

Press Release

2016

**The 32nd Higashikawa Awards**

**The Town of Photography**  
**Culture Capital of Photography**

Information

**Higashikawa International Photography Festival Office**

Mayor : Ichiro Matsuoka

HIGASHIKAWA, KAMIKAWA-GUN, HOKKAIDO

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

## The 32nd Higashikawa Award Winners

- ◆The Overseas Photographer Award: Oscar Muñoz (Colombia)  
For photographic achievements, including the exhibition  
“Protographs” (Jeu de paume, Paris, 2014 and other places)
  
- ◆The Domestic Photographer Award: Taishi Hirokawa  
For the photobook “BABEL – ORDINARY LANDSCAPES –”  
(AKAKA, 2015) and his accomplishments as a photographer
  
- ◆The New Photographer Award: Yoko Ikeda  
For the photobook “Monkey Puzzle” (Nazraeli Press, 2015)
  
- ◆The Special Photographer Award: Michael Kenna  
For the photo series taken in Hokkaido
  
- ◆The Hidano Kazuemon Award: Yoshimi Ikemoto  
For long-term achievement in photographing San-in area with a  
focus on Tottori Prefecture, including photography series  
“Kinsei miseya ko”

## Commentary on the Selection of the 32nd Higashikawa Photography Awards

Michiko Kasahara, jury member

The judging of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Higashikawa Photography Awards took place at the Kuwasawa Design School on February 23, 2016. Having gone over the list of the people who make recommendations for nominees, we found it to be unanticipatedly extensive and had more photographers than usual this year: 54 for the Domestic Photographer Award, 53 for the New Photographer Award, 18 for the Special Photographer Award, 24 for the Hidano Kazuemon Award, and 12 for the overseas Photographer Award. The jurors gathered at 10:00 AM and carefully looked through the huge amount of works by the nominated artists. The deliberation lasted from 1:30 to 5:00 p.m. with a lunch break in between.

The Domestic Photographer Award was given to Taishi Hirokawa. Opinions were divided between Yoshihiko Ueda and Taishi Hirokawa, both of whom have had impressive careers as photographers. The jury found the omnibus of Ueda's work up until now impressive but was won over by the way in which Hirokawa has cultivated a more expansive platform for himself as a photographer with his photography book "BABEL - ORDINARY LANDSCAPES -". He included photographs of mines, dams, hillside land plots for houses, and power plants — unromanticized views of commonly seen instances of nature mutated by human intervention.

Opinion is divided over the New Photographer Award every year and this year was no different. This proves that there are many qualified candidates to choose from since it is applied to the work of young to mid-career photographers. After a number of votes and discussions, Yoko Ikeda, Eriko Koga, Sohei Nishino, Takahiro Masuda, Tamotsu Kido, Tamaki Shindo, and Kazuna Taguchi, all of whom have completely different styles, remained. The vote went to Yoko Ikeda as the recipient of the New Photographer Award by a small margin. She has enjoyed a high reputation as an artist in recent years. The photography book "Monkey Puzzle" captures pedestrian shots of Hokkaido, Nagano, Tochigi, Tokyo, Aichi, Kyoto, and Kumamoto in Japan as well as places in America, Belgium and the Netherlands. It is a complete collection of her works, marked by her distinctive humor, color, and composition.

The Special Photographer Award, which is given to a photographer associated with Hokkaido was given to Michael Kenna. He is an internationally acclaimed photographer renowned for works whose poeticism is thought to be reminiscent of ink painting. It may be that the jury overlooked him as a candidate for this award because he is already advanced in his career. An Englishman living in America, Michael Kenna vigorously takes photos of sceneries both in and out of country. He feels a deep connection to Hokkaido. Related photos are included in the collection simply titled "Hokkaido", with the famous oak tree by Lake Kussharo, affectionately known as the Kenna tree, an outstanding example. The book "Forms of Japan" comprises choice photos of Japan from Hokkaido to Okinawa, the fruits of a thirty year effort. These two collections present works complementary to the nature of Japan in ways even its residents never imagined.

