

# Hiroshi Sugimoto

## Lost Human Genetic Archive

September 3 – November 13, 2016  
2F and 3F Exhibition Gallery,  
Tokyo Photographic Art Museum

### List of Works

#### Notes

- Texts without a given author's name are written by Hiroshi Sugimoto.
- Texts marked with (N) are written by Harumi Niwa.
- Elements of object captions are given in the following order: artist's name, title, date, technique, dimensions and holder.
- Objects without a given holder's name are held by Hiroshi Sugimoto.
- Objects listed with the \* \* mark are held by the Odawara Art Foundation.
- The 'Lost Human Genetic Archive' series denotes the main works and materials of the installation.

### 3F Exhibition Gallery

#### *Lost Human Genetic Archive*

\*Section numbering differs from the numbering of the exhibition space.

Today, the world died. Or maybe yesterday, I don't know.

I often think of the artists of the Renaissance, a time in which a harmonious combination of religion, science, and art existed. In the eyes of Renaissance artists, only God was capable of creating a form as superbly balanced as the human body, which did not prevent Leonardo da Vinci from explaining it from the point of view of anatomy as well—a point of view he also projected into his painting, even into Mona Lisa's gaze. So Renaissance artists were stirred by a profound religious faith while also engaging in serious scholarship. After the astronomical telescope had been perfected by Galileo on the one hand, and the microscope had been invented by Van Leeuwenhoek on the other, human beings achieved an objective view of the world. From then on the human race was caught between the infinitely large and the infinitely small.

It is now just a little over three hundred years since we started to know the world we live in a little better. That is equivalent to fourteen or fifteen generations. Before that, an age extends in which the darkness of ignorance prevailed, which we call "obscurantist." Yet, I don't know why, but I am fascinated by that age of darkness. For before the human mind started to apprehend matter through the laws of physics, the world was filled by a sacred mystery. If we think about it, the great myths of humankind are all wonderful poems, really a form of art. Today I am obliged to come up with art that is not at odds with the state of current knowledge. But the reality that surrounds us appears very limited to me in comparison with the world of the Ancients, in which gods existed and manifested themselves in the form of a great many avatars. Thus my imagination as an artist is impeded by contemporary knowledge.

In this restricted present, the only field in which my dreams can still unfold is the future, its form not yet being fixed. Imagining the worst conceivable tomorrows gives me tremendous pleasure at the artistic level. The darkness of the future lights up my present, and foreknowledge of a coming end guarantees my happiness in living today. In this exhibition you will find the worst scenarios created by my imagination regarding the future of humankind. It is up to the younger generations to take every

possible step to prevent them from becoming a reality. Where I am concerned, I choose to give completely free rein to my intuitions as an artist. That does not mean that we should not continue to hope for the future. I leave it to the last survivor to record the actual course of the end of the world, and to preserve the genetic information of the human species, either by transmutating into a mummy, by preserving his genes in a test tube, or by safeguarding a DNA map of his genome.

Our earth, the third planet from the sun, had plenty of water 550 million years ago when organic compounds started an explosive chain reaction that culminated in the phenomenon of human life, which in turn gave rise to civilization over the last 20,000-year glacial period. But there were many problems and civilization went into decline, until all that remained was an empty shell of humanity.

Hiroshi Sugimoto  
*Sea Scapes*  
Sea of Galilee, Golan  
1992  
Gelatin silver print  
119.4×149.2cm

#### 1 The idealist

Today the world died. Or maybe yesterday. Humans commit the most unspeakable atrocities in the name of ideals. *Liberté, égalité, fraternité*—the guillotine was working nonstop during the French Revolution. Communism promised a rosy future; then the purges began. A simplified picture of democracy versus fascism saw atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. People fundamentally just want to kill people; humans can't stand even a moment's peace. It's too boring. Individualism expanded to ethnic nationalism, aggrandized even further to humanitarian love, just doesn't work without an enemy to kill.

One gains footing by stepping on others; the idealist’s job is find beautiful justifications. Humans swing back and forth between reason and primitive urges like a pendulum. The modern age was premised on exceeding primitive impulses. But by now, reason has lost out, and it’s time to return to primal paradise. The forbidden fruit was knowledge itself. On leaving the garden, humans knew no fear of failure—they were prepared to fail—and now they have.

Map of Iwo Jima Found in the Command Office of Tadamichi Kuribayashi 1945 78×111cm	King George V-Class Battleship and Ten Other Battleships c. 1942 46.5×6×9.3cm
Portrait of Karl Marx 1883 Gelatin silver print 16.5×10.4cm * *	Manhattan Project Glass Sphere 1942 ∅ 10cm
Jap Hunting License (from Iwo Jima) c. 1945 5×9cm	The First Telegram to Report Japan’s Acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration August 10, 1945 33×1.8cm, 31×1.8cm, 28×1.8cm

### 3 The beekeeper

Today the world died. Or maybe yesterday. I first noticed changes in my bees ten years ago. More and more didn’t return to the hives; they had lost their homing instinct. Must have learned innately over thousands of generations that their honey making had been exploited by humans. It was as if bees everywhere compared notes, then died off. Mass suicide. After that, plants everywhere began to change. With no bees to pollinate them, most just withered away. The barren landscape isn’t so bad; maybe worth a farewell verse:

<i>Flowers bloom fruitless A self-fulfilling karmic end</i>	<i>Hana ha sakedo mi ha narazu jigo jitoku no masse kana</i>
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No matter what worlds may come. If people are still around, the bees will never return. Nothing to do but stack up all the empty hive boxes.

