

Press Release

2012

The 28th Higashikawa Awards

The Town of Photography

Information

Higashikawa International Photography Festival Office

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<http://photo-town.jp/>

The 28th Higashikawa Award Winners

<The Overseas Photographer Award>

Arif Aşçi (Turkey)

For his photographs taken in Istanbul

<The Domestic Photographer Award>

Taiji Matsue

For his accomplishments as a photographer

<The New Photographer Award>

Lieko Shiga

For her community-oriented activities in Natori, Miyagi prefecture, beginning in 2009, and her achievements as a photographer

<The Special Photographer Award>

Makiko Ui

For the photography exhibition and book, *Ainu: Portrait of the Wind* (Shinsensha, 2011), and artistic activities related to the Ainu

<The Hidano Kazuemon Award>

Yoshikazu Minami

For long-term achievement in photography in his hometown of Chichibu

The Overseas Photographer Award

Arif Aşçı

Lives in Istanbul, Turkey



Arif Ascı is born in Adana, the South of Turkey, in 1958. To be a painter he studied at Istanbul Fine Arts Academy from 1975 to 1982. After graduation he went to Italy and stayed 6 months in Rome. In 1984 he started to serve as an instructor in engraving at the same academy. Two years later he resigned and traveled Asian countries. During those years he built up his career as a photographer. In 90's he published a lot of photo stories and produced TV documentaries on culture. In 1996-1997, he organized a team with ten camels and completed 12,000 km expedition from China to Turkey. As a result came out a book "The Last Caravan on the Silk Road". From 2003-2007, he focused on multilayered images of Istanbul in panoramic form.

Arif Ascı's photos were published and widely exhibited in galleries and museums of S.Korea, Germany, Russia, Belgium, France, Italy, USA as well as Turkey. Ascı continues working on various photo series which combine journey into outer and inner worlds.

<Artist Statement>

To start a new photography project, an accidental frame, or newspaper clipping, a poem, a painting or a simply several sleepless nights and following depression can be enough. But once I feel that something new, something exciting appears, after putting a few images side by side I hold firmly the rope of Ariadne. Every new photo leads me to the next one. To reach to the light at the exit of labyrinth, there are times that I disappear in the darkness, but looking for the light itself is an adventure. Isn't it?

To receive prestigious Higashikawa award made me so happy that, Japan, where I visited two years ago may give me another time opportunity to follow the trail of my favorite poet, Basho....

The Domestic Photographer Award

Taiji Matsue

Lives in Tokyo



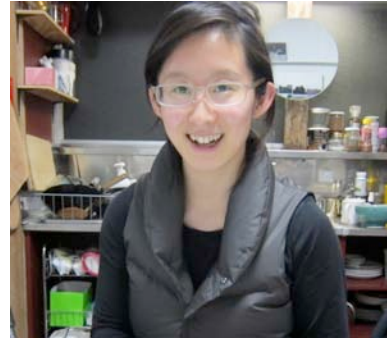
Born in Tokyo in 1963. Graduated in geography from Tokyo University and held his first solo photography show at Zeit Photo Salon in 1987. Received the New Photographer Award of the Higashikawa Photography Awards in 1996 and the Kimura Ihei Memorial Photography Award for *Hysteric: Taiji Matsue* in 2002. Has participated in many solo shows and group shows in Japan and overseas.

Developed his trademark style of photographing the surface of the ground precisely and evenly with front lighting while shooting in Yemen in 1991. Created the *gazeteer* series, in which images of the land from different locations all over the world are juxtaposed. In 2001, began showing the *CC* series, urban scenes shot with the same methods. Matsue has experimented with new possibilities in the medium of photography, creating images with very small and very large scale. *cell*, for example, is composed of very tiny images selected from the *gazeteer* and *CC* photographs. He also began making video works that might be described as “moving photographs” in 2010.

The New Photographer Award

Lieko Shiga

Lives in Miyagi



Born in Aichi prefecture in 1980. Graduated from Chelsea College of Art and Design in London in 2004. Received Mio Photo Award Encouragement Prize in 2005, the 33rd Kimura Ihei Memorial Photography Award for photobooks *Lily* (Art Beat Publishers) and *Canary* (Akaaka-sha) in 2008, and the International Center of Photography Infinity Award (new photographer award) in 2009.

