

Abstracts

Naito Masatoshi's Message:

Record of Talk Event at the *Another World Unveiled* Exhibition (1)

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Speakers:

Naito Masatoshi (Photographer and Folklorist),

Akasaka Norio (Folklorist, Professor at Gakushuin University)

Editor:

Ishida Tetsuro (Curator, Tokyo Photographic Art Museum)

In 2018, the Tokyo Photographic Art Museum held *Another World Unveiled*, a solo exhibition by photographer and folklorist Naito Masatoshi (1938-2025). During the exhibition, a two-part talk event titled *The World of Naito Masatoshi* was held, and it turned out to be one of the final opportunities to hear the artist speak in person during his lifetime. Following Naito's death, the audio recording of this valuable talk was transcribed, and it is presented here.

In the talk, Naito looked back on his career while touching on his major series, from his early science-fictional photographs made using specialized techniques, to the *Another World of Deities* series produced in the 1990s and 2000s, and his work of 2004, in which he made prints based on his own interpretations of negatives taken by Okamoto Taro, who photographed Japanese folk culture.

The talk took the form of a dialogue, with folklorist Akasaka Norio serving as the interlocutor. Akasaka conceived the field of *Tohokugaku* ("Tohokuology," the study of the Tohoku region), and founded a journal of the same name in 1999. From 2000 onward, Naito taught at Tohoku University of Art & Design as a colleague of Akasaka, a position he held until March 2013.

Research Notes on Luigi Ghirri's *Atlante* Series

Yamada Yuri (Curator, Tokyo Photographic Art Museum)

This paper examines the significance and underlying concepts of the *Atlante* series, an early body of work by the Italian photographer Luigi Ghirri (1943-1992), born in the province of Reggio Emilia. Ghirri began working seriously in photography in the 1970s, pursuing new possibilities centered on color photography through a keen sensitivity to color, space, and light, and an ability to view mundane objects with humor and lyricism. Although his career spanned only about 20 years, he produced a diverse and experimental body of photographs shaped by sustained engagement with the act of looking at the world.

Ghirri's *Atlante* series is a key early project begun in the 1970s. The photobook of the same title, *Atlante*, compiles 80 photographs, texts by Ghirri himself, and an essay by the architectural critic Vittorio Savi, with whom he maintained a close relationship. The book was posthumously published by Charta in 1999, although Ghirri had evidently conceived the idea of bringing the series together in book form during his lifetime. According to Savi, Ghirri mounted individual prints one by one onto square cardboard sheets measuring 31 x 31 cm and bound them into a maquette, through which he sought to arrive at an "ideal series" that reorganized the visual world in the manner of a map.

In this context, this paper examines the visual and conceptual approaches Ghirri pursued in the *Atlante* series and aims to offer points of reference for interpretation of the work.

The Practice and Current State of Registrars at Japanese Art Museums

Record of the TOP 30th Anniversary Talk Session, *The Museum's Collection Care: The Present and Future of the Collection from the Perspective of a Registrar and Art Transportation*, with Additional Questions and Answers

Hotta Aya (Registrar, Tokyo Photographic Art Museum)

This paper aims to clarify the current state of registrar practice at art museums in Japan by summarizing presentations given at the talk session *The Museum's Collection Care: The Present and Future of the Collection from the Perspective of a Registrar and Art Transportation*, held as part of the Tokyo Photographic Art Museum's 30th anniversary program, and by compiling the speakers' additional responses to questions.

A registrar is a specialist responsible for overseeing the transport of works within and outside the museum, the process of bringing in new works, and the management and preservation of works and related information. At overseas museums, where responsibilities are clearly divided, registrars play a central role in collection care alongside collection managers and conservators, and organizations such as the Association of Registrars and Collections Specialists exist. In Japan, by contrast, where there are few personnel dedicated solely to registrar duties, opportunities to share practical experience and information within the country have been insufficient.

