

Press Release



2020

The 36th Higashikawa Awards

The Town of Photography
Culture Capital of Photography

Information

Higashikawa International Photography Festival Office

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HIGASHIKAWA, KAMIKAWA-GUN, HOKKAIDO

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The 36th Higashikawa Award Winners

◆Overseas Photographer Award: Gregori MAIOFIS (Russia)

For his photobook, *“Proverbs”* (Nazraeli Press, 2014), *“Mixed Reality”* series (2018-) as well as related works.

◆Domestic Photographer Award: NAGASHIMA Yurie

For her exhibitions, *“And a Pinch of Irony with a Hint of Love”* (Tokyo Photographic Art Museum, 2017), *“To Create, To Bring Up... as a Mother, as an Artist / Yurie Nagashima”* (Chihoro Art Museum Tokyo, 2018), and her book, *“The Flower Named in an Unknown Word / The Landscape Not in My Memory / The Book that Can Not Be Read by My Fingers”* (Yokohama Civic Art Gallery Azamino, 2019), as well as related works.

◆New Photographer Award: UEHARA Sayaka

For her exhibition, *“The Others”* (Canon Open Gallery1, INTERFACE-Shomei Tomatsu Lab., 2019).

◆Special Photographer Award: TAKAHASHI Kentaro

For his photo exhibition, *“A Red Hat”* (Nikon Salon Ginza, Osaka, 2019)

◆Hidano Kazuemon Award: KIKAI Hiroh

For his continued photography of Tokyo: *“Persona: The Final Chapter”* (Chikuma Shobo, 2019), *“Persona”* (Soshisha, 2003), *“Tokyo Mutan: Labyrinthos”* (Soshisha, 2007), *“Tokyo Labyrinth”* (Shogakukan, 1999), among others.

Commentary on the Selection of the 36th Higashikawa Photography Awards

UENO Osamu

Higashikawa Photography Award Jury Committee

Judging of the 36th Higashikawa Photography Awards was held on February 13th, 2020. The nominees this year included 57 for the Domestic Photographer Award, 66 for the New Photographer Award, 28 for the Special Photographer Award, 28 for the Hidano Kazuemon Award, and 26 for the Overseas Photographer Award. As with other years, the morning was spent viewing and discussing photo books and resources while the afternoon saw judging of 181 artists for five awards. Although one juror was absent this year, we took her recommendations submitted in advance into account, thereby judging was actually carried out by a total of eight jurors.

Similar to last year, final voting for the Domestic Photographer Award was evenly split. After repeated discussion and voting, NAGASHIMA Yurie was chosen from the deadlock. This is for her unequalled original pursuit of expression and creativity in the radical questioning of traditional relationships between society, expression, and family in her three large-scale exhibitions held from 2017 to 2019: *“And a Pinch of Irony with a Hint of Love”* at the Tokyo Photographic Art Museum, *“To Create, To Bring Up.. as a Mother, as an Artist”* at Chihoro Art Museum Tokyo, and *“The Flower Named in an Unknown Word / The Landscape Not in My Memory / The Book that Can Not Be Read by My Fingers”* at Yokohama Civic Art Gallery Azamino. In the end, there was agreement to award her the Domestic Photographer Award as “during the last three years, her work has shown meaning within in the history of photography and photographic expression, as well as the future.”, which appropriately meets the requirement of the award.

Regarding the New Photographer Award, which sees hotly-contested battles each year, UEHARA Sayaka and YAMAMOTO Ayaka stood at the final judging stage with Uehara coming out winner by a narrow margin. Her work, while at first orthodox-looking, is full of respect for Okinawa photography up to now while updates it, and her snapshots of daily landscapes has received high recognition. Her exhibition, *“The Others”*, the subject of the award, was held in conjunction with the photography project *“Okinawa Photography Typhoon: From North From South”*, just like the silent eye of a typhoon moving from the south to the north.

