



Ishiuchi Miyako: Grain and Image

December 9 (Sat.), 2017 - March 4 (Sun.), 2018

December 8, 2017

Ishiuchi Miyako (born in 1947) is currently one of the most highly acclaimed photographers in the world. Her many honors include being the first Asian woman to receive the Hasselblad Foundation International Award in Photography in 2014.

After studying weaving at Tama Art University, Ishiuchi began taking photographs on her own. She was quickly recognized for her coarse-grained, monochrome pictures of Yokosuka, the city where Ishiuchi spent her adolescence, and former red-light districts in various parts of Japan. In recent years, the artist's work *ひろし 罫/hiroshima*, which deals with clothing used by victims of the atomic bomb, and a series depicting the personal effects of the Mexican painter Frida Kahlo have led to even greater renown.

Twenty-seventeen is the 40th anniversary of Ishiuchi's solo exhibition "Yokosuka Story," which in effect marked her debut as a photographer. Slated for this landmark year, this exhibition focuses on "grain," one of Ishiuchi's keywords, and consists of approximately 240 items from sixteen series, from her early years to never-before-shown works.

Through these photographs of abandoned buildings, scars, silk kimono beloved by women of the Taisho and Showa era who played an important role in the modernization of Japan, and personal articles that belonged to the artist's mother and atomic-bomb victims, the exhibition presents Ishiuchi Miyako's world, in which she has consistently addressed themes such as existence and absence, people's memories, and vestiges of time.

■ Sections

横浜 Yokohama

In 1975, Ishiuchi Miyako set up a darkroom in her home in Yokohama and began working as a photographer. From then on, nearly all of her black and white photographs, from her debut *Yokosuka Story* to *Mother's*, were produced in this Yokohama darkroom. The city of Yokohama was itself a subject to which Ishiuchi repeatedly turned. In her pre-debut *Kanazawa Hakkei, Yokohama*, she photographed scenery near her home, but with the sky and clouds exposed for a long time, while the horizon is blackened with the darkroom technique of dodging, resulting in a granularity that connects to the works that followed. This section contains, Ishiuchi's images of the cityscape and buildings of Yokohama, including *yokohama gorakuso* and *Bayside Courts*, as well as works, portraying the body of Butoh dancer Ohno Kazuo, who was active in Yokohama.

絹 Silk

Ishiuchi shot silk garments that had been worn by female atomic bombing victims, and in 2011, she went on to photograph antique *Meisen* silk fabric in her birthplace, Kiryu in Gunma Prefecture. *Meisen* incorporated bold colors and modernist patterns influenced by European avant-garde art, and were used in kimono for everyday wear, popular among ordinary women who played an enormous role in Japan's early 20th century modernization. In 2017, Ishiuchi encountered silk in two new forms. One was a group of kimono that the late father of American fashion designer Rick Owens acquired in Japan. The other consisted of costumes for *Awa ningyo joruri*, a form of puppet theater practiced in Tokushima Prefecture since before World War II. Ishiuchi who was born in Kiryu, known for the production of silk fabric, and has been working in Yokohama, which developed along with exports of silk fabric and raw silk, continues to unravel the history surrounding silk through her work.

無垢 Innocence

"While a person hopes to remain unblemished through life, we must all sustain and live with wounds, visible and invisible." The photographs of scars that Ishiuchi continued producing from around 1990, were a fundamental re-examination of what it means to live. Among them is a series entitled *Innocence*, focusing only on women's scars and brimming with a sense of empathy for women living with these vestiges on their bodies. Ishiuchi presents scars as "proof of lives lived." In *Shiranui no Yubi*, she photographed the hands and feet of Ishimure Michiko, a poet and author of the novel *Paradise in the Sea of Sorrow*. In these works Ishiuchi captures the grain of Ishimure's skin, on which is inscribed 90 years of life and powerfully conveys the weight of these years and how, with these hands alone, Ishimure continues to fight a long and valiant battle.

遺されたもの Belongings

Ishiuchi produced the series *Mother's* as a way of facing the reality of her mother's death, and these photographs became the first of many depicting the belongings of deceased people, playing a significant role in determining the direction of her subsequent work. The *Frida* series conveys, through painter Frida Kahlo's possessions, the day-to-day life of an artist who endured considerable trauma from illness and accident. This work grew out of a request from a curator at the Frida Kahlo Museum, who had seen *Mother's*, and was shot in 2012 at the "Blue House," where Frida lived for a long time. ひろしま / *hiroshima* is a series of photographs of victims' personal possessions donated to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, which Ishiuchi has been working on every year since 2007. In the grain of the objects, we see one of Ishiuchi's approaches to observing and photographing the accumulation of time carried to a stunning conclusion.

ISHIUCHI Mlyako

Born in Kiryu, Gunma Prefecture.

Ishiuchi had a solo exhibition titled *Time Textured in Monochrome* at The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo in 1999. In 2005, she represented Japan at the Venice Biennale with *Mother's 2000-2005: Traces of the Future*, for which she photographed her mother's belongings. In 2008, Ishiuchi released the series ひろしま/*hiroshima* for which she took pictures of belongings left behind by victims of the atomic bomb, which were shown in her solo exhibition at Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, as well as published as a book. She photographed kimonos of the type known as *Meisen*, and in 2012 this series, *Silken Dreams*, was featured in her solo exhibition held at the Marugame Genichiro-Inokuma Museum of Contemporary Art. Ishiuchi also traveled to Mexico to photograph Frida Kahlo's belongings kept at the Frida Kahlo Museum. In 2013, her *Yokosuka Story* was shown at the Tate Modern in a collection exhibition. In 2014 Ishiuchi had a solo exhibition as her Hasselblad Award show at the Hasselblad Center, and in 2015 she held a solo exhibition titled *Postwar Shadows* at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, featuring works ranging from her first series "Yokosuka Story" to her latest one ひろしま / *hiroshima*. In 2016 she held a solo exhibition titled "Frida is" at Shiseido Gallery in Tokyo. Her book of photographs *Shashin kankei (About Photography)* was published by Chikuma Shobo.



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■Exhibition Catalog

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■General Information

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Hours: 10 : 00~18 : 00
*Open until 16:00 on March 1 (Thu.), 2018
*Open until 20:30 on March 3 (Sat.), 2018
*Admission until 30 minutes before closing.
Admission: Adults ¥1,500, University and high school students ¥900,
Junior high school students ¥400, Free admission for children under 12,
Seniors (65 and Older) ¥1,400
*ID required. Only available at the ticket counter in the museum.

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