Stayed in Sendai while preparing work for “Re:search – art collaboration between Australia and Japan Art Collaboration,” held at Mediateque Sendai in 2006, and established a studio in the Kitakama district of Natori, Miyagi prefecture. She worked as a village photographer, blending into the community and listening to the oral histories of individuals raised in the area. Her photographic works incorporating these experiences were made in collaboration with the village people. From June 2011 to March 2012, she prepared work for a solo exhibition to be held in November at Mediateque Sendai and gave a total of ten lectures about her work in Kitakama and her activities after the earthquake under the title “Thinking Table.”

Shiga’s striking, highly tactile images overwhelm the viewer with their tremendous strength while posing questions about images and the body.

The Special Photographer Award

Makiko Ui

Lives in Tokyo



Born in Chiba prefecture in 1960. Graduated from Musashino Art University in 1983. Graduated from Nippon Photography Institute in 1985. Studied under photographer Kenji Higuchi. Began doing freelance work, mainly for magazines.

Has been visiting Nibutani, Hokkaido since 1992, usually taking her children with her, to take pictures of an Ainu family who maintain their traditional culture. These photographs focus on Asiri Rera (meaning “new wind” in Ainu, Japanese name: Yasuko Yamamichi). Published *Ainu, Sometimes Japanese* (Shakai Hyoronsha) in 2001, a collection of photographs of Ainu living in the Tokyo area (where more than 5000 Ainu live), and received the Domestic Photo Report Prize of the 7th Shukan Gendai Documentary Photography Awards for this photobook in 2002. Published *Asir Rera: Ainu Spirits* (Shinpusha) and received 4th Sagamihara New Photographer Encouragement Prize in 2010. Published photobook *Ainu: Portrait of the Wind* (Shinsensha) and held a solo exhibition of the same photographs at Nikon Salon, Ginza in 2011.

Usui takes photographs in a natural style with deep empathy for the rich spiritual world of the Ainu. Her images include traditional Ainu houses (*chise*), events of everyday life among the Ainu, rituals and dances, and the protest movement against the Nibutani Dam which threatened to destroy Ainu culture.

The Hidano Kazuemon Award

Yoshikazu Minami

Lives in Chichibu, Saitama



Born in Chichibu, Saitama prefecture in 1935. Graduated from Tokyo College of Photography. Has received many prizes, including the 4th Taiyo Prize in 1967, the Saitama Prefecture Culture Encouragement Prize in 1968, the 28th Photographic Society of Japan Award in 1978, the 13th Ken Domon Prize in 1994, and the 21st Ina Nobuo Prize in 1996.

Highly reputed for photographs of farm life, including images of young brides in farm families and the work done on farms. Minami has made it his life work to photograph customs and festivals peculiar to the region such as *mushi okuri* (insect expulsion), *amazake koboshi* (spilling sweet sake), the lion dance, and exorcisms; the natural landscape during the four seasons; and places of religious significance.

These photographs taken over a long period of time in Chichibu give an understanding to people of later generations of how the people, customs, and land change have changed time as well as natural landscape views that have not change.

Higashikawa International Photography Festival Photo Fiesta 2012

Award Winners' Exhibition

Date: 28 July (Sat.) – 19 August (Sun.), 2012

Venue: Higashikawa Bunka Gallery

Time: 10:00 - 17:30

Admission: ¥200 (¥100 for residents)

Organize: The Town of Photography: Higashikawa

Address: 1-19-8 Higashi-machi, Higashikawa-cho, Kamikawa-gun, 071-1423 Hokkaido

Tel: (+81)-(0)166-82-4700 Fax: (+81)-(0)166-82-4704

Artists:

Arif Aşçi (The Overseas Photographer Award)

Taiji Matsue (The Domestic Photographer Award)

Rieko Shiga (The New Photographer Award)

Makiko Ui (The Special Photographer Award)

Yoshikazu Minami (The Hidano Kazurmon Award)

Event Schedule:

28 July (Sat.) 14:00-14:30 Award Ceremony

15:30-17:00 Opening Reception

29 July (Sun.) 13:00-17:30 Panel Discussion

Panelists: award winners, judges and guests

Higashikawa Awards

[Purpose]

With the idea of contributing to and fostering photographic culture as well as raising the cultural consciousness of Higashikawa residents, starting this year, 1985, we will annually be awarding prizes accompanied by monetary gifts to the photographer for his / her works.

