

Press Release

2014

**The 30th Higashikawa Awards**

**The Town of Photography**  
Information

Higashikawa International Photography Festival Office

Mayor : MATSUOKA Ichiro

HIGASHIKAWA, KAMIKAWA-GUN, HOKKAIDO

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## The 30th Higashikawa Award Winners

◆The Overseas Photographer Award: Jorma Puranen (Finland)  
For photographic achievements, including “Icy Prospects“

◆The Domestic Photographer Award: NOGUCHI Rika  
For the exhibition “NOGUCHI Rika: Light Reaching the Future” (Izu Photo Museum, 2011-12) and her accomplishments as a photographer

◆The New Photographer Award: Gentaro Ishizuka  
For the photobook, *PIPELINE ICELAND/ALASKA* (euphoria FACTORY/ Kodansha, 2013)

◆The Special Photographer Award: Koji Sakai  
For achievements in photographing Hokkaido, including the “Sight Seeing” series.

◆The Hidano Kazuemon Award: Tazuko Masuyama  
For a series of photographs of Tokuyama Village, which was destined to disappear under the waters of a reservoir.

## Comments on the Selection of the Higashikawa Photography Awards

Tokihiro Sato, member of the Higashikawa Photography Awards Jury

This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the Higashikawa Photography Awards. Many events and incidents have occurred during this thirty years – too many to recount here – and the conditions of society have changed greatly. The Higashikawa Photography Awards were presented for the first time in 1985. There were no galleries in Higashikawa at the time, and I have heard that the photographs were initially exhibited in existing facilities such as the Agricultural Improvement Center. The event has continued under three different mayors, being reevaluated from time to time and improved with new ideas. “Photography Koshien,” an event for high-school students, was added twenty years ago. During the last few years, more and more municipalities throughout Japan have made an attempt to improve their communities through cultural activities. Higashikawa was one of the first to pursue this goal by promoting the art of photography, and the Higashikawa Photography Awards is a successful event that continues to flourish.

The judging of this year’s entries took place in the final week of February. The awards are determined through discussion by a jury of eight members, and this style of judging, which is influenced by differences in the individual character and opinions of the judges, has become a distinctive feature of the Higashikawa Photography Awards. All of the final candidates for awards are extremely talented and accomplished photographers, so it is very difficult to show strictly logical reasons for choosing one photographer rather than another. It is necessary to make decisions by a majority vote, but because there are eight judges, an even number, it is not uncommon for the vote to be evenly divided. And the composition of the opposing groups of jury members is usually different on each occasion. If we look at this year’s winners, who were selected in this highly competitive process, we find that the final lineup is highly deserving of this honor and we can take pride in the result. The quality of the photographers who will receive this year’s awards is commensurate with the celebration of this thirtieth anniversary.

The first award I would like to consider is the Domestic Photographer Award, which went to NOGUCHI Rika. Noguchi has been nominated in previous years, but the judges finally came together to support her continuing achievement. Noguchi's work reflects a unique view of the world that is gentle and expansive, and she composes her photographs by framing the subject matter from a slightly detached point of view. Her work has appeared in individual shows as well as group shows such as "I Dreamt of Flying" at the Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, "The Light" at the National Art Center, and "Light Reaching the Future" at the Izu Photo Museum. All her works suggest some sort of subtle narrative. The elements that make up the tranquil space of her photographs – birds, domesticated animals, insects, people, sunlight, a rocket blasting off, and the light source of a projector – are all treated as being of equal value. She has participated in previous exhibitions in Higashikawa, and I am delighted to see her receiving the Domestic Photographer Award this year.

Next is the New Photographer Award. This award is always the most contested because it depends so much on the subjective viewpoint of the selectors. This year, it was presented to Gentaro Ishizuka in recognition of his photobook *PIPELINE ICELAND/ALASKA*. He was previously nominated in 2007 when his first views of pipelines were published. The 4 x 5 format of the previous book was replaced by an 8 x 10 format in the current work. The four-inch difference may not be important, but there is a big difference in the way these photographs are handled. The subject is the natural environments of Iceland and Alaska and the long pipelines passing through them. These pipelines represent the need of human beings to maintain a supply of energy wherever they live, and the images reveal a simple relationship between human beings and nature. Ishizuka has traveled the world with his large-format camera, and the sense of scale and energy he has achieved make him fully deserving of the New Photographer Award.