The talk session at the museum invited registrars working in dedicated positions at Japanese institutions, along with conservation specialists involved in art transportation, and served as a forum for examining approaches to the management, preservation, and presentation of works through the sharing of practice-based case studies and the challenges they entail. This paper supplements that discussion by providing the speakers' answers to questions that could not be addressed during the session due to time constraints, and offers an overview of the practice and current state of registrars at art museums in Japan.

Formation of Artistic Vision in Higa Yasuo's Early Work *My Native Island: Okinawa*

— Between a Journalistic Perspective and a Personal Perspective

Onishi Tatsuki (Intern, Tokyo Photographic Art Museum)

This paper discusses the formation of photographer Higa Yasuo's artistic vision by examining his early body of work *My Native Island: Okinawa*. Higa (1938-2000) is regarded as one of the most prominent figures in postwar Okinawan photography.

Higa followed an uncommon path, changing careers from police officer to photographer, and the subjects of his photographs also evolved. His focus expanded from recording and bearing witness to conditions under US occupation, to scenes of everyday life across Okinawa, and further to the spiritual world as manifested through ritual practices.

My Native Island: Okinawa is a group of works produced over a period of approximately 20 years. It was initiated after Higa left his job as a police officer in 1969 and continued through a series of solo exhibitions held in Tokyo, Osaka, and Okinawa in 1971 and 1972, followed by the publication in 1972 of the photobook *My Native Island: Okinawa* by Tokyo Photographic College, where he was enrolled at the time. The project continued until the 1992 publication of *My Native Island: Okinawa, From American Rule to Japanese Rule* (Niraisha), which brought together works addressing travel in mainland Japan, communities hosting military bases, and memories of the Battle of Okinawa. The sustained production of this body of work, which occupied much of Higa's photographic career, was central to the formation of his perspective as an artist.

Thirty-four works from *My Native Island: Okinawa* are in the collection of the Tokyo Photographic Art Museum and were shown in the 2020 exhibition *TOP Collection: Photography in the Ryukyu Islands*.

Focusing on early works from *My Native Island: Okinawa*, particularly photographs taken just before the 1972 reversion to Japanese rule, and drawing as well on texts and quotations from Higa himself, this paper traces how Higa moved beyond his initial stance of calling attention to the injustices of life under occupation. It examines how, through engagement with landscapes across Okinawa, he explored and shaped his own way of seeing.

A Site of Experimentation and Practice: Gallery OWL

Miura Teru (Intern, Tokyo Photographic Art Museum)

This paper examines the activities of Gallery OWL (1979–1981), located in Minami-Aoyama, Minato-ku, Tokyo. OWL, which was a later entrant among independent galleries and pursued what was described as conceptual photography, differed from earlier independent galleries in its approach to gallery operations, including systems for archiving. However, it is not well documented in literature and has been little discussed. By comprehensively examining OWL's activities, this paper aims to clarify what distinguished it from other independent galleries.

OWL's activities were wide-ranging. Its exhibition program included not only solo shows by core members but also group and curated exhibitions, alongside the ongoing publication of printed matter. These publications were compiled as *OWL Archive*, establishing a single, consistent format through which the gallery's character was articulated. Other initiatives included the publication of *OWL information*, which served a publicity function, and *OWL NEWS* which featured exhibition critiques and writing on photography, as well as events such as the OWL FILM FESTIVAL and WORKSHOP IN OWL. Through these practices of viewing, presenting, and discussing photography, OWL clarified and intensified its stance.

These activities were at times criticized as insular, and OWL's photography and discourse were not easily accessible to a general audience. Even so, by sustaining a wide range of activities that included exhibitions, printed materials, and writing, and by steadily building its own means of approaching photography, OWL came to be met with a variety of favorable assessments.

By treating its entire site as a medium, taking photography itself as an object of study, and making various types of trial-and-error a part of its practice, OWL adopted an approach that stood apart from other independent galleries.