

Press Release

2013

The 29th Higashikawa Awards

The Town of Photography
Information

Higashikawa International Photography Festival Office

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The 29th Higashikawa Award Winners

◆The Overseas Photographer Award: Minstrel Kuik Ching Chieh
(Malaysia)

For her achievements up to and including the project “Mer.rily Mer.rily Mer.rily Mer.rily Mer.rily Mer.rily”

◆The Domestic Photographer Award: Rinko Kawauchi

For the exhibition “Rinko Kawauchi: Illuminance, Ametsuchi, Seeing Shadow” (Tokyo Metropolitan Photography Museum, 2012) and her accomplishments as a photographer

◆The New Photographer Award: Ari Hatsuzawa

For the photobook, *Rinjin. 38-dosen no kita* [Neighbors. North of the 38th parallel] (Tokuma Shoten, 2012), and *True Feelings 2011.3.12 ~ 2012.3.11* (Sanei Shobo Publishing Co., Ltd., 2012)

◆The Special Photographer Award: Takehiko Nakafuji

For the photography exhibition and photobook, *sakuan, matapaan - Hokkaido* (Zen Photo Gallery, 2012)

◆The Hidano Kazuemon Award: Minoru Yamada

For the photobook, *Yamada Minoru shashinshu kokyo wa senjo datta* [Minoru Yamada photo collection: my native land was a battlefield] (Miraisha, 2012) and the exhibition “Yamada Minoru ten hito to toki no orai – shashin de tsuzuru Okinawa [Minoru Yamada exhibition: coming and going of people and time – Okinawa conveyed in photographs] (Okinawa Prefectural Museum and Art Museum, 2012). The many photographs of Okinawa, where Yamada was born and raised, taken over a period of many years.

Comments on the Selection of the Higashikawa Photography Awards

Tokihiro Sato, member of the Higashikawa Photography Awards Jury

2013 began with an uninspiring change of government, but there were some signs of change in the economic situation. The yen is cheaper and stock prices are higher. What will be the long-term effect of these developments on the Japanese economy? Two years have passed since the earthquake and tsunami disaster and nuclear reactor accident. A serious concern right now is a loss of interest by the general public in spite of the fact that the recovery is incomplete. We need to pay close attention to what is happening in the area damaged by the earthquake and confront the realities of Japanese society. We should also watch for new trends in the world of photography.

The judging for the Higashikawa Photography Awards was held at the end of February. The jury was composed of professionals in photography as well as a variety of other fields, a unique and important feature of the Higashikawa Awards. The debates held among the judges every year are quite interesting. This year, with all eight judges present, the votes on all the awards after extensive discussion were split evenly, four to four. The atmosphere was very tense. In the end, however, the awards were determined after fair presentations of arguments from different points of view. The winners this year represented a broad spectrum of photography, another characteristic of the Higashikawa Awards. The 29th Higashikawa Photography Festival will be a very successful event.

First, I would like to discuss the Domestic Photographer Award. It went to Rinko Kawauchi. It is difficult to describe the world of Kawauchi's photographs in words. Briefly, her works might be described as taking viewers in imagination to various areas of life (both light and dark), taking clues from images of the light in the world. Wandering among these faintly emerging images that never become strong or forceful, we become caught up in Kawauchi's rhetoric. Random elements are chosen from thoughts and intentions. Necessary receptivity is developed through the accumulation of accident upon accident. If fragments of everyday life are taken as a horizontal axis, we are absorbed into the flow of time of the vertical axis, starting from everydayness. Kawauchi's solo exhibition at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography last year contained video works showing a field being burnt, revealing Kawauchi's world view. Relevance to the present time is especially evident in the work of Kawauchi, and it has

an energy that earned her the Domestic Photographer Award.

Next I would like to consider the New Photographer Award. This award attracts more controversy than any of the other Higashikawa Photography Awards. Because of the character of the New Photographer Award, the stance of the judges is often called into question. This year the award went to Ari Hatsuzawa. I would like to comment on three of his photobooks, *Baghdad*, taken in Iraq, *True Feelings*, photographs of the damage caused by the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake published last year, and *Neighbors*, images of North Korea. At first glance, Hatsuzawa's works are easy to understand. Ten years have passed since the Iraq War began. There is a striking contrast between the relaxed expressions of people before the war began and the tense expressions after the war started. The difference in these photographs makes us realize the meaninglessness of war and its terror. On the day after the earthquake struck, Hatsuzawa drove to the damaged areas in Tohoku. The text at the back of the book contains his ruminations about taking photographs in the disaster area. Reading this text clears up various doubts. North Korea under the Kim Jong-un regime is threatening to launch missiles and creating tension in the surrounding region. During a two-year period, Hatsuzawa traveled alternately to the earthquake site and North Korea. He captured the real conditions in these places by being physically present and not accepting preconceptions. The remarkable toughness of his work makes it appropriate for the New Photographer Award.