The Hidano Kazuemon Award, presented to a photographer who has made a special contribution to a particular region, was given to Yoshimi Ikemoto. He has taken many photos of things in and around Tottori, which is the center of the Sanin region. Over the course of his thirty year labor, he has visited old-fashioned, individually run shops such as shoe shops, plant nurseries, mills, barber shops, and traditional artisan shops, all of which have made it into "Kinsei miseya ko" series. In these photographs of a world trapped in the Showa era, time stands still; each shop owner has a unique character and a story to tell. In the ever-presence of mass market uniformity, these photos are a precious reminder of more personal individual human experiences and places.

This year, the Overseas Photographer Award was presented to a photographer from Colombia. Colombia has suffered a long period of anxiety brought on by civil war and drug cartel activities. However, since 2002, President Uribe worked to restore safety to the country. As of 2007, an international photo festival, FOTOGRÁFICA BOGOTÁ, is held biannually. With the cooperation of the locals, juror Aki Kusumoto conducted a search for talented photographers, of whom 12 were nominated. Ranging from the up-and-coming to veterans of their crafts, all the nominees represent contemporary Colombia in their works. Among these, Oscar Muñoz received the majority vote. Held in several museums including the Jeu de Paume in Paris, the

exhibition “Protographs” presents a dynamic installation of themes of memories and disappearance [death] utilizing imagery of smoke and water.

This is the 32nd year of the Higashikawa Photography Awards. We in the jury are confident that we have chosen a group of excellent photographic artists worthy of recognition in this festival sponsored by the “Culture Capital of Photography.” This festival did not come about overnight, and it is owed to more than the ability and knowledge of the jury. It depends upon the support of many people around the world who sympathize with the purposes of the Higashikawa International Photo Festival and the accumulated efforts of the people of Higashikawa in the 32 years since the “Photography Town Manifesto” was announced in 1985. The manifesto of the “Culture Capital of Photography” stated that the purpose of the festival was to “encounter the photography of the world in this small town, make contact with people from all over the world, and produce happy smiles around the world.” As a result, Higashikawa will “take a role in creating connections between photographic culture and the people of the world.” In this 32nd year, we hope to step out in a new direction with the people of Higashikawa and the wonderful artists who have received awards.

### **The Jury Committee of the 32nd Higashikawa Awards**

Katsumi Asaba <Art Director>-----24<sup>th</sup> –  
Michiko Kasahara <Photo Critic>-----23<sup>rd</sup> –  
Aki Kusumoto <Photo Critic, Curator>-----25<sup>th</sup> –  
Osamu Ueno <Photo Critic>-----31<sup>st</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 Overseas Photographer Award

Oscar Muñoz

Lives in Cali, Colombia



Photo by Fernell Franco

Born in Popayán, Colombia. Oscar Muñoz studied art at the Escuela de Bellas Artes in Cali during the 1970s. As an art student, he began making drawings based on photographic images and, although his studies did not specifically include photography or audiovisual media, these media and their relationships to reality and meaning-making have subsequently become central to his artistic practice.

Muñoz is also known for his use of ephemeral materials, in poetic reflections upon memory and mortality. In the 1980s and 1990s, Colombia was wracked with a war between feuding drug cartels and the Colombian government. “My work today,” Muñoz writes, “is based on my endeavor to understand the mechanism developed by a society which has ultimately suffered the routinization of war... A past, a present and in all likelihood a future full of violent events on a daily basis, which are stubbornly repeated, in a practically identical fashion.”

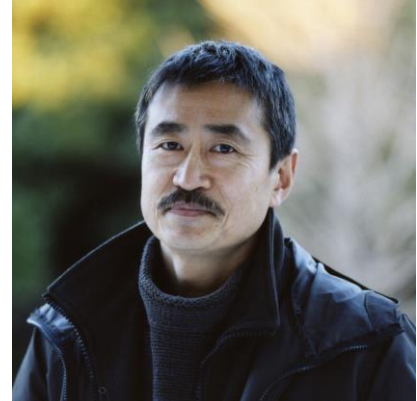
The “Protographs” exhibition, held at several venues in Colombia, Buenos Aires, Lima and Paris, showcases his career that has spanned nearly forty years. “Protographs” could be seen as a potential photograph, the image just before being frozen in the photograph.