[Awards]

The Overseas Photographer Award

*1,000,000 yen to a overseas photographer

The Domestic Photographer Award

*1,000,000 yen to a Japanese photographer

The New Photographer Award

*500,000 yen to a Japanese photographer

The Special Photographer Award

*500,000 yen to a photographer from Hokkaido

The Hidano Kazuemon Award

*500,000 yen to a photographer who contributed to society through photography

[Conditions]

The Overseas Photographer Award is presented to a photographer in a specific country or region chosen each year. He / She must be either living or born in that country or region.

The Domestic and the New Photographer Awards are presented to photographers whose work has been taken within the past three years that has significance either in the history of photography or as some unique expression of the art of photography.

The Special Photographer Award is presented to a photographer living or born in Hokkaido or whose theme and / or object concerns this island.

The Hidano Kazuemon Award is presented to a photographer in acknowledgement of his longtime contributions in taking photographs of local people, nature and culture. (The prize is open to both professional and amateur photographers.)

Of all the prizes, no specific restrictions are applied concerning the year it was taken

for the Overseas Photographer Prize, the Special Photographer Prize and the Hidano Kazuemon Prize.

[Selection]

The works selected by nominators charged by the executive committee are judged by the Jury Committee of the Higashikawa Award. The awards ceremony is held each year during the period of the Photo Fiesta in Higashikawa Town and is accompanied by commemorative symposiums and other events.

[Other Stipulations]

The monetary gift presented with the Higashikawa Awards is meant to purchase the original prints of the awarded photographs. Each awardee is requested to voluntarily submit original print(s) of his / her choice from among the awarded works to the residents of Higashikawa town.

The residents of the town shall be responsible for storing the photographs with care and for exhibiting them to visitors to Higashikawa, the Town of Photography.

These awarded photographs are exhibited at the Higashikawa Photography Museum in order to contribute to promoting a friendship and cultural development of the Town of Higashikawa.

We may present other awards to the photographs of outstanding works in order to contribute to photographic culture as well as to development of the Higashikawa Awards. For this reason, awards from other committees and sponsors are negotiable.

The Jury Committee of the 25th Higashikawa Awards

Katsumi ASABA <Graphic Designer>-----24th –
Michiko KASAHARA <Photo Critic>-----23rd –
Aki KUSUMOTO <Critic, Curator>-----25th –
Tokihiko SATO <Photographer>-----14th–
Kazuyoshi NOMACHI <Photographer> -----23rd –
Keiichiro HIRANO <Novelist>-----24th –
Yuri MITSUDA<Art Critic>-----27th –
Hiroshi YAMAZAKI <Photographer>-----25th –

The Town of Photography: Higashikawa

Higashikawa Town is located in central Hokkaido, northernmost of Japan, and is a part of Japan's largest national park "Daisetsuzan National Park" with Higashikawa's eastern part forming a large-scale forest. Blessed with natural beauty, lots of places in Higashikawa have been the subjects of many photographs.

Higashikawa, firstly cultivated by a group of settlers in 1895, has a shorter history compared to that of photography invented in 1839. Higashikawa declared the "Town of Photography" in 1985 aiming to create a town of "being a good subject to be photographed" co-existing with beautiful nature inhabited by many species of animals and plants.

Higashikawa established the Higashikawa Awards in the same year and started the annual summer festival of photography with the idea of contributing to and fostering photographic culture as well as raising the cultural consciousness of Higashikawa residents. With a history of more than a quarter of a century, it has been the nation's prestigious photography awards and the longest-running photography festival.

Higashikawa awards can also be noted in that it has rewarded overseas outstanding photographers such as Joel Sternfeld, Lewis Baltz and Jan Saudek as well as domestic photographers and introduced them to Japan. Through this, we meet people from abroad and exchange with them. By doing so, we believe we can entrust prayer for peace and our dreams to the future generation.