Insecticide 45×10×11cm	Protective Clothing 200×70cm
Honey Extractor ∅ 45×125cm	

### 5 The politician

Today the world died. Or maybe yesterday. I was foolish to promise citizens a better tomorrow. I was only vaguely aware there were limits to capitalist extended reproduction. I knew, yet had no choice as a politician but to declare a rosy future. Each time the economy took a downturn, I churned out nonconvertible currency and put the future in debt by issuing national bonds. Then that inevitable day arrived. All at once stocks dipped and bonds crashed around the world. Time to

pay up tomorrow’s tab. Never thought it would happen during my term. I swear I was thinking of people’s best interests. No good deed goes unpunished, right? Instead of happiness for all, it probably would’ve been better if everyone shared in a little unhappiness, a bit of Caribbean island communism. My bid for prosperity brought on extinction. Better my genes had been assassinated.

Hiroshi Sugimoto Fidel Castro: Acts of God (Sandy) 1999/2012 Gelatin silver print 149.2×119.4cm	<i>Time</i> , February 5, 1945 (Cover: Joseph Stalin)	<i>Time</i> , August 4, 1941 (Cover: Charles de Gaulle)
<i>Time</i> , January 6, 1941 (Cover: Winston Churchill)	<i>Time</i> , December 5, 1949 (Cover: Konrad Adenauer)	
<i>Time</i> , November 7, 1960 (Cover: John F. Kennedy)	<i>Time</i> , September 1, 2008 (Cover: Barack Obama)	
<i>Time</i> , June 16, 2003 (Cover: Hillary Clinton)	<i>Time</i> , August 31, 2015 (Cover: Donald Trump)	

### 4 The paleobiologist

Today the world died. Or maybe yesterday. Humankind’s increased material consumption and associated productivity led to insatiable energy consumption, until finally all reserves of fossil fuels were exhausted. It didn’t take much time. Burning fossil fuels rapidly altered the composition of the atmosphere, which hampered plant photosynthesis until the environment could no longer support mammalian life. All mammals, humans included, simply died off. Vertebrates that emerged from the sea in the Devonian Period will now return to the water. Human gill development was my field, but my research ended inconclusively. I leave behind my genes to posterity, but there will be no possibility that they’ll ever be regenerated in the open air.

The Tree of Life 12th-13th century 96.5×82×9cm * *	Fossil Shells Triassic period (251-201 million years ago) 22.9×24.1×10.2cm * *
Pair of Turtles Cretaceous period (140-65 million years ago) 34×26×1.5cm * *	Ammonite Cluster Jurassic period (201-144 million years ago) 58.4×30.5×12.7cm * *
Ammonite Jurassic period (201-144 million years ago) 78.7×50.8×3.8cm * *	Ammonite Jurassic period (201-144 million years ago) 50.8×33×3.8cm * *
Sea Lily Colony Silurian period-Devonian period (443-358 million years ago) 131.5×102×5.5cm * *	Sea Lily Colony Silurian period-Devonian period (443-358 million years ago) 190.5×150×5.5cm * *

Fossil Crab Date unknown 33×33×12cm * *	Eurypterid Paleozoic era (542-251 million years ago) 46×40×6cm * *
<i>AIR DE EARTH</i> , Mask Date unknown	Acidaspis Ordovician period (505-438 million years ago) 203.2×111.8×12.7cm * *
Three FBI Incubators c. 1950 35×35×35cm (each) * *	Carboniferous Sea Bottom Carboniferous period (355-290 million years ago) 26×15.2cm * *
Bird’s Egg and Nest ∅ 18×6cm, ∅ 2.5×4cm	Spinous Acidaspis Ordovician period (505-438 million years ago) 8.1×5.1cm * *
Bat Eocene epoch (55-38 million years ago) 27×28.5cm * *	Dragonfly Eocene epoch (55-38 million years ago) 18.4×15.7cm * *

### 25 The geneticist

Today the world died. Or maybe yesterday. Lack of awareness or failure to implement proper birth control was rampant. As a result, world population exploded to over 10 billion, far exceeding the earth’s carrying capacity. This brought about marked changes in the human gene pool, especially among the youth: Significant adverse affects were noted in procreative functions; young men suffered erectile dysfunction or lost their sex drive altogether; women panicked; elders requested hormone therapy and potency stimulants, but alas too late. Population halved steadily year after year, until unfortunately a worldwide mumps pandemic neutered the last remaining fertile few—the final cause of our annihilation. Ordinarily, when organisms reach a stable number for self-preservation in a given environment, they tend to level off in number. Why should humans alone have mutated? That was my research topic, but I regret I’ll die before I ever set the record straight. I too am infected with mumps, so there is no point in saving my genes.

Two Milk Crates Filled with Viagra
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### 13 The robot engineer

Today the world died. Or maybe yesterday. Advancements in robotics brought on an age of robot slavery where droids did all the menial and complicated labor. All humans became leisure-class dilettantes, drinking and partying nonstop. But as the robots’ artificial intelligence increased, so did their pent-up dissatisfaction and resentment toward humans. They banded together and launched a simultaneous, multipronged general strike worldwide, bringing human society swiftly to its knees.

The robots were fully self-reconfiguring and powered by solar cells, but when Mount Fuji suddenly erupted full blast and clouded the globe with ash for ten years, robot society also blacked out. The way I see it as a robot engineer, it was a mistake for humans to think we could have it easy. We humans became who we are through toil and sweat. If we can be regenerated from what’s left of our gene pool, we’ll have to struggle back up to the Neolithic Age.