TAKAHASHI Kentaro was selected for the Special Photographer Award for his work documenting the daily lives of MATSUMOTO Goro and HISHIYA Ryoichi, who were imprisoned in 1941 during the “Life Drawing Incident” whereby teachers and students were oppressed at the Asahikawa Teacher’s Training College Art Club in Asahikawa. Those seized books and painting cannot be brought back, and the only things remaining are some photos of paintings captured in the black and white negative film. By assembling the past and the present through photography, his exhibition, “*A Red Hat*” gives evidence that the incident has not ended.

For the Hidano Kazuemon Award, KIKAI Hiroh was selected for this continued photography of Tokyo residents and scenery over several decades. His portraits of Tokyoites with the same background of Senso-ji temple, and the cityscapes showing the daily life of residents, which were photographed through his extensive walks in Tokyo, reflect the sentiment of one city. This work is no doubt fitting for an award that recognizes continuing work on regional people, nature, and culture.

For the Overseas Photographer Award, after considering explanations based on the careful research of KUSUMOTO Aki, the Russian photographer Gregori MAIOFIS was chosen for such works as “*Proverbs*”, which satirically expresses the social and political conditions of modern society. Up to his latest series, “*Mixed Reality*”, which focuses on people who can only see the world through headsets, his work is consistently full of irony and wit, somewhere in between fiction and reality.

Sitting around a round table and making decisions over discussion on the works and the nature of the awards is a typical scene of the Jury Committee of the Higashikawa Awards each year. Of course, there are differences in opinion which are not always resolved. However, being sensitive to the changing times and spirit, and where having no direction is a direction, is characteristic of the Higashikawa Awards and perhaps the path the Jury Committee should follow. From the “Declaration of Town of Photography” of 1985 to the proclamation of “culture capital of photography” of 2014, the Higashikawa Awards continues to change, led forward by the great effort of the progressive people of Higashikawa.

The Jury Committee of the 36th Higashikawa Photography Awards

Anju <Photographer> -----36th –
UENO Osamu <Photo Critic>-----31st–
KITANO Ken <Photographer>-----33rd–
KURAISHI Shino <Photo Critic, Poet>-----35th –
SHIBASAKI Tomoka <Novelist>-----34th –
NIWA Harumi <Curator>-----33rd –
HARA Koichi <Designer>-----34th –
MITSUDA Yuri <Art Critic>-----27th –

We are truly thankful to Ms. Irina Chmyreva and Mr. Andrey Martynov for their professional cooperation with the research carried out in Russia.

The Overseas Photographer Award

Gregori MAIOFIS

Lives in St. Petersburg, Russia



Photo by Ivan Sorokin

Born in 1970 in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) to a family of artists. Was taught drawing, painting, and printmaking by his father from his childhood. Studied in Faculty of Graphics, in the I. E. Repin Institute (Academy of Arts) in St. Petersburg. In 1991, shortly before the collapse of the Soviet Union, moved with his family to Los Angeles. In 1995, returned back to his home town, where he has been living and working ever since.

Photography has been his prime medium since the early 2000s after exploring various media such as painting, graphics and video. In 2000–2002 he created his first photographic project “*Krylov's Fables*”, followed by “*Tarot Decks*” (2003). He gave the allegorical contents and titles in these works and applied collage and colors. By meeting bromoil printing similar to a blended technique of oil painting and etching, he acquired better ways of expressing his world with the photography he took in this real world.

“*Proverbs*” (2005-2015) such as works with the satirical photographs of a voting monkey and a bear reading Lenin, along with “*The Taste for Russian Ballet*” which captured a ballet dancer and a circus bear has become his representative works. In 2014 a monograph based on “*Proverbs*” was published by Nazraeli Press (USA). In his latest “*Mixed Reality*” series (2018-), he produces photographs in which he caustically and humorously criticizes people who can't face the reality in the modern society. Held the solo exhibition at Aslan Chekhoyev Novy Museum and published the book “*Mixed Reality*” in 2020. Has held numerous exhibitions in and outside the country and gained attention internationally.