In 2006, Muñoz founded *Lugar a Dudas*, a cultural center and residency program for artists. Located in Cali, *Lugar a Dudas* (space for doubts) has become a center for young artists to work through ideas and participate in a dialogue and public debate about art and politics.

## The Domestic Photographer Award

**Taishi Hirokawa**

**Lives in Tokyo**



Born in Zushi City, Kanagawa in 1950. Established his office in 1974. His photos have been prolific in magazines and advertising.

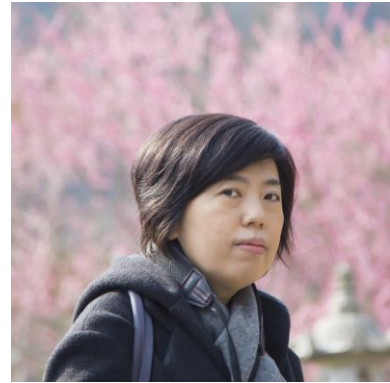
Following the Fukushima Atomic power plant accident, his photography book “STILL CRAZY - Nuclear Power Plants As Seen in Japanese Landscapes -“ (Korinsha Press, 1994) gained a higher reputation. He photographed all 53 power plants in Japan in an effort to capture the modern Japanese landscape. Although invisible beyond the seacoast, his photos thrust before us the hidden reality of the national power plants project. Started at the same time as “STILL CRAZY”, the ongoing series “TIMESCAPES” captures double exposures of the great rocks and mountains in the deserts of the world against the night sky using long exposure to combine the images under the daylight. He expresses in photography the power of nature which surpasses human wisdom. The photography book “Babel - ORDINARY LANDSCAPES -” (AKAACA Art Publishing Inc. 2015) contains images of highway construction, sites of building destruction, mountains stripped of gravel, and disaster stricken areas. His works express his viewpoint of the contrast between desire-driven human actions which affect nature and nature’s indifference and timelessness. They serve as a superlative criticism of civilization.

He received the Photography Award of the Kodansha Publishing Culture Award with “Family Portraits” in 1986. He won the Photographic Society of Japan Award for “TIMESCAPES - Mugen Senritsu” (Aoki Shoten Co.) and his solo exhibition in 2003. Recent exhibitions include “BABEL - ordinary landscapes -” (CANON Gallery S, Tokyo, 2005), “TIMESCAPES 2016” (Taisho University ESPACE KUU, Tokyo, 2016). He was a professor at Tokyo Polytechnic University from 2011 to 2015.

## The New Photographer Award

### Yoko Ikeda

Lives in Tokyo



Born in Kanazawa City, Ishikawa in 1965. Graduated from the Research Department of Tokyo College of Photography in 1995.

She continually strives to capture nonchalant images of everyday lives in the two-dimensional surface of photography with her unique view and composition. Her first photography book “Incoming Light” (Le Pont Rouge, France, 2015) was captured in Benelux in 2013. Shadows cast by the light shining through the trees; reflections of glass and water; remnants of pebbles on the pavement--these details show the exquisiteness of color and form found in reality. Her second book, “Monkey Puzzle” (Nazraeli Press, U.S.A, 2015) spans from 2006 to 2014 and contains photographs taken in places both in and outside of Japan, including Kyoto, Okayama, Tokyo, U.S.A., and the Netherlands. Her works feature various instances of nature interwoven with the artificial, flavored by her wit and humor.