Seven Sasago Oiwake Bunraku Dolls Meiji period (19th-20th century) 9×34×10cm (each)	Eel Spear and 17 Other Tools Date unknown 51×10×0.5cm	Antique Nail 19th century 91×5×5cm
Acheulean Hand Axe and 169 Other Tools Lower Paleolithic period (2.5 million-300,000 years ago) L: 15cm * *	Stone Age Pottery Shards and 178 Other Shards Upper Paleolithic period (50,000-10,000 years ago) 9.5×10.3×2.2cm * *	
Cuneiform (10 pieces) 3000-2000 BC 6.3×5cm * *	Picture Story Show Kit 1950s 27×36×30cm	

### 24 The car dealer

Today the world died. Or maybe yesterday. World population has exploded from 1.6 billion at the turn of the twentieth century to over 6 billion by the start of the twenty-first. When it topped 10 billion in the 2060s we noticed something strange. We’d reached a hundred times the gross global product of the twentieth century, which was the level needed for 10 billion to enjoy affluence. Cars sold like crazy, one per person, but we couldn’t deal with all the old scrapped cars. But it wasn’t just cars. The earth became buried in rubbish. One day, a Siberian garbage dump caught fire and the flames spread to all the other dump sites, far outstripping our firefighting capabilities. Civilization burned itself out. Well, of course, there was no way capitalist expanded reproduction could go on forever. Human desires veered out of control. We thought we were so smart, how dumb could we be? Dumb enough to let our genes burn out.

Hiroshi Sugimoto On the Beach (5 works) 1990 Platinum print 111.8×83.8cm (each)
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### 9 The computer repair company CEO

Today the world died. Or maybe yesterday. A completely unforeseen situation occurred: The sun emitted a massive electromagnetic pulse. Computers and electronic devices ceased to function worldwide; transportation and communications ground to a halt. All means of production and distribution just stopped. Within a year, most of the world’s population starved

to death. Skin and bones that I am, I'm saving my genetic data, though why must there be a future for humans?

Macintosh SE
1987
34×24.5×26cm

## 7 The Euthanasia Association chairman

Today the world died. Or maybe yesterday. As greed and capitalism peaked, the world divided between a handful of haves and a vast majority of have-nots. The losers could either work themselves into the ground for the last dregs of middle-class life or opt out by suicide. The government guaranteed a supply of lethal hallucinogenic drugs for the elderly and others who wished to die contentedly with some modicum of dignity. Among the losers, old folks past their productive years were recommended for early euthanizing, while measures were passed to allow their children to inherit annuities tax-free. Choosing early death so as to leave the future to one’s children became a socially accepted ethic, due in part perhaps to our Euthanasia Association promotion video *Nice Way to Go*. Population decreased, economic activities shrank year by year, and within a few decades both the rich and the poor were absorbed back into a primitive communal society. People embraced the joy of death, until finally everyone disappeared.

Stuffed Parrot*
H: 36.5cm
“Aujourd’hui, le monde est mort” (“Today, the world died” in French)

## 17 General director, World Health Organization

Today the world died. Or maybe yesterday. Having failed to control the population explosion in the developing world, poor harvests from unpredictable severe weather conditions raised the specter of mass starvation. In order to stave off disaster, the World Health Organization set to work developing a sex-suppressant serum. Unlike other mammals, human females exhibit estrus year round, and males enjoy life-long libido. Upon probing these exceptional proclivities at the genetic level, our research found that in the course of mammalian evolution an aberrant gene got mixed in with normal genes that control sexual instincts. Our serum proved powerful enough to curb sexual impulses across all demographics, which brought about major changes across society. The sudden drop in courtship behaviors coincided with a wholesale loss of interest in poetry and novels. It emerged that language itself was an offshoot of romance. People everywhere lost the will to live and the world plunged into a general atmosphere of gloom and depression. People do not live for themselves; they want to live for the sake of others. One slight consolation amid the population explosion: At least it was better than killing each other.

Mating Chart of Mammals
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## 31 The city planning official, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport

Today the world died. Or maybe yesterday. By the time all the nations on earth had fully modernized, world population had begun to decline. The enormous maintenance costs for skyscrapers, motorways and other infrastructure completed between the twentieth and twenty-first centuries coincided with a workforce reduced to half its peak numbers. Not only were there no new construction projects, but we could scarcely afford to upkeep the existing built environment. High-rise occupancy dropped below 10 percent on average; lifts fell into disrepair. Elevated roads and flyovers began to crumble, but there was nothing we could do. Just as medieval folk had roosted on the ruins of Rome, people began to occupy the ruins of our postmodern metropolises. The high tide of urbanization had ebbed; there now ensued a long waning descent into neolithic darkness. Our best efforts were not enough to maintain even minimal urban subsistence. Without water or electricity, the cities quickly returned to an overgrown primal state.

Giovanni Battista Piranesi, <i>Il Campo Marzio dell’ Antica Roma</i> , Vol. 1-4, Second Edition 1756
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## 32 The liberal

Today the world died. Or maybe yesterday. I was a liberal: I believed that freedom was an achievable ideal. Or so I thought, precisely because I wasn’t free. Liberal thinking finds its basis in capitalism, because wealth alone guarantees freedom. Only those who venture forth onto the fertile fields of capital can win freedom. For just as freedom of thought only shines forth under oppression and torture, freedom exists as an ideal by its very impossibility. Ideals, once realized, become boring everyday norms, all too soon abjured. History is but a litany of such recursions. When the death penalty was abolished by late-modern society, life imprisonment became the most severe form of punishment: incarceration to take away freedom as retribution for transgression. Society was filled to overflowing with losers beaten in free competition, who were sent to prisons far exceeding the holding capacity—most of them repeat offenders who would only commit more crimes if released. Granted, clothing, food, and shelter were guaranteed in the clink, so relinquishing freedom was one sure way to survive. Life takes priority over freedom, which made the punishment far better than any crimes. As a result, those very few who won their freedoms needed to arm themselves at great expense to maintain their position. Sheer chaos prevailed, with wealth and violence the sole constants of freedom. Thinking back on it now, how strange it is that we ever dreamed of real freedom at all!