<Artist Statements>

It is a great honor to be the first Russian recipient of the Higashikawa Overseas Photographer Award and I would like to thank Higashikawa Town for this opportunity to bring my art to Japan.

My presentation includes some of the best images I have created over the years: the staged compositions from “*Proverbs*” and “*Taste for Russian Ballet*”, and also works from my most recent project, “*Mixed Reality*”. This series, in which characters wear the mixed reality headsets, was started in 2018, and it is still an ongoing project. I look forward to this unique opportunity to visit Higashikawa and, hopefully, create compositions for my new series.

Gregori MAIOFIS

The Domestic Photographer Award

NAGASHIMA Yurie

Lives in Tokyo



Born in Tokyo in 1973. Received PARCO Prize in URBANART #2 for her and her family portrait in the nude while at Department of Visual Communication Design, Musashino Art University. Gained attention as a photographer forerunning the “Girls Photography” trend in the 1990s. Finding a disparity between the media reputation focusing her nude and femininity and her practice as an artist, she went to the United States and received a MFA from California Institute of the Arts. Received the 26th Kimura Ihei Award for photography book *“Pastime Paradise”* (Madora Publishing Co. Ltd, 2001). Studied feminism at Masters degree in arts and science at Musashi University since 2011 and finished in 2015. Published *“from their Girls Photography to our Girly Photography”* (Daifuku Shorin) in 2020 based on her master’s thesis critically reviewing and reevaluating the “Girls Photography” connected to the global feminism and art trend.

In the solo exhibition *“And a Pinch of Irony with a Hint of Love”* (Tokyo Photographic Art Museum, 2017), she presented an installation focusing on a woman’s life course as well as her earlier representative self-portraits and her family series. In the exhibition *“To Create, To Bring Up... as a Mother, as an Artist / Yurie Nagashima”* (Chihiro Art Museum Tokyo, 2018), she showed several series including her son’s childhood photographs. *“About HOME”* series questions the creating act for women who have always been tied to women’s roles as well as the works with the theme of “one-thousand stitches” women collected for their family during the World War II.

In *“The Flower Named in an Unknown Word / The Landscape Not in My Memory / The Book that Can Not Be Read by My Fingers”* (Yokohama Civic Art Gallery Azamino, 2019), with the inspirations she got from the dialogue with a totally blind person, she exhibited photographs which question the relationship between photographs, texts and memories. Keeps producing works which delve into the uneasiness of the society and how women are with the clue of the relationships of her families and people she is familiar with.

<Artist Statements>

While I gained many important things from holding solo and two person exhibitions in succession for three and a half years from 2016, I had to face the reality that I was living on the edge in poverty. I hoped to continue my career as artist as something beyond just self satisfaction, but there were many days where I realized that my work and myself had no value because I could not be financially independent. After knowing that I had won a Higashikawa Award, it felt like a sign that it was okay to believe in myself and continue ahead, and I felt encouraged. I would like to thank all of those who took the time to look at my unskillful work.

What kind of statement can reflect what “art” is? How can we create a standard that shows if “value” exists or not? This is something that I have constantly pursued in the 30 years since I started photography. Through my distrust of “Girls Photography,” I came to know about social constructivism. Keeping the principle of “the personal is political” close to my heart, I hope to continue to live and make art without quitting.

NAGASHIMA Yurie

The New Photographer Award

UEHARA Sayaka

Lives in Okinawa



Born in Okinawa in 1993. Graduated from Tokyo Zokei University in 2016. Received Zokei Award 2015 for her graduation work “*White Season*” in which she tried to capture Okinawan everyday scenery as an extension of someone’s life, not the existing Okinawa image by symbolic interpretation as something to be consumed. Went back to Okinawa and continued shooting after graduation.