Recent solo exhibitions include “Sensation (Gallery Mestalla, Tokyo, 2015), “Monkey Puzzle (IBASHO, Antwerp, and gallery ART UNLIMITED, Tokyo, 2016). Group exhibitions include “Reflection (Place M&M2 gallery, Tokyo, 2013), “Secret Garden part 2”, (gallery ART UNLIMITED, Tokyo, 2015), “Regards de femmes, (Maison Foli, Mons, Belgium, 2015), “Contemporary Photography Asian Perspective (Lawrence Miller Gallery, New York, 2016). In 2013, She won the Philadelphia Museum of Art Purchase Award (86<sup>th</sup> Annual International Competition: Photography, The Print Center, Philadelphia).



## The Special Photographer Award

### Michael Kenna

Lives in Seattle, USA



Born in Widnes, Lancashire, England in 1953. He majored in art at Banbury School of Art in Banbury, Oxfordshire and majored in commercial photography at London College of Printing in London, England. He moved to and began working as a photographer in San Francisco in 1977.

He started taking photos in Hokkaido in 2002. Beginning with the oak tree by Lake Kussharo known as the Kenna tree, which has since been cut down, he has continually taken photographs of various places in Hokkaido. His subjects are not limited to wild nature; he also photographs man-made fences and pylons as well as nameless trees. His works are a rich poetry of contemplation and communication with the subjects. He published a photography book “Hokkaido” (Nazraeli Press / Shuppan Kyodosha) in 2006. It is highly esteemed for his sublime silver print, making use of his unique aesthetic to capture minimalist landscapes and subtle shadows and subtle shadows, these evoke the essence of ink-painting and haiku poems.

He continually takes photographs with various themes in places such as Europe, the U.S.A, Asia and North Africa. He has published more than 50 photography books. His major exhibitions include “In Japan” (Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, 2006), “Michael Kenna-Landscape and “Memories” (Kushiro Art Museum, Hokkaido, 2009) and “Forms of Japan”, (gallery ART UNLIMITED, 2016 ). He published “Forms of Japan” (Prestel Pub, Germany, 2015 ) last year, a culmination of his photographs from the last thirty years.

## The Hidano Kazuemon Award

### Yoshimi Ikemoto

Lives in Tottori



Born in Tottori City, Tottori in 1944. He discovered photography at the newspaper company where he held his first job. He graduated from Nippon Photography Institute (now known as Japan Institute of Photography And Film, Osaka) in 1967. In 1970, he established the Ikemoto Yoshimi Photography Office in his hometown of Tottori city. Beginning in 1977, he worked for the late Ueda Shoji for nearly 20 years as an assistant. He continued to take photographs of the Sanin area featuring its regional culture as a theme. He received a Tottori City Culture Award in 1999. He revamped his office and opened the Ikemoto Yoshimi Little Museum of Photography to promote and nurture Sanin culture this spring.

In the 1970's, he began a series called "Sode fureaumo". These snapshots portray the spirituality and memories of the Sanin area. Meanwhile, he also continued the ongoing series "Kinsei miseya ko". This began with a photo of a barber in Aoya-cho, Tottori city in 1983. It has since expanded to include a warehouse, shoe shop, laundromat, fishmonger and candy store—about 60 industries and over 100 stores. In addition to the Polaroid Gallery Toranomom (Tokyo, 1986), he has exhibited his works at Nikon Salon (Tokyo, Osaka, 2015) and other places as well as overseas galleries.

His most prominent works are "Sode fureaumo" (G.I.P. Tokyo, 1993), "Ikemoto Yoshimi Collection: A hundred Scenes of Tottori" (The Tottori Bank, 1999), " Kinsei miseya ko" (Godo Printing Company Limited, 2006), " Portraits of Inpaku: memories of the future".

## Higashikawa International Photography Festival

### Photo Fiesta 2016

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

Date: 30 July (Sat.) – 31 August (Wed.), 2016

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:

Oscar Muñoz (The Overseas Photographer Award)

Taishi Hirokawa (The Domestic Photographer Award)

Yoko Ikeda (The New Photographer Award)

Michael Kenna (The Special Photographer Award)

Yoshimi Ikemoto (The Hidano Kazuemon Award)

#### **Event Schedule:**

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

15:30-17:00 Opening Reception

31 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 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 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.