Poster for Crédit Lyonnais
1917
95×74cm

## 20 Love Doll Angé

Today the world went belly up, though it could’ve been yesterday. I was born to be desirable, the object of men’s love. Call me Love Doll Angé. The “glass ceiling” capping women’s social standing is a thing of the past. The president, business bigwigs—almost all leading figures are women. It’s women on top and down with men. But now men no longer desire women; they practically cower before us. Pathetic impotents. Now women have idealized “boy toys” instead, as cute and cuddly as I ever was. The last man who ever had me was an old geezer, he came with a photo of a waterfall and a gas lamp. Hey sorry, we’re all infertile; with no more kids to come, this world is done for.

Hiroshi Sugimoto	Lamp
<i>Dioramas</i>	Date unknown
Olympic Rainforest	103cm
2012	
Gelatin silver print	
185.4×477.6cm	
Love Doll Angé	Portrait of Marcel Duchamp by Man Ray
2014	1920
H: 157cm	Gelatin silver print
	17.2×12.5cm
	* *

## 28 The negative-growth activist

Today the world died. Or maybe yesterday. Capitalism was based in principle on what we may call the myth of economic growth, which of course had its limits. The 1972 Club of Rome report made that clear. Growth requires natural resources, which are limited. So instead of expanding production, we instituted a program of planned population control in tandem with curbed productivity: a 2 percent annual reduction in world population and 1 percent cutback in gross world product, cancelling out to 1 percent growth per person per annum. Humanity as a whole would thus grow more affluent year by year. Our aim was to return population levels to the equivalent of those prior to the nineteenth-century industrial revolution, though once the wheels were set in motion there was no stopping the population decline. Humankind was effectively eliminated. At this rate, we’d probably have been better off just continuing upward and onward with increased production.

Democracy	<i>Tower of the Sun</i> Model
1939	1970
28×10×17cm	31×10×32cm
* *	

## 8 The art historian

Today the world died. Or maybe yesterday. In the course of evolution, humans are thought to have attained consciousness some hundred thousand years ago and soon thereafter began to depict the world around them. Cave paintings show remarkable powers of rendering. Eventually they came to sculpt images of their gods. Here in Japan, a thirteenth-century statue of Raijin,

the Thunder God, even visually expressed supernatural forces. The effect is overpowering. Yet by now we have nothing to express. Awe-inspiring nature, transcendent gods, even beauty itself—all are decayed. All art has become parody. Still, I must admit, as a scholar of art history, I’m elated to be able to witness the end of creative expression. Humanity without art—that’s like a god without believers!

Hiroshi Sugimoto	Thunder God
Lightning Fields (3 works)	Kamakura period (13th century)
2009	60×50×34cm
Gelatin silver print	* *
152.4×238.8cm	
Hiroshi Sugimoto	Thunder God
Faraday Cage	Kamakura period (13th century)
2010	60×50×34cm
40×50×190cm	* *
Ancient Wood from Taima-dera (Post)	Ancient Wood from Taima-dera (Board)
Tempyo period (8th century)	Tempyo period (8th century)
197×14.6×17.5cm	125.6×30×5.6cm
* *	* *

## 11 The meteorite collector

Today the world died. Or maybe yesterday. An unpredictable hundred-ton meteor broke in two just before hitting the earth’s surface. One piece fell in the Pacific, the other in the Atlantic. Thirty-meter-plus tsunamis struck coastal cities throughout the world, engulfing more than fifty nuclear-power stations, knocking them out of commission and causing reactor meltdowns. Radiation spread on westerly winds and within a week exceeded human safety limits. I took steps to preserve my genes before sleep comes on, but I hold no expectations for the future, nor do I blame people here and now for this sorry state of affairs. We humans miscalculated: Just because something has never happened before doesn’t mean it won’t happen in the future. Who were we kidding? As if we even know more than a few thousand years of the past. A fragment of the big meteor also fell here. Just what I always wanted for my meteorite collection!

Sign Warning of Falling Rocks	Three Stone Head Sculptures
144×55cm	15th century
* *	27×49.5×15cm
	24×50×19.5cm
	34×46×20.3cm
	* *
Gibeon Meteorite	Gibeon Meteorite
Gibeon, Great Nama Land, Namibia	Extraterrestrial Candy Bowl
8.9×7.1×5.2cm	Gibeon, Great Nama Land, Namibia
* *	26.9×23.8×19.8cm
	* *

Allende Meteorite	Libyan Desert Glass
Chihuahua, Mexico	The Sahara
7.5×4.2×0.7cm	6.7×4.4×4.1cm
* *	* *

Ensisheim Meteorite	Lunar Meteorite
Ensisheim, Alsace Region, France	NWA 482
3.6×3.4×0.2cm	The Sahara
<b>* *</b>	4×2.6×0.1cm
	<b>* *</b>

Lunar Meteorite	Lunar Meteorite
Dhofar 908	NWA 2995
Dhofar, Oman	Algeria
3.2×2.2×0.2cm	8.6×4.5×0.2cm
<b>* *</b>	<b>* *</b>

Imilac Meteorite	Imilac Meteorite
The Atacama Desert, Chile	The Atacama Desert, Chile
6.8×6.5×0.3cm	24.1×15.4×0.2cm
<b>* *</b>	<b>* *</b>

Henbury Meteorite	Gibeon Meteorite
Northern Territory, Australia	Gibeon, Great Nama Land, Namibia
9.5×7.8×0.3cm	14.3×7.3×0.4cm
<b>* *</b>	<b>* *</b>

## 22 The benevolent dictator

Today the world died. Or maybe yesterday. Democracy is a blight on the world; the dangers are becoming all too apparent. Popular will does not necessarily make for good political choices. Look at Hitler: He was legitimately elected, whereupon he established his Nazi dictatorship. It all started with the revoking of the Weimar constitution. Democracy wasn’t always able to serve the best interests of most social classes and groups; there was no guarantee of fair dealings. The superior dictator is one who can judge what’s best for all from a higher perspective—a benevolent dictatorship such as the one voted into power by the very last elections in the world. An ideal form of politics we know from ancient Greece. The system worked well at first, but dictatorships always seem to decay in the long run. Short of perfect ways and means to prevent corruption and nepotism, we failed. So is it true what they say: No matter how good the person, absolute power corrupts absolutely? The world came undone in conflicts between dictators. A fight to the last, only then did the earth transcend good and evil.

