

Press Release

2015

The 31st Higashikawa Awards

The Town of Photography
Culture Capital of Photography

Information

Higashikawa International Photography Festival Office

Mayor : Ichiro Matsuoka

HIGASHIKAWA, KAMIKAWA-GUN, HOKKAIDO

<Address>

HIGASHIKAWA PUBLIC OFFICE

Organizers: Akihito Kubota, Kita Masahito

1-16-1, Higashimachi, Higashikawa, Hokkaido 071-1492 Japan

TEL. +81 166 82 2111 / FAX. +81 166 82 4704

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

The 31st Higashikawa Award Winners

◆The Overseas Photographer Award: Anne Noble (New Zealand)

For photographic achievements, including the photobook *The Last Road* (Clouds, 2014)

◆The Domestic Photographer Award: Tokihiro Sato

For the exhibition “Sato Tokihiro: Presence or Absence” (Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, 2014) and his accomplishments as a photographer

◆The New Photographer Award: Maiko Haruki

For the exhibition “A certain composition of eyes” (Taro Nasu, 2014) and her photographic achievements

◆The Special Photographer Award: Kazutoshi Yoshimura

For the photobook, *CEMENT* (Nostro Bosco, 2010)

◆The Hidano Kazuemon Award: Kikujiro Fukushima

For long-term achievement in photographing problematic aspects of postwar Japanese, including images of his hometown in Seto Inland Sea and survivors of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima.

Commentary on the Selection of the 31st Higashikawa Photography Awards

Michiko Kasahara, jury member

Commentary on the Selection of the 31st Higashikawa Photography Awards

Michiko Kasahara, jury member

The judging of the 31st Higashikawa Photography Awards took place at the Kuwasawa Design School on February 16, 2015. A total of 106 photographers had been nominated: 30 for the Domestic Photographer Award, 34 for the New Photographer Award, 11 for the Special Photographer Award, 18 for the Hidano Kazuemon Award, and 13 for the Overseas Photographer Award. The jurors gathered at 10:00 AM and carefully looked through the huge amount of work by the nominated artists. The judging began at 1:30 PM after a lunch break. Jury member Hiroshi Yamazaki was suddenly taken ill and could not be present. Kazuyoshi Nomachi was on an overseas trip and could not attend, but he had already given his recommendations to the business office.

The Domestic Photographer Award was given to Tokihiro Sato. Before starting deliberations on the Domestic Photographer Award, we discussed whether or not it would be appropriate to consider Mr. Sato as a candidate for the award because of his previous involvement with the Higashikawa Photographer Awards. Even though we thought that some criticism could be expected, it was decided that he should be included because of the extent of his achievements, and in the judging that followed he was unanimously selected by the jury to receive the award. The exhibition, "Presence or Absence," at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography was a magnificent presentation of Sato's achievements that examined the structure of the camera and the principles of photography through the themes of light, the body, time, and space.

Opinion was divided over the New Photographer Award. Since it is applied to the work of young to mid-career photographers, there are many qualified candidates to choose from every year. The candidates who remained after a number of votes and discussions were Maiko Haruki, Shintaro Sato, Noriko Hayashi, and Toshiya

Murakoshi. By a small margin, the vote went to Haruki Maiko as recipient of the New Photographer Award. She has been working steadily for 15 years, has been invited to participate in group exhibitions in Japan and other countries and enjoys a growing reputation. The black void filling the space of her new work, A certain composition of eyes, can be seen as representing the condition of today's Japan.

Kazutoshi Yoshimura received the Special Photographer Award, which is given to a photographer associated with Hokkaido. He has energetically taken landscape photographs both in Japan and overseas. On this occasion, he was recognized for CEMENT, a photobook featuring a cement plant in Hokuto, Hokkaido. A large-format camera was used for both detailed close-ups and distant views in these color photographs. This book asks the viewer to think about the presence and meaning of the cement plant and at the same time reveals and celebrates the beauty found in its forms.

The Hidano Kazuemon Award is presented to a photographer who has made a special contribution to a particular region. This year it was awarded to Kikujiro Fukushima, who has gained attention in recent years for the documentary film, Japan Lies, which covers the last half of his life. He is a remarkable journalistic photographer who has always taken the side of the weakest members of society. He has photographed the survivors of Hiroshima for many years and documented other negative aspects of the history of the region known as Japan, including the Sanrizuka struggle (the protest against construction of Narita Airport), pollution, and nuclear power plants.

This year, the Overseas Photographer Award was presented to a photographer from New Zealand. With the cooperation of the Auckland Festival of Photography, jury member Aki Kusumoto conducted research in Auckland and Wellington. 13 artists were nominated, all of them important photographers in New Zealand. From these candidates, Anne Noble was chosen by an overwhelming majority. She is known for her compelling series of images of her daughter's mouth and photographs on the theme of Antarctica. She deals with a variety of issues faced by contemporary people such as sexuality, the relationship between man and nature, and the problem of representation through vivid images often spiced with humor.