The Special Photographer Award was given to Koji Sakai. Sakai is another photographer who has been nominated a number of times over the years. For a long time he has been known for the landscape series, *Sight Seeing*, in which he explores primal images of Hokkaido. The series has been continued in recent years under a different title, *Gukei*. The judges agreed on rewarding his efforts this year. Sakai was born in Hokkaido and has continued taking photographs of Hokkaido for many years.

The titles of his photographs are composed of numbers that indicate the latitude and longitude of the subject as well as the date. The photographer is interested in the particular geographical place that has been photographed. His approach to photography, capturing light in relation to geography, is especially suited to the Special Photographer Award, which is given to photographers and photographs related to Hokkaido.

Then there is the Hidano Kazuemon Award, which was presented this year to Tazuko Masuyama, a photographer who passed away eight years ago. Masuyama was born in Tokuyama Village, Gifu prefecture. She was engaged in farming and managing an inn throughout her life but at the same time used a compact camera to document the changes in her home village brought about by the building of the Tokuyama Dam. Her photographic record covers all phases of the project from the early stages of planning through construction. In all, she filled some 600 photo albums and left over hundred thousand negatives. When we look at the photographs she produced and their sheer volume, we gain a new sense of the value of the existence of photographs. This mass of photographs represents the accumulated everyday actions of a single woman. They suggest an answer to the question of the fundamental nature of photography. These collected photographs of everyday life have great significance and strength. It was decided that Masuyama's achievement was deserving of an award identified with the name of Hidano Kazuemon.

The final award is the Overseas Photographer Award, presented to Jorma Puranen of Finland. He belongs to a group of photographers known as the Helsinki School, which has begun to be introduced in Japan in recent years. Puranen has taught at University of Art and Design Helsinki (now Aalto University School of Art and Design) and contributed to the education of younger photographers. He has created overlapping images of landscape, native people, and language as well as photographs that treat reflections on the surfaces of paintings and photographs. Portraits of people have connotations of history and authority, and language shows cultural differences. Puranen presents photographic effects with a critical viewpoint, making them metaphors for the history and memory contained in the paintings and photographs he appropriates. We are pleased to be able to offer the Overseas Photographer Award to a photographer who produces photographs filled with such great beauty and profound meaning.

## The Overseas Photographer Award

Jorma Puranen

Lives in Helsinki, Finland



One of Finland's most important photographers, Jorma Puranen began his photographic career in the early 1970's. His works has been diverse, from poetic ethnography to experimentation with painterly reflections of light. His interest in historical painting has led him to conceptual projects with portraiture and landscape.

Puranen has exhibited widely and his work is being held in various international museum collections. His most recent exhibitions include *Seduced by Art: Photography Part and Present*, National Gallery London, 2012, *Shadows, Reflections and All That Sort of Thing*, Sinebrychoff Art Museum, Helsinki, 2011, EMMA Museum of Modern Art, Espoo, 2010 and Palais des Beaux-Art, Lille, 2010.

Puranen lives and works in Helsinki, where his teaching has inspired a generation of young practitioners, now called the Helsinki School.

### <Artist statement>

My work is about photography's ability to give expression to various inter-related layers of history and memory, geographical imagination and cultural difference. Photographs exist simultaneously as material objects, as complexly coded thematic representations of people and places, and as triggers for speculation, fantasy, reverie. In exploring themes of history and cultural difference I am not only making use of this complexity but also critiques the role of visual representation in the construction of history.

I am often asking myself "what any other medium [than photography] deals so expressively with the play of light and shadow?" For me, the photography's capacity to register shadows and reflections is a unique quality. In my work the use of reflections becomes a metaphor, a way to grasp the relationships of past and present, duration of time and recollection over the years.