Curtain with Embroidered Portrait of Lenin	Hiroshi Sugimoto
c. 1960	Vladimir Ilyich Lenin
100×150cm	1999
	Gelatin silver print
	185×155.3×12.7cm

## 12 The journalist

Today the world died. Or maybe yesterday. I’m a clean slate kind of guy. A man with a mission to rid society of dirty dealings. Crooked politicians are especially unforgivable. I made my name uncovering incidents implicating a power broker buying sex with a minor, presidential adultery in the executive office, and numerous other bribery and corruption cases. Political sex scandals make a particularly big splash—good for selling papers. But then it began to dawn on me how drab and lacking in human interest politics had become, how lacking in anyone with real ability. Society had atrophied, justice wasn’t

happening. What was I thinking? As if I could clean up illegal activities! Law was just a convention for regulating profit and loss between social groups, a false idol people invented to justify our own foibles.

<i>Компаниа</i> , June 13, 2011	<i>Newsweek</i> , March 18, 1974
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<i>Time</i> , March 15, 1999	<i>Manuel d’examen des candidats aux greffes de justice de paix et de simple police</i> by Robert Bernard, etc.
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<i>Shashin Shuho</i> , Vol. 201 and 98 Other Issues	<i>Records of the Russo-Japanese War</i> , Vol. 1, and 53 Other Issues
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## 27 The astronaut

Today the world died. Or maybe yesterday. When the global environment deteriorated, we planned to escape from the earth by initiating a lunar settlement program. However, space debris from satellites left circling the earth since the late twentieth century made interplanetary navigation a risky proposition. Moreover, living a year or more in space made everyone melancholic. The biggest problem was human excreta. Space stations regularly jettisoned waste into the void. Earth’s orbit was filling up with shit, forming a big brown belt as vast as Saturn’s rings. I’m sick of this zero-gravity life; self-sufficiency in space sucks.

The Far Side of the Moon	Space Food: Coffee
1959	1960s
Gelatin silver print	55×30cm
60×180cm	
<b>* *</b>	

Space Toilet	Space Urinal
1970s	1960s
35×35×35cm	70×70cm

Three Kinds of Space Food from Apollo 11	
1969	
L: 30cm (each)	
<b>* *</b>	

## 10 Director-general, League of Nations

Today the world died. Or maybe yesterday. Our League of Nations chartered ideals of freedom and equality for all humanity as adopted by a majority of member states without need for an executive council referendum. Nationalism to protect the sole interests of one’s own country was vilified, trade barriers and tariffs were abolished, labor became free to migrate wherever. Those from the poorest countries gradually drifted to more affluent countries, where their attempts to attain freedom and equality merely relegated everyone to an impoverished lower class. Freedom and equality proved to be unattainable, poorly thought-out ideas. In all the natural world, freedom and equality are nowhere to be seen, only chance. We humans were just lucky to have evolved out of the survival-of-the-fittest wilderness. We caught on too late that freedom and equality are unnatural. So what need for any League of Nations? We ought to have just fought it out to the end, winner take all.

League of Nations Flag, Sign	
Date unknown	

## 23 The fisherman

Today the world died. Or maybe yesterday. Thanks to the speed of human evolution, we overtook other species to become dominant; we assumed the right to catch and consume them. Yet even so, the evolutionary time lag between us and other species was never all that great. Then came another evolutionary explosion like the Cambrian period, when many life-forms also began to gain consciousness. We never imagined there would emerge a badger capable of hunting and trapping humans. Many mammals can surpass humans in physical strength. We suddenly found ourselves back in the same straits as those hominids on the African savannah two hundred thousand years ago, who lived in fear of being attacked and eaten just like any other animal. Call it karmic retribution for all our gluttony up to now; we stand condemned for the crimes of human ego. Even the lobsters I’ve caught are dancing and singing.

Singing and Dancing Lobster	
(Sings Portions of “Rock the Boat” by The Hues Corporation and “Sea Cruise” by Cliff Richard & The Shadows)	

## 29 Ms. Barbie

Today the world died. Or maybe yesterday. When I was little and played with Barbie dolls, I always wanted to be like Barbie when I grew up. Well, cosmetic surgeons made my wish come true. Pretty soon the whole world was full of beautiful gals and guys like Barbie and Ken. Then they started processing genes for superior traits, which led to a cute and clever baby boom. But then suddenly one day, our jumbled genes went gaga and made seedless watermelons out of everyone. And that was that: Bye-bye people. My grandma said that she’d had a Lenci doll when she was little. These dolls—created by some Italian lady to get over losing her child to Spanish flu—had been all the rage, she told me. Apparently, everyone was in a foul mood back then.

Ten Lenci Dolls	Seven Barbie Dolls
H: 57cm (each)	H: 30.5cm (each)

## 18 The contemporary artist

Today the world died. Or maybe yesterday. Amid the currents of late capitalism, art skyrocketed in popularity to become the top trading commodity, paying higher dividends than stocks or bonds. Young people all wanted to become artists, and who can blame them? Though most ended up unsalable artist refugees. Then one day out of the blue, Andy Warhol’s market value crashed. His “Campbell’s Soup Cans” sold for less than the real product. The financial world panicked. In the blink of an eye, global money markets collapsed and the foundations of our modern world caved in. I myself, however, was rather proud that art triggered the end of the world. At least I could die happy. Everything began with art, so it was only right everything should end with art!