The Special Photographer Award was presented to Nakafuji Takehiko. "Sakuan, Matapaan - Hokkaido," is the title of a beautiful, two-volume photobook. *Sakuan* and *matapaan* mean "summer comes" and "winter comes" in the Ainu language. After the long Hokkaido winter and radiant days of spring, summer is a time of rapid and vigorous growth by hardy trees and plants. The abandoned buildings and land in a place like Yubari are overgrown by wild plants and return to nature. There is something nostalgic about the Hokkaido photographed by Nakafuji. His photographs are connected to his personal memories, and the fragmentary views of landscape in them evoke memories of early modern Japan and earlier times when Hokkaido was the land of Ezo. Daido Moriyama called his own stance toward photography "abrasive." Nakafuji arouses memories of the land by creating friction with the landscape of Hokkaido. The Special Photographer Award is given to a photographer who is connected with Hokkaido. Nakafuji's empathetic photographs have brought him the Special Photographer Prize.

Next is the Hidano Kazuemon Award. This year it went to a photographer

from Okinawa, the part of Japan farthest from Hokkaido. His name is Minoru Yamada. He turns 95 this year, and his upbringing and career are covered in detail in the chronology. To give the main facts, he was raised in Naha, Okinawa, went to college in Tokyo, and then started working. After being transferred to Manchuria, he was drafted into the Kanto Army. After many vicissitudes, including imprisonment in Siberia after World War II, he returned to Okinawa in 1952. He opened a photography store there and at the same time began taking his own photographs. He was a pioneer of Okinawan photography. He devoted his life to the promotion of photography in Okinawa, founding the Okinawa Nikkor Club and the photography section of the Oki-ten. He also served as a guide to famous photographers who visited Okinawa from other parts of Japan when Okinawa was still controlled by the American military. Rather than following the trend of documenting protests against the American bases, he mainly took pictures of children and their everyday lives and the streets of Naha. His pictures are a valuable record of the time and a source of hope. Yamada's achievements in photography are perfectly suited to the Hidano Kazuemon Award.

Finally, we come to the Overseas Artist Award. This year it was awarded to Minstrel Kuik of Malaysia based on research done by committee-member Aki Kusumoto. Kuik was raised as a Chinese Malaysian, but she studied in Taiwan and obtained a master's degree from the National Superior School of Photography in Arles, France. Young Japanese have little knowledge of politics, religion, or other conditions on the Malay Peninsula. It was occupied by Japan during World War II, and there were positive and negative aspects of Japan's involvement with Malaysia during its independence movement and its subsequent economic growth. A nuanced understanding is necessary. Kuik's theme is her and her family's Chinese identity in Malaysian society. In projects such as *Mer.rily Mer.rily Mer.rily Mer.rily*, she attempts to develop new values by quietly and conscientiously taking photographs that show the position of the majority and minority in the social structure. She explores the question of whether one can see the subject just as it is or believe what one sees, experimenting with the unique possibilities of the new technology of digital photography. It is appropriate for this international award to go to an energetic and innovative young artist from Asia.

The Overseas Photographer Award

Minstrel Kuik Ching Chieh

Lives in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



Chinese Malaysian **Minstrel Kuik** was born in Pantai Remis, Malaysia in 1976. Due to the racial quota that restricts national university access to native Malaysians, her country ‘exported’ her to Taiwan, like many other Chinese students. After her bachelor’s degree in western painting, she emigrated to France, where she had to complete another course in order to enroll at the Arles School of Photography (ENP) from which she would graduate in 2006 with a European Masters degree.

Driven by a desire to understand, deconstruct and reinvent the notions of the family home, cultural identity and photographic expression, Kuik bases her work on both snapshots and staged images she takes of her family, her hometown and the place she lives in. In parallel to her main project “Mer.rily, Mer.rily, Mer.rily, Mer.rily”, which studies the local context and its influence on gender and the familial structure, Kuik is also very interested in exploring how the digital apparatus inspires photography and our contemporary experience on time and reality with its unique language and aesthetic.

