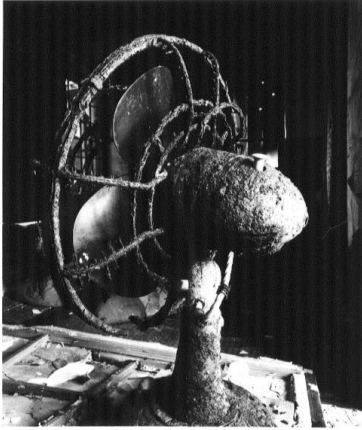


L) Man Ray 《 Return to Reason 》 1923, gelatin silver print

R) Stillfried and Andersen 《 Untitled (portrait of geisha)》 19th Century (Meiji Era) handcolored on albumen print

The texture of a material, how it feels against the skin. A fetishistic sense for the surface and the detail of things. An exotic handcolored print from the Meiji era that captivated foreigners with its application of “make-up” that added color to the surface of the monochrome printing paper.

#### 04\_sense of loss



- L) Saiga Yuji 《Gunkanjima》 1984-86, gelatin silver print
- R) Christian Boltanski 《Gymnasium Chases》 1991, photogravure

A scene of ruins and a commemorative photo from the past. The vestiges of time lost forever shake human memory and human emotion. Photography causes people to think nostalgically about the irreversible flow of time.

#### 05\_reference



- L) Robert Doisneau 《Picasso and the Loaves》 1952, gelatin silver print
- R) Morimura Yasumasa 《A Requiem: Theater of Creativity / Self-portrait as Pablo Picasso》 2010, gelatin silver print

One image replayed in the future as the source of other images. One image connected to the history of the visual culture of the past.

## Exhibition Details

Title: Collection Exhibition 2013: The Aesthetics of Photography--Five Elements

Dates: May 11, Sat. – July 7, Sun. 2013

Opening hours: 10:00 to 18:00 ( until 20:00 on Thursday and Friday )

\* Admittance is 30 minutes before a closing

Closed on Mondays

Venue: 3F Exhibition Gallery, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography

Admission: Adults ¥500 / College Students ¥400

High School and Junior High School Students, Over 65 ¥250

For the further information, please contact:

Ishida Tetsuro, curator, [t.ishida@syabi.com](mailto:t.ishida@syabi.com)

Kushiro Akiko, public relations, [a.kushiro@syabi.com](mailto:a.kushiro@syabi.com)

Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography 1-13-3 Mita, Meguro-ku, Tokyo 153-0062, Japan  
Tel: 81 3 3280-0099 / URL: [www.syabi.com](http://www.syabi.com)