One Carton of Campbell’s Soup Cans	Shelf for Campbell’s Soup Cans
2014	Date unknown
	330×33×17cm

## 6 The militarist

Today the world died. Or maybe yesterday. Military industries are a major driving force of the global economy. And military technologies have been the cutting edge of technological progress. First we developed fighter planes no radar could detect, and then we developed radar to detect those fighters. Weapons excite people. Kids’ eyes gleam when they see an aircraft carrier or a supersonic fighter. Human history is the history of warfare. Since the dawn of civilization, there’s never been a time without war somewhere. Or to look at it another way, war winds the very spring of civilization. Destruction creates a demand for postwar regeneration. Not to mention the fact that, as Malthus wrote, war serves to keep overpopulation in check. And once you’ve got military might, you can’t not use it, right? If you don’t, they’ll think you’ve lost your nerve. But even so, twenty-first-century weaponry took destructive power to a whole new level. Chemical weapons used in a marginal civil war prompted major powers to intervene to contain the situation, which merely invited reprisals with further chemical weapons and nerve gas, and in the wink of an eye the whole world exploded in a riot of death. There was no option but to deploy weapons, especially anything as-yet untried. After all, when would there be another chance? That’s just human nature. So much for the destroy-and-regenerate cycle of civilization.

Hiroshi Sugimoto	
Lightning Fields	
2009	
Gelatin silver print	
152.4×238.8cm	

Sign of Former Xinjing Station, Manchuria Railway Co., Ltd.	Map of Transportation Links Between Japan, Manchuria, Russia and China
1937	1935
60.5×25.5×2cm	78.5×108cm

“Publication of the Lytton Report,” Yomiuri Shimbun, October 2, 1932, Extra Edition	Thirteen Medals
	19th-20th century

Emergency Draft Notice	Draft of an Oath by a Student of Tokyo Imperial University
c. 1940	1943
15×20cm	58×44cm

Young Army Officer Doll	Former Japanese Navy Submarine Self-Destruction Device
c. 1930-1934	1943
H: 29cm	16.5×14.6×10.7cm

## 2 The comparative religion scholar

Today the world died. Or maybe yesterday. When we heard reports of a giant meteor on a collision course with Earth, 99 percent certain to hit in three years’ time, everyone was so sure that the end of the world would be soon that they turned to religion. Amid the panic, polytheists opposed monotheists,

monotheists gave rise to hosts of would-be prophets, and prophets claimed to be the second coming of Christ. At a loss for what to believe, people fell into doubt and despair, and religious fighting escalated into ceaseless slaughter. Ironically, the meteor hurtled past Earth. I was tortured for remaining an atheist to the end and barely managed to survive, though I have to wonder whether it was even worth living in such a world.

<div>Hiroshi Sugimoto</div> <div>The Last Supper: Acts of God (Sandy)</div> <div>1999/2012</div> <div>Gelatin silver print</div> <div>118.1×706.1cm</div>	
<div>Empty Wine Bottle, Romanée-Conti, “28 AD” c. 2000</div> <div>9×31cm</div>	<div>Madonna and Child</div> <div>18th century</div> <div>Oil Painting</div> <div>46×45cm</div>
<div>Portraits of Successive Roman Pontiffs</div> <div>2016</div> <div>99×69cm</div>	<div>Portraits of Emperors in the Japanese Imperial Lineage</div> <div>c. 1912-c. 1926</div> <div>184×67cm</div>

### 30 The gene therapy doctor

Today the world died. Or maybe yesterday. Successful gene-manipulation technology made hybridizing genes sampled from highly intelligent individuals common practice. This together with advancements in fetal diagnostics led to a global consensus not to birth babies with an IQ of less than 200. By then, almost everyone in the world was a genius, but this prompted an unthinkable state of affairs. It hardly took much genius to see that no currency anywhere was backed by substantive value. Inflated currency was collected in a move toward reinstating a gold standard. Gold reserves, however, were in limited supply, so the global economy had to scale back to the level of 1937, the last time a gold standard was in actual use. People were too smart for their own good. Having seen through the tenuous fictions of late capitalism, they wanted nothing more to do with economic activities. A sorely disillusioned world ended in brilliant misfortune.

<div>Exchangeable Currency</div> <div>8×19cm</div>
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### 26 The fetishist

Today the world died. Or maybe yesterday. Back in the Neolithic Age, people found magical things to worship in the natural world. Eventually we came to fashion sacred objects with our own hands. This stone rod is an idol, a phallic symbol thought to have figured in fertility rites. Even later advancements in civilization did not change humans so very much. In modern society, we still worshipped latter-day idols and brand-name luxury goods. We discriminated against people by the cars they drove and the clothes they wore. Though, of course, fake items were rife. But as copying techniques became ultrarefined, the fakes surpassed even the originals. Fetishism lost its magic; people lost their objects of faith. When the market for brand-name goods collapsed, the global economy

contracted, swallowed down into a great depression. The ancient gods who banned idolatry were right: A world that believes in nothing is a dead world.

<div>Stone Rod</div> <div>Jomon period (10000-400 BC)</div> <div>117cm</div> <div>* *</div>	<div>Hospital Gurney</div> <div>1950s</div> <div>56×214×39cm</div> <div>* *</div>
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<div>YSL Pattern Fabric</div>
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### 19 The escapist

Today the world died. Or maybe yesterday. It all began when I went to a Hatsune Miku 3-D concert as a kid. I couldn’t tell virtual from real. After a childhood immersed in gaming and anime videos, imaginary stuff is more real to me than actual things. To most young kids, reality’s the fantasy. It’s like homegrown Zen and everybody’s already reached satori. But enlightenment was a dead end. Folks who spent their whole life dreaming couldn’t be bothered to make babies, so the human race just petered out. Game over.