Apart from Malaysia, she has exhibited in Indonesia, Korea, Europe (Photoquai 2011) and the United States (Houston FotoFest International Discoveries 2009). The rest of time, she lectures in local art schools.

<artist statements>

I think of a song released in 1966 by the French singer Jacques Dutronc. Seven hundred millions Chinese, and I and I and I, with my life, my little home, mocks the singer in “Et moi, et moi, et moi”.

Today, there are 1,3 billions Chinese from the Mainland China, and another 40 millions Overseas Chinese who spread over around the world. There are approximate 7 millions Chinese in Malaysia, which is less than a quarter of the total population of the country. I am one of them - the Malaysian Chinese. Indeed, I think of it and I forget it,

with my life, my little home.

I believe the debate of cultural identity and social hegemony lies in a simple idea of quantity – the majority, and the minority. To resist intellectually, means to be in the minority. Photography is the medium that always highlights the complexity of self-identification: Are you in or out?

What makes you believe what you see? What makes you see things as they are? It depends not only where you are but also what you wish to see, says the photographer.

The Domestic Photographer Award

Rinko Kawauchi

Lives in Tokyo



Born in Shiga prefecture in 1972. Graduated from Seian University of Art and Design (formerly Seian Women's College) in 1993. Grand Prize in the 9th Hitotsubo Photography Exhibition in 1997. 27th Kimura Ihei Memorial Award for first photobooks, *Utatane* (Napping) and *Hanabi* (Fireworks), both published by Little More in 2002. Solo exhibition at the Cartier Foundation for Contemporary Art in Paris in 2005. 25th ICP Infinity Award for Art in 2009. Art Encourage Prize for New Artist from the Ministry of Education for solo exhibition, "Rinko Kawauchi: Illuminance, Ametsuchi, Seeing Shadow" at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography in 2012.

Her published books of photographs include *Cui Cui* (Foil, 2005), a collection of family photographs taken over a period of 13 years, and *Semear* (Foil, 2007), photographs taken in Brazil to commemorate the centennial of Japanese immigration in a joint project with the Sao Paulo Museum of Modern Art. Kawauchi captures personal scenes of everyday life and natural landscapes with a unique point of view and use of light, evoking universal themes like life and death, light and darkness, and heaven and earth with skillful compositions. For many years she has been working with a square format camera, but recently has also been using a large-format 4x5 camera and doing video works. She has engaged energetically in a variety of activities, publishing photobooks, holding exhibitions, and keeping a blog diary. She has presented many exhibitions in Japan and overseas.

The New Photographer Award

Ari Hatsuzawa

Lives in Tokyo



Born in Paris, France in 1973. Graduated in Sociology from Jochi University. Completed 13th Photography Workshop Corpus founded by Eiko Hosoe. Worked for the Iino Studio in Hiroo before going freelance. While creating his own photographs, he has also done commercial work, including fashion photography, picture of automobiles and the Takarazuka theater.

Hatsuzawa visited Baghdad in February 2003 just before the beginning of the Iraq War and again in June after the war had started. His photobook *Baghdad 2003* (Hekitensha, 2003) presents fragments of everyday life that tend to be lost from sight in the turmoil of war. In autumn 2009, he applied for a visa to North Korea to make a book of photographs. He visited North Korea four times in 2011 and 2012 and openly took photographs of the lives of people in cities and regions that are seldom seen in the media and published them in *Rinjin. 38-dosen no kita* [Neighbors. North of the 38th parallel] (Tokuma Shoten, 2012). While working in North Korea, he also began photographing the damage caused by the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake, starting on March 12, the day after the earthquake struck. During the next year, he visited the area almost every month, recording the lives of people who had slipped out of the category of “disaster victim.” These photographs were published in *True Feelings. 2011.3.12 ~2012.3.11* (Sanei Shobo, 2012).

Hatsuzawa extracts images not constructed by the mass media with the certainty that comes from personal experience, showing works that question what is or is not self-evident.

The Special Photographer Award

Takehiko Nakafuji

Lives in Saitama



Born in Tokyo in 1970. Entered Waseda University in the School of Letters, Arts and Sciences I but left before graduating. Graduated in photography from Tokyo Visual Arts. Opened Gallery Niepce in Daikanyama in 2000 (later moved to Yotsuya 3-chome), and organized many exhibitions. Most of his photographs are snapshots of the city in grainy black and white.