The Overseas Photographer Award

Anne Noble

Lives in Wellington, New Zealand



Anne Noble is Distinguished Professor of Fine Arts at Massey University, Wellington and one of New Zealand's most respected contemporary photographers. In 2009 she received an Arts Foundation Laureate Award in recognition of her contribution to the visual arts in New Zealand. She has also received an ONZM for services to photography in New Zealand and was a recipient of a Fulbright Fellowship, to undertake a residency at Colombia College, Chicago in 2014. Noble has also worked as a curator, representing Australia and New Zealand as Oceania curator for the Musee du quai Branly Photoquai Biennale in 2009 / 2011 / 2013. She is sought internationally, as an advisor on creative arts research, as a photography teacher as a keynote speaker and as a judge of international photography awards.

Antarctica has been a major focus of her work over the last decade resulting in three photographic book and exhibition projects, *Ice Blink*, 2011 (Clouds) *The Last Road*, 2014, and *Whiteout / Whitenoise* (forthcoming), through which she explores new ways to see and imagine a place that most people only encounter second-hand through the photographic image. Noble's Antarctic projects have been exhibited widely nationally and internationally.

More recently Noble has turned her attention to the decline of the honeybee and global threats to complex natural systems. Her project *Song Sting Swarm* is concerned with the symbiotic relationship between bees and humans and is premised on close creative collaborations with scientists, with professional apiarists and with members of amateur beekeeping communities.

The Domestic Photographer Award

Tokihiro Sato

Lives in Saitama



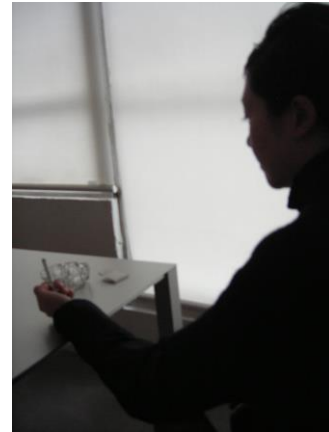
Born in 1957 in Sakata, Yamagata prefecture. Received an MFA in sculpture from the Tokyo University of the Arts. Won the New Photographer Award of the 6th Higashikawa Photography Awards in 1990. Spent time in France after receiving the Grand Prix of the Art Scope Daimler Japan art-in-residence program in 1993. Lived in England on an overseas study grant from the Agency for Cultural Affairs. In addition to holding many exhibitions in Japan, has earned an excellent reputation and participated in a number of exhibitions overseas, including the “9th Asian Art Biennale, Bangladesh” in 1999 and a solo show at the Art Institute of Chicago in 2005. Received the Prize of the Minister of Education Award for Fine Arts for “Sato Tokihiro: Presence or Absence” at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography in 2014. Presently serving as professor in the Department of Intermedia Art at the Tokyo University of the Arts.

One of Sato’s major works is his *Photo-Respiration* series, in which he personally enters the landscape he is photographing and produces traces of light with a penlight and sunlight reflected from a hand mirror. These points of light appear in the final photograph. In *Gleaning lights*, he created 360-degree panorama photographs with multiple pinhole cameras that he made by himself. And in the *Wandering Camera* series, he used a camera obscura that could be moved from place to place, and people were able to enter the chamber of the camera. These experimental projects reexamined the possibilities of primitive optical properties of the camera for contemporary times. Focusing on the apparatuses of photography, he has created photographic works of art that question the inherent nature and universality of presence and absence with the themes of light, time, space, and the body.

The New Photographer Award

Maiko Haruki

Lives in Tokyo



Born in Ibaraki prefecture in 1974. Attended Goldsmith's College, University of London from 1995 to 1996 as an exchange student while enrolled in the Literature Department of Tamagawa University. Graduated in art from Tamagawa University in 1997. Major exhibitions include "Roppongi Crossing 2007: Future Beats in Japanese Contemporary Art" (Mori Art Museum, 2007), "Contemporary Japanese Photography, vol. 10 – elan photographic" (Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, 2011), Azamino Photo Annual: Boundaries of Photography" (Yokohama Civic Gallery Azamino, 2014), and "A certain composition of eyes" (Taro Nasu, 2014). Her works have been collected by the Mori Art Museum, the Takamatsu City Museum of Art, and Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine.

Because of extreme underexposure, many of Haruki's photographs have large areas of black juxtaposed with small areas of dazzling light that break out of the darkness, as exemplified in the book "●○" (Daiwa Radiator Factory Co., Ltd., 2005). She has attracted attention for experimental and sophisticated expression. *possibility in portraiture* (1223 Contemporary Paintings, 2011), is a work that questions the problem of time as well as the issue of boundaries by including moving people along with buildings as important parts of the photograph. An animal that has been mounted for display is the subject of *A certain composition of eyes*. The animal is photographed from many different angles, breaking down the image and reconstructing multiple gazes on the same plane. In contemplating the act of seeing, she strips extraneous elements away from photographic expression, encouraging viewers to ponder the two basic elements of time and space.