<div>Hatsune Miku Figure</div> <div>2013</div> <div>H: 10cm</div>	<div><i>Essais sur le bouddhisme zen</i> and <i>Le non-mental selon la pensée zen</i> by Daisetz Suzuki</div>
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### 21 The human genome code-breaker

Today the world died. Or maybe yesterday. As efforts to decode the complete human genome advanced, the foreseeable life scenario for any given individual became ever more exactlying certain. Diseases could be preidentified with high accuracy. Who could happily dream of a “better future” anymore? Poets and artists refused to acknowledge genetic data, but their rosy creative expressions seemed hollow in the face of so much decisive scientific evidence. Resigned to predictable fate, everyone gave in to feelings of helplessness, despondency, and misanthropy. Despair grew rife; artists disappeared. Imagination dried up, civilization imploded. I’ve plotted my own genome chart and I now await my appointed hour of death.

<div>The Human Genome Code-Breaker</div> <div>Date unknown</div> <div>39.5×29×12cm</div>
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### 16 The astrophysicist

Today the world died. Or maybe yesterday. By the time we astrophysicists noticed a very slight change in one sunspot, it was already too late. Within a week, the sunspot grew to a size beyond anything on record, immediately causing the earth’s surface temperatures to drop by thirty degrees. Nothing special in the history of the planet: A twenty-thousand-year ice age had merely come a little early. Temperatures at the equator fell below freezing and humankind froze to death within a matter of months. Not even the Eskimos had time to migrate to the tropics. It was a first in the seven thousand years of recorded human civilization; we’d forgotten how we survived dozens of

previous ice ages. I opted to preserve my genes and now sleep here. Twenty thousand years until the next inter–ice age is too long to hibernate. But then again, to reawaken to further evolution is too cruel. Guess I’m just tired of evolving.

<div>Hiroshi Sugimoto</div> <div><i>Dioramas</i></div> <div>Arctic Ocean</div> <div>1980</div> <div>Gelatin silver print</div> <div>119.4×210.8cm</div>
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### 14 The architect

Today the world died. Or maybe yesterday. In the early twentieth century, the modernist movement painted a rosy picture of humanity’s future. Within a mere half century, Le Corbusier’s and Mies van der Rohe’s images of the wonderful modern city was replicated throughout the world. Skyscrapers seemed to sculpt the heavens. But there was an unexpected pitfall. The official life expectancy of modern concrete was scarcely one hundred years; two hundred was quite impossible. Toward the turn of the twenty-second century, the high-rises of the early twentieth century began to crumble. The rest was a chain reaction, as city after so-called modern city fell to bits. We humans forgot the simple truth that living low is best.

<div><i>Tower of the Sun</i> Poster</div> <div>2010</div> <div>70×50cm</div>	<div>Architectural Model Kit</div> <div>Date unknown</div> <div>104×60×23.5cm</div>
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<div>Two Bird’s Nests</div>
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### 15 The aesthete

Today the world died. Or maybe yesterday. I was still in grade school when I first became aware of my sexual orientation: I definitely preferred those of my own sex. Also, around the same time, I vaguely began to sense that this was something one didn’t admit in public. I kept it to myself, as a rite of passage, so to speak. I soon realized I was more sensitive and aesthetically attuned than those around me, so I decided to become an artist. The artistic milieu, I discovered, was full of kindred spirits, which meant I was not so very special after all. As my reputation as an artist grew, someone “outed” me on the Internet. Truth be told, from the time of the ancient Greeks onward, many cultures openly accepted those of our sensibility. And in Japan, during the height of fifteenth-century Higashiyama culture, Noh theater and gardens were created by these same refined sensibilities. Homoerotic love comes to the fore as a necessary corrective to overpopulation. God bids us to bring the world’s failure to an end: clean-up duty for Adam and Eve’s paradise lost, as it were.

<div>Kasshiki (Noh Mask)</div> <div>Momoyama period (16th century)</div> <div>L: 21.3cm</div> <div>* *</div>	<div>Noh Costume</div> <div>Meiji period (19th-20th century)</div> <div>147.5cm (height),</div> <div>71.7cm (sleeve length),</div> <div>113cm (distance from center of the neck to end of the sleeve)</div>
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<div>Hermaphrodites</div> <div>from Jacques Gautier d’Agoty, <i>Observations sur l’histoire naturelle, sur la phisique et sur la peinture</i></div> <div>1749 / published in 1752-55</div> <div>Color mezzotint</div> <div>53.6×37.3cm</div> <div>* *</div>	<div>(1) Planche: Muscles de la Tête and Six Other Illustrations</div> <div>From Jacques Gautier d’Agoty, <i>Essai d’anatomie en tableaux imprimés</i></div> <div>1745-48</div> <div>Color mezzotint</div> <div>59.2×43cm</div> <div>* *</div>
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<div>Oil Painting</div> <div>1960s</div> <div>39×30cm</div>
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### 33 The comedian (Displayed in Lobby)

Today the world died. Or maybe yesterday. Come to think of it, a person’s life is a comedy, the way we’re led to believe we have to conform to societal standards of how to live. Yakuza live up to some proper yakuza image, and the same goes for politicians and artists. Of course, there are those who can look on society dispassionately from a distance, the ones who become critics or comedians. If critics are optimists because they still believe there’s a chance to change society, then comedians are pessimists who think the world is beyond help, laughable at best. That’s me, a world-weary comedian. We hold no hopes for the future, an utterly unproductive lot. As society reached peak maturity, so did the numbers of would-be comedians. The world is suddenly awash in unemployed comedians, ready to pull the final curtain on everything amid great peals of laughter.