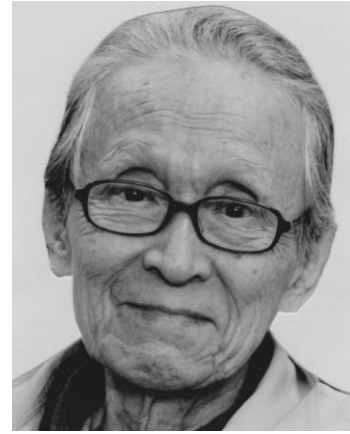
Nakafuji showed photographs of Tokyo, his hometown, in “NIGHT CRAWLER – Kyoko no toshi e no hoko” [Wandering Through a Fictional City] at Konica Plaza in 1995. Later he photographed cities in the former communist countries of Eastern Europe, Berlin, Warsaw, Prague, and Budapest, and published the images in *Winterlicht* (Wise Shuppan, 2001).

Nakafuji has taken photographs in many countries, including Cuba, New York, Shanghai, and Russia. His 2009 exhibition, “САХАЛИН – Sakhalin,” at Konica Minolta Plaza featured pictures of Sakhalin, an island connecting Eastern Europe, Russia, and Hokkaido. In 2013, he held an exhibition of photographs of Hokkaido, “Sakuan, Matapaan – Hokkaido,” at Zen Photo Gallery. *Sakuan* and *matapaan* mean “summer comes” and “winter comes” in the Ainu language. Nakafuji reflects his unique view of the world in refined street snapshots of people and landscapes.

The Hidano Kazuemon Award

Minoru Yamada

Lives in Okinawa



Born in Hyogo in 1918 and raised in Naha. Graduated in commerce from Meiji University in 1941. Worked as an editor for the college newspaper and obtained another degree from the Department of Advanced Research in Journalism (section two) of the same university. After joining Nissan Construction Co., Ltd., was posted to Manchuria. Drafted into the Japanese military in Manchuria and served in the Kanto Army. Engaged in battle with the Soviet army at the end of the war and was imprisoned in Siberia. Returned to Maizuru, Japan in 1947 and went back to work for Nissan Construction. Returned to Okinawa in 1952. Opened the Yamada Camera Store in Naha. Founding member of the Okinawa branch of the Nika Society in 1958. Established the Okinawa Nikkor Club in 1959 and became a member of the Oki-ten in 1962. Founding member of the Okinawa Photography Association in 1966. A pioneering figure in Okinawan photography.

Yamada was strongly influenced by Ken Domon's realist movement and Hiroshi Hamaya, who accompanied him on photography tours in Okinawa in 1962. Rather than focusing on American bases and protest demonstrations, he photographed children and the everyday lives of ordinary people with reserve as well as empathy.

Before Okinawa's reversion to Japanese jurisdiction in 1972, he played host to many Japanese photographers in Okinawa, including Takeji Iwamiya, Hiroshi Hamaya, Tadahiko Hayashi, Ihei Kimura, Shomei Tomatsu. He also acted as coordinator for Tomatsu's Workshop Photography School when it was held in Okinawa. He was a very important networker between Okinawa and the rest of Japan.

Received the Okinawa Times Art Selection Grand Prize in 1977 and the Award for Cultural Merit of Okinawa prefecture in 2000. In 2012, the Okinawa Prefectural Museum and Art Museum organized "Yamada Minoru ten hito to toki no orai" [Minoru Yamada Exhibition: coming and going of people and time] and Yamada published the photobook *Yamada Minoru shashinshu kokyō wa senjō datta* [Minoru Yamada photo collection: my native land was a battlefield] (Miraisha, 2012).

<p>Higashikawa International Photography Festival Photo Fiesta 2012</p>

Award Winners' Exhibition

Date: 10 August (Sat.) – 4 September (Wed.), 2013

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:

Minstrel Kuik Ching Chieh (The Overseas Photographer Award)

Rinko Kawauchi (The Domestic Photographer Award)

Ari Hatsuzawa (The New Photographer Award)

Takehiko Nakafuji (The Special Photographer Award)

Minoru Yamada (The Hidano Kazurmon Award)

Event Schedule:

10 August (Sat.) 14:00-14:30 Award Ceremony

15:30-17:00 Opening Reception

11 August (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.