Chosen to “Okinawa Photography Typhoon: From North From South”, project to discover and present young photographers by PHOTONESIA OKINAWA, which honors late Tomatsu Shomei’s contributions, disseminates photography knowledge and culture and actively promotes various projects to nurture photography-related human resources, she had an exhibition “*The Others*” both in Okinawa and Tokyo (Canon Open Gallery1, INTERFACE-Shomei Tomatsu Lab., 2019). She exhibited a series of photographs taken for about 3 years from 2016 to April 2019, which projected the moments that accidentally touched someone’s time in familiar landscape and the history and problems of Okinawa lying in even very small living spaces.

By focusing the fine texture and expressions of the things lit up under the bright sunshine, she keeps taking photographs carefully capturing the memories and scars that appear in Okinawa landscape.

<Artist Statements>

I am extremely happy to receive the New Photographer Award as I did not expect it. *The Others*, for which the award was given, was my first solo exhibition, made possible by the help of many people. I would like to thank everyone from the bottom of my heart.

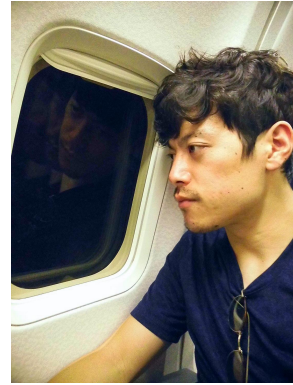
What appears in photographs are clues for thoughts. I want to continue to pursue photography as a way to continue to imagine with distance and to prevent all the details from being lost. Being chosen for this award is great motivation for me to continue my work from now. Thank you very much.

UEHARA Sayaka

The Special Photographer Award

TAKAHASHI Kentaro

Lives in Tokyo



Born in Yokohama in 1989. Graduated from School of Social Informatics, Aoyama Gakuin University in 2012. After graduation, he learned photography from Andreas Seibert, a Swiss photographer. Started a project with a theme of fashion and inner thoughts of young Japanese men in 2013. Won the Conscientious Portfolio Competition 2014 and the 9th Reminders Photography Stronghold for “*Riverbed*” capturing people’s lives along the Tamagawa, the river which has been a motif featured by many artists in history. After receiving the award, taking on a request by one of the reviewers, photo editor of LeMonde, a French newspaper, he took photos of Hiroshima commemorating the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombing and they were printed in the August 6, 2015 issue.

Started a project “*Tomatoes, a bird, Takeko and Koichi*” in 2017 visiting his grandparents in Pippu, Hokkaido recording their everyday lives. In the same year, he also started visiting MATSUMOTO Goro (born in 1920) living in Otofuke town and HISHIYA Ryoichi (born in 1921) living in Asahikawa to interview about the “Life-drawing Case” that occurred in prewar Hokkaido. “Life-drawing education” is an art education conducted in and around Asahikawa attempting to effect change through observing and drawing their everyday lives carefully. Members of Asahikawa Teacher’s Training College Art Club at the time, Matsumoto and Hishiya, were charged and arrested for violating the Peace Preservation Law for painting sincere representations of their daily life scenes. Held an exhibition “*A Red hat*”, which displayed photographs of their daily lives in 2019 (Nikon Salon, Ginza, Osaka). Will publish a photo book, “*A Red hat*” (AKAAKAsha) in June, 2020.

<Artist Statements>

Being awarded this prize was only made possible because HISHIYA Ryoichi and MATSUMOTO Goro, who have lived in good health for almost a century, have allowed me into their lives. Despite my suspicious job title as a “freelance photographer,” one with no lineage, they allowed me to brazenly follow their routines from having meals to lodging and so on. For this, I cannot thank them enough.

The subject matter of “A Red Hat” is based on the “Life Drawing Case” which occurred at the Asahikawa Teacher’s School Art Club in 1941. Even though it took place almost 80 years ago, I am constantly asking myself what my attitude should be to the current intolerance of the world, which seemingly resembles to the conditions of those days.