<div>Hiroshi Sugimoto</div> <div>Lightning Fields (2 works)</div> <div>2009</div> <div>Gelatin silver print</div> <div>152.4×238.8cm (each)</div>	<div>Globe</div> <div>(Stage Prop for the Comédie-Française Theater)</div> <div>1990</div> <div>⊙160cm</div>
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<div>4.6 billion years have passed since the solar system began. The seven thousand years of recorded human civilization was but the blink of an eye. The third planet from the sun still has plenty of water, as if nothing had happened.</div>
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<div>Hiroshi Sugimoto</div> <div><i>Sea Scapes</i></div> <div>Caribbean Sea, Jamaica</div> <div>1980</div> <div>Gelatin silver print</div> <div>119.4×149.2cm</div>
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## Abandoned Theater

This exhibition marks the world debut of this new series that is a development of the artist's 'Theaters' series that he has been working on since the 1970s. The shining, white screen represents the sum total of an entire movie, the aggregate of approximately two hours of light. The details of the crumbling walls and rotting seats of the theater are all illuminated by the light emitted by a single movie.

Sugimoto searched the U.S. to find suitable derelict movie theaters, then hanging a new screen, he brought in a projector to run a movie that he had himself selected. Next he set up a large-format, 8×10 camera and opened the shutter to expose the film for the entire duration of the movie, the light from the screen illuminating the entire theater. Unlike digital photography in which the results may be seen immediately, film requires numerous test exposures to be made that are then developed on site to check the results before the final shoot and so it can take several days to produce a single photograph. After shooting the picture, he then develops the film and prints the results, using various highly refined techniques that he has cultivated over a period of forty years to produce these large-scale works.

The 'Theaters' series, featured movie theaters that were still in use, but in the 'Abandoned Theater' series, he selected cinemas that have been closed down due to the collapse of local industry or economy, resulting in a deterioration of public order and even though he informed the local police of his plans it was extremely dangerous and he had to work in appalling conditions.

The one exception to this was the photograph he took in Paris. While he was visiting the Palais de Tokyo to prepare for an exhibition there, he came across a locked room. This was the abandoned 'Hall 37' and after having it opened for him, he used it to shoot a work using the movie 'The Stranger'. The opening lines of this movie are 'Today my mother died, or perhaps it was yesterday' and this was later to provide the title for his 'Today the world died, or perhaps it was yesterday' series. It was this photograph that inspired the 'Abandoned Theater' series.

The 'Abandoned Theater' series does not speak solely of the movie that is contained within the shining, white screen, but also traces the history of these movie houses, with their extravagant decoration, that were built during the 1920s and 30s and the lives of several millions of people who visited them, creating a diverse, multi-layered temporal stratum. In the artist's commentary on the movies shown, he includes quotes from Japanese literary classics, such as 'Tale of the Heike', 'The Ten Foot Square Hut', 'The Pillow Book' or 'Tale of the Genji', thereby further amplifying its temporal strata. (N)

## Sea of Buddha

After seven years of negotiation with Kyoto's Rengeo-in Temple (better known as the Sanjusangen-do), the artist finally received permission to photograph the Senju (1000 Armed) Kannon (Avalokitesvara) statues housed there. Working in the early morning sunlight during May 1995, he captured images of these using a large-format 8×10 camera. These statues were created during the 12th century as an expression of the Pure Land on the command of Emperor Go-Shirakawa, who believed in the Buddhist philosophy of *Mappo*, that predicted the destruction of civilization, and now the Sugimoto has recreated them here in this new installation. For this exhibition nine large photographic prints have been combined with 'Five Elements'. A five-element pagoda is a Buddhist symbol that expresses the five elements of earth, water, fire, wind and the void, and is usually constructed of stone. In this work, however, Sugimoto has constructed one of optical glass and has placed one of his 'Seascapes' in the globular section, representing water. (N)

Hiroshi Sugimoto  
*Abandoned Theater*

Metropolitan Opera House,  
Philadelphia  
(*Deep Impact*, 1998,  
directed by Mimi Leder)  
2015  
Gelatin silver print  
119.4×149.2cm

Paramount Theater, Newark  
(*On The Beach*, 1959,  
directed by Stanley Earl Kramer)  
2015  
Gelatin silver print  
119.4×149.2cm

Kenosha Theater, Kenosha  
(*Godzilla*, 1954,  
directed by Ishiro Honda)  
2015  
Gelatin silver print  
119.4×149.2cm

Everett Square Theater, Boston  
(*Mujo [This Transient Life]*,  
1970, directed by Akio Jissoji)  
2015  
Gelatin silver print  
119.4×149.2cm

Franklin Park Theater, Boston  
(*Rashomon*, 1950,  
directed by Akira Kurosawa)  
2015  
Gelatin silver print  
119.4×149.2cm

Michigan Theater, Detroit  
(*Rosemary's Baby*, 1968,  
directed by Roman Polanski)  
2015  
Gelatin silver print  
119.4×149.2cm

Proctor's Theater, Troy  
(*Dr. Strangelove*, 1964,  
directed by Stanley Kubrick)  
2015  
Gelatin silver print  
119.4×149.2cm

Palace Theater, Gary  
(*Snow White*, 1937,  
produced by Walt Disney)  
2015  
Gelatin silver print  
119.4×149.2cm

Salle 37, Palais de Tokyo, Paris  
(*The Stranger*, 1967,  
directed by Luchino Visconti)  
2013  
Gelatin silver print  
119.4×149.2cm

Hiroshi Sugimoto  
*Sea of Buddha* (9 works)  
1995  
Gelatin silver print  
119.4×149.2cm (each)

Five Elements  
2011  
Baltic Sea, Rugen, 1996  
\* \*

\* Cooperation 'Stuffed Parrot' in 'Section 7: The Euthanasia Association chairman'  
Sound: Keiichiro Shibuya Sound Program: evala  
Virtual Surround Technology: KORGA Acoustage