In fact, it could be said that reflection—or reflected light—is the very subject matter of the photographs in my work, even as these images also address notions of history, memory, and imagination.

## The Domestic Photographer Award

**NOGUCHI Rika**

**Lives in Berlin, Germany**



Born in 1971 in Omiya (now Saitama City), Saitama Prefecture. Graduated from the Department of Photography, College of Art, Nihon University in 1994. Her photographs were marked by a high degree of finish and unique sense of distance. Received early recognition for such works as *Record of Creation*, which earned The Grand Prize of the 5<sup>th</sup> 3.3 m<sup>2</sup> Exhibition (1995), *To Dive*, which received The Grand Prize of New Cosmos of Photography (1996), and *A Prime*, which was shown in the “Grand Prize Winner’s Exhibition” the next year (1997).

Searched with great physical and mental energy for places where her imagination could connect with interesting subjects, exploring the bottom of the ocean, many locations around the planet, and even outer space and revealing a fantastic, unknown world in the landscapes she photographed. In recent work, has experimented with pinhole cameras and silkscreen prints, creating new forms of photographic expression that cross conventional boundaries.

In 1997, presented a solo show and participated in a group exhibition in Higashikawa. Stayed in New York on a personal fellowship from the Asian Cultural Council in 1998. Guest artist at Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunstverein in Amsterdam in 1999-2000. Received the 52<sup>nd</sup> Minister of Education’s Art Encouragement Prize for New Artists in 2002. Stayed in Germany and East Africa on a fellowship from the Pola Art Foundation in 2005. At present, lives and works in Berlin, Germany.

Noguchi has participated in many exhibitions inside and outside Japan. Major solo exhibitions in Japan include “A feeling of something happening,” Marugame Genichiro-Inokuma Museum of Contemporary Art, Kagawa, 2001; “I Dreamt of Flying,” Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, 2004; and “NOGUCHI Rika: Light Reaching the Future,” Izu Photo Museum, 2011-12.

## The New Photographer Award

### Gentaro Ishizuka

Lives in Tokyo



Born in Tokyo in 1977. Began taking photographs around age 19 and traveled to more than 70 world countries, including Sri Lanka, Germany, and Alaska. Won the Epson Color Imaging Contest Prize in 1999 for *World Wide Wonderful*, produced while backpacking in Africa and Asia. In 2002, received the Grand Prize in the general section of the Visual Art Awards and the Young Photographer Award of the Japan Photographers Association for *worldwidewarp*, composed of pairs of vertically juxtaposed photographs taken at slightly different times and completed during two trips around the world, moving from east to west.

In 2003, became interested in a long pipeline passing through the endless natural environment that he experienced on a trip to Alaska. This trans-Alaskan pipeline, over 1280 km long, was planned after the oil shock to transport oil from the large oil fields in the far north of North America to ports in the south. In 2007, Ishizuka published PIPELINE ALASKA (Petit Grand Publishing, Inc.), containing the photos that he took while traveling the entire length of the pipeline from south to north. In the spring of 2012, while continuing to take pictures in Alaska, he was offered an SIM residency in Iceland, where he took photographs of a pipeline that supplies geothermal energy to the cities with an 8 x 10 large-format camera. In 2013, he published PIPELINE ICELAND/ALASKA (euphoria FACTORY/Kodansha), featuring photographs of both Alaska and Iceland.

Currently photographing landscapes with a unique point of view in locations throughout the world. Subjects include glaciers, pipelines, and gold rushes. In 2011, given an Overseas Study Grant for Young Artists by the Japanese Cultural Agency. In 2012, received an Overseas Study Grant for Young Artists from the Pola Art Foundation.