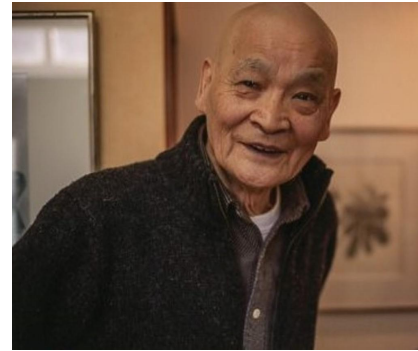
The fact that I was given such an opportunity in the midst of all this, I feel that there is still a possibility that my photographs may become a “thought provocation”. Once again, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all the people who have been involved with me until now. I hope we can continue our relationship to the future.

TAKAHASHI Kentaro

The Hidano Kazuemon Award

KIKAI Hiroh

Lives in Kanagawa



Born in Sagae (former Daigo-mura), Yamagata in 1945. Started working for Yamagata prefecture in 1963. After retirement, he was taught by Fukuda Sadayoshi, philosopher, at Hosei University, Faculty of Letters, Dept. of Philosophy. After going through various jobs such as a truck driver, longline tuna fishing boat crew, and darkroom technician, he became a photographer.

Started taking portraits in Senso-ji temple in 1973 to capture the fundamental role of human existence through photography. Won The Photographic Society of Japan, Newcomer's Award and the 13th Ina Nobuo Award for *"ECCE Homo:Portraits of Kings"* (YATATE Publishing). Keeps taking portraits of the local people in Asakusa for nearly half a century and keeps publishing photography books such as *"Ya-Chimata Kings Corridor"* (Misuzu Shobo, 1996), *"PERSONA"* (Soshisha Publishing, 2003, the 23rd Domon Ken Award, The Photographic Society of Japan award), *"Asakusa Portraits"* (Steidl, 2008), *"Tokyo Portraits"* (Crevis, 2011), *"Ordinary people"* (Chikuma Shobo, 2014), *"Persona: The Final Chapter"* (2005-2018).

Along with Asakusa works, since 1973, he has worked on "portraits of space" series which focuses on depicting people's presence and smells by the things on street corners and alleys trying to take landscape photographs that show people's essence and sense of values just like portraits do. Published *"Tokyo Labyrinth"* (Shogakukan, 1999) and *"Tokyo Mutan: Labyrinthos"* (Soshisha, 2007) as a photography book capturing town portraits as the place where people live their own lives drifting around between dream and reality.

While shooting in Japan, he has also kept shooting India since his first visit in 1979, and Anatolia, Turkey trying to explore the texture of the human nature in people's deed and look lost in consumerism. Repeatedly visiting the same place and gazing at human activities, he keeps producing photographs which question what a human is.

<Artist Statements>

Thank you very much for choosing me for this year's Hidano Kazuemon Award. For me, as someone who was raised in a farming village, it is a pleasure to receive this award from a town that also works with nature. Because of this award, I feel I can continue to climb the mountain of photography. Thank you very much.

KIKAI Hiroh

Higashikawa International Photography Festival Photo Fiesta 2020

Award Winners' Exhibition

Date: 1 August (Sat.) – 2 September (Wed.), 2020

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:

Gregori MAIOFIS (The Overseas Photographer Award)

NAGASHIMA Yurie (The Domestic Photographer Award)

UEHARA Sayaka (The New Photographer Award)

TAKAHASHI Kentaro (The Special Photographer Award)

KIKAI Hiroh (The Hidano Kazuemon Award)

Event Schedule:

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

15:30-17:00 Opening Reception

2 August (Sun.) 13:00-17:30 Panel Discussion

Panelists: award winners, judges and guests

※ There is a possibility that schedule may be modified related to the current coronavirus situation.

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.

The 36th Higashikawa Awards
Award Winners Works



Taste for Russian Ballet
from the series "Taste for Russian Ballet"
2008



Torn blanket (about home)
2015



from the series "The Others"
Okinawa
2016-2019



"Self-portrait in red hat" which was painted
by Ryoichi Hishiya on February 11, 1943.
Asahikawa, Hokkaido
2017



A girl who was like a dragonfly
2011