The Special Photographer Award

Kazutoshi Yoshimura

Lives in Tokyo



Born in Matsumoto, Nagano prefecture in 1967. Graduated from Nagano Prefectural Tagawa High School and worked for a printing company in Tokyo. After retiring, got his start in photography during a year in Canada. While living in Tokyo, traveled throughout Japan and the world, actively taking photographs. Spends long periods of time carefully researching selected themes. In addition to publishing photobooks, is recently doing a great deal of writing. Has expanded his expressive activities by writing magazine articles and publishing collections of essays. Received a Canadian Media Arts Prize in 2003 and the Newcomer's Prize of the Photographic Society of Japan in 2007.

Beginning with a book of photos of Prince Edward Island on the northeastern coast of Canada, has published more than 30 photobooks. *Blue Moment* (Shogakkan, 2007) was a collection of views of blue sky taken in the few minutes before dawn and after sunset in different parts of the world during a twenty year period. Yoshimura's enchanting, visionary photographs have a broad appeal. Returned to Japanese landscapes in a number of photobooks including *Sense of Japan* (Nostro Bosco, 2009), *Shinshu* (Shinano Mainichi Shimbunsha, 2011), and *Sekisetsu* (Maruzen Shuppan, 2013). His photobook *CEMENT* (Nostro Bosco, 2010) presents images of a cement plant in Hokuto, Hokkaido with a very matter-of-fact gaze, highlighting the reality of big industry and revealing the beauty of its details.

The Hidano Kazuemon Award

Kikujiro Fukushima

Lives in Yanai, Yamaguchi

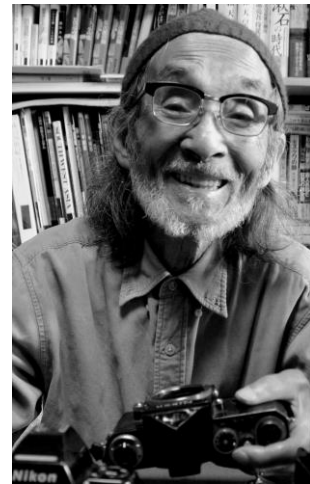


Photo by Keiko Nasu

Born in Kudamatsu, Yamaguchi prefecture in 1921, the fourth son of a local fishing boss. A private second class in the Japanese army at the end of the war in 1945. From 1946 on, operated a watch and clock store in his hometown and began photographing survivors of the Hiroshima atomic bomb and scenes from remote islands in the Seto Inland Sea. *Pika Don: A Record of Atomic Bomb Survivors* is his photographic documentation of the struggles and suffering of a family of Hiroshima survivors over a ten-year period. Received the Special Prize from the Japan Photo Critics Association in 1960.

Fukushima moved to Tokyo in 1961 where he photographed subjects that reflected the times: student protests, the Self Defense Forces, the weapons industry, the Sanrizuka struggle, pollution, and young people's lifestyles. His photographs were published frequently in magazines and other media. In 1982, because of opposition to the state and its authority, began living a self-sufficient life on an uninhabited island in the Seto Inland Sea. Left the island because of illness and later published *War Begins* (Shakai Hyoronsha, 1987) and *Story of a Remote Island in the Seto Inland Sea* (Shakai Hyoronsha, 1989). When the Showa emperor died in 1989, Fukushima started a mobile photography exhibition with photographic panels he had constructed, highlighting Japan's war responsibility and postwar conditions. He still loans out these panels.

In recent years, Fukushima is gaining recognition as a witness to history. He has been writing his *Unphotographed Postwar* series since 2003. A documentary film, *Japan Lies: The Photojournalism of Kikujiro Fukushima, Age 90* was released in 2012, and the publishing of *Will and Testament* (Days Japan, 2013) followed soon after.

Higashikawa International Photography Festival
Photo Fiesta 2015

Award Winners' Exhibition

Date: 8 August (Sat.) – 2 September (Wed.), 2015

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:

Anne Noble (The Overseas Photographer Award)

Tokihiro Sato (The Domestic Photographer Award)

Maiko Haruki (The New Photographer Award)

Kazutoshi Yoshimura (The Special Photographer Award)

Kikujiro Fukushima (The Hidano Kazuemon Award)

Event Schedule:

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

15:30-17:00 Opening Reception

9 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 31st Higashikawa Awards

Katsumi ASABA <Art Director>-----24th –
Michiko KASAHARA <Photo Critic>-----23rd –
Aki KUSUMOTO <Photo Critic, Curator>-----25th –
Osamu Ueno <Photo Critic>-----31st–
Kazuyoshi NOMACHI <Photographer> -----23rd –
Keiichiro HIRANO <Novelist>-----24th –
Yuri MITSUDA<Art Critic>-----27th –
Hiroshi YAMAZAKI <Photographer>-----25th –

The Town of Photography

Culture Capital 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.

Since the declaration of the Town of Photography, Higashikawa has been a platform of meeting people, photography culture and nature over the last 30 years. Celebrating 120 years of resource development of the land, we declared the Culture Capital of Photography in May 2014, keeping in mind our motto "Take a picture, Save the picture, Share it with others" and with the determination to link photography and people across the world.