## The Special Photographer Award

### Koji Sakai

Lives in Sapporo, Hokkaido



Born in Yoichi-cho, Hokkaido in 1960. Graduated from the Photographic Technology Section of the Tokyo Polytechnic University Junior College. Won the First Fox-Talbot Prize sponsored by Tokyo Polytechnic University. *Vanishing Point of Summer* acquired by the Shadai Gallery. Worked for a photo studio in Sapporo and in 1992 established Graytone Photographs Inc. Has been participating in solo and group exhibitions since 1984. Became a member of the Network of Photographers Promoting Hokkaido, a non-profit organization, and served as a part-time instructor in the art department of Sapporo Otani University.

In *Sight Seeing*, a series begun in 1994, captured ordinary landscapes different from the sorts of scenes that we typically associate with Hokkaido. The titles of the works are composed of 21 numbers, which indicate the time and place (latitude and longitude) of the photograph. The silent spaces, archetypical landscapes, which reveal themselves in his photographs are captured in varied kinds of light and places in Hokkaido. Showed work from the same series in a solo exhibition at CAI02 Gallery in Sapporo in 2009.

In a parallel series, *Something Standing There*, photographed ordinary buildings such as wood-frame residences, barns, silos, and small community meeting halls built in the Showa era. In addition to documenting a particular historical period, these seemingly forgotten images have a quiet but intense sense of presence. In *Hokkaido Journey*, a series of color snapshots taken in various places in Hokkaido, he continues to examine ways of revealing the landscape of Hokkaido.

## The Hidano Kazuemon Award

### Tazuko Masuyama

**Born in Tokuyama Village**  
(1917-2006)



Photo by Hiroshi Kakiuchi

Born in Tonyu, Tokuyama Village, Gifu Prefecture in 1917. After losing her husband in World War II, she continued living in Tokuyama Village, doing farm work and operating a small inn. In 1957, a plan was proposed to build a dam in Tokuyama. Motivated by a desire to preserve a record of the village, began to record the sounds of village events and everyday life with a tape recorder. In 1977, as the dam project moved forward, took her first photographs at a village athletic day. She invested in photographic equipment with money from her pension and went on to take many pictures with a Pikkari Konica, becoming known as the “photographer grandma.”

In 1983, cooperated in the making of a film based on Tokuyama Village, *Furusato* (Hometown), directed by Kamiyama Seijiro, and appeared in the last scene. Published first book of photographs, *Kokyo – watakushi no Tokuyamamura shashin nikki* (Hometown – my photographic diary of Tokuyama village) through Jakometei Shuppan in 1983. In 1985, forced to leave Tokuyama Village and moved to Gifu City. Continued visiting the village after it was abandoned in 1987 and continued photographing the people, nature, buildings, festivals, and customs of the village until her death in March 2006 at age 88. Eventually produced some 100,000 negatives and 600 photo albums. Test filling of the reservoir began in September of that year and the remains of Tokuyama Village were covered by water. Tokuyama Dam was completed in 2008, a half century after the planning began, and Masuyama’s photographs became precious documents of the former condition of the village.

Received an Avon Achievement Award in 1984. Published *Arigato, Tokuyama-mura* (Thank you, Tokuyama village) through Kage Shobo, in 1987 and *Masuyama Tazuko: Tokuyama-mura shashin zen kiroku* (Tazuko Masuyama: The Photo Documentation of Tokuyama village) through Kage Shobo in 1997. After Masuyama’s death, exhibitions of her photographs were presented throughout Japan. A recent exhibition was “Tazuko Masuyama: Until Everything Becomes a Photograph” at Izu Photo Museum in 2013-14.

## Higashikawa International Photography Festival

### Photo Fiesta 2014

#### **Award Winners' Exhibition**

Date: 9 August (Sat.) – 3 September (Wed.), 2014

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:

Jorma Puranen (The Overseas Photographer Award)

NOGUCHI Rika (The Domestic Photographer Award)

Gentaro Ishizuka (The New Photographer Award)

Koji Sakai (The Special Photographer Award)

Tazuko Masuyama (The Hidano Kazurmon Award)

#### **Event Schedule:**

9 August (Sat.) 14:00-14:45 Award Ceremony

15:30-17:00 Opening Reception

10 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 Prize, the Special 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 25<sup>th</sup> Higashikawa Awards**

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

## 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.