Eikoh Hosoe: Photographs 1960-1980

Constance McCabe

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EIKOH HOSOE: Photographs 1960-1980

by

Constance McCabe

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
MASTEr OF FINE ARTS

MFA PHOTOGRAPHY PROGRAM
SCHOOL OF PHOTOGRAPHIC ARTS AND SCIENCES
ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

June, 1982

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EIKOH HOSOE:

Photographs 1960 - 1980

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

I intend to organize and curate three exhibitions of the photographs of Eikoh Hosoe. I will research the work of the photographer as the artist presents it and perceives it. The research will involve Hosoe as he fits into the history of photography of Japan, and his impact on the photographic community of Japan and abroad. Through the joint cooperation of RIT, Visual Studies Workshop, the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House and Light Gallery, New York City, I will organize and edit the photographs to form three groups of the artist's work to be concurrently exhibited at RIT's MFA Photo Gallery, at IMP/GEH, and at Visual Studies Workshop.

BACKGROUND

For many years I have been interested in the art of Japan. Through recent acquaintances with several Japanese students, photographers and linguists, my interest has broadened to include the history and language of Japan, as well as the artistic approach to photography in Japan.

Since my graduate study commenced at RIT last year, I have been interested in the possibility of executing an exhibition involving Japanese photography. In order to provide myself with an historical foundation as a background for curating a possible exhibition, I researched the history of nineteenth and twentieth century photography in Japan.

Concurrently, I discussed various possibilities for Japanese photographic exhibitions with friends who are directly or indirectly involved with Japanese culture, the language and the photographic museum and gallery community of Japan. Eikoh Hosoe is the most active of Japanese artist/photographers. His influence is recognized internationally. This recognition
as well as my personal enthusiasm toward his work has
directed me to endeavor to gather all the resources available
to me in order to execute these exhibitions of his photographs.
Perhaps the audience that views these exhibitions might gain the
the same enthusiastic appreciation of Hosoe's photographic
expression which I enjoy.

PROCEDURE

Visual Studies Workshop and the International Museum of
Photography at George Eastman House holds a great deal
of Hosoe's early work. Light Gallery in New York City
represents Hosoe in the United States. Through their
cooperation and that of Rochester Institute of Technology,
and in direct conjuntion with the artist, three concurrent
exhibitions will be presented, representing Hosoe's develop-
ment of artistic concerns throughout the past twenty years.

This project will require correspondence with the artist
and with his representative gallery. It will be necessary
to travel to New York in order to supplement my research in
the archives of the Eastman House and Visual Studies Workshop.
These resources might provide a resource for exhibition
material. I will curate the exhibitions, editing the artwork
and designing the exhibitions. I will also arrange for
publicity.
Introduction

This project was initiated with an appreciation of the work of Eikoh Hosoe; I had not met him until his visit to Rochester for the occasion of this project's completion.

It was difficult to find specific information about Mr. Hosoe. Although he speaks excellent English, there is little written about him in this language. This fact is surprising when one considers how well-reknown his work is not only in this country, but internationally as well. Many of the statements in this report, therefore, are based not on bibliographical sources. The information is based on my experiences during the preparation of the exhibition and catalogue and during Mr. Hosoe's visit to Rochester.

I am indebted to Mr. Hosoe and to Dr. Russell Kraus, director of RIT's School of Photographic Arts and Sciences for making this project possible. Their dedication as educators, their patience and their trust allowed me the privilege of executing the project. Thanks are also due to the classmates, faculty, family and friends who helped so much.
EIKOH HOSOE: the Photographer

Eikoh Hosoe is undoubtedly Japan's outstanding figure in contemporary fine arts photography. Thematically, Hosoe's work concentrates on the human figure. From this elemental subject, his concepts expand to visually express his concerns with the human spirit.

Raised in a Shinto shrine (his father was a Shinto priest) in Tokyo, Hosoe's youth was spiritually and artistically rich. His early awareness and involvement with Zen has influenced his work throughout his career. On the walls of his home as he grew up were the traditional woodblock prints of Japan, some erotic. From a western point of view, the influence of this sort of visual background seems outwardly apparent. Conventions of design—the contrast and formal composition, man as dark and woman as light—these are the building blocks of much of Japanese conventional 2-dimensional art, such as the Ukiyo-e print. Yet to Hosoe, these elements, although very traditionally significant, are somewhat superficial. His photographs are meditations. They are, in fact, beautiful and seductive human figure studies. But to listen to Hosoe speak of his photographs, the viewer is seduced further. The strength of his already powerful photographs is augmented by the words describing his experiences while making the images.
Hosoe photographs as a means to producing a fine published piece. The book is his art. He always has specific intentions when preparing each piece, yet he does not expect each reader to interpret the piece as he has conceived it. Although each photograph holds personal significance to Hosoe, he writes no accompanying text. Instead, others have written for him, and interpret his work in various esoteric ways. In the preface of KAMAITACHI, for example, Shuzo Takiguchi wrote a sort of abstract prose. A mood is created by this preface, and when it is combined with the disquieting imagery and the preciousness of the book format (each page must be unfolded individually) an allusion is made to Hosoe's emotional intent. Although there is no obvious literal message to be found in KAMAITACHI, the emotional message is clear: the evil mythical sharp-toothed weasel, "Kamaitachi," is a memory of his youth which would have been more comfortably forgotten. It stems from his childhood wartime evacuation from Tokyo to the countryside where he felt alone and afraid, and where Kamaitachi lurked waiting in the rice fields (see catalogue).

The sense of esoteric symbolism is recurrent in all of Hosoe's work. His subjects are abstracted, either compositionally or conceptually. In one of his two most well-known books, ORDEAL BY ROSES, this abstraction is evident. Figures are left in deep shadow, extremely foreshortened or placed on a ground that is perceptually ambiguous.
EMBRACE is a powerful series of abstracted nude forms. Man is dark and woman is light. This tonal concept stems from the traditional Japanese artistic conventions used to depict genders, in such arts as the Kabuki theater or the woodblock print. Hosoe utilizes this concept in his work, exaggerates the convention by means of careful close cropping and exaggerated but tonally controlled contrast, and combines a photographic "reality" of subject matter to present a strong, abstract sensuality.

In ORDEAL BY ROSES, Hosoe photographs the Japanese novelist and playwrite Yukio Mishima, as the mysterious central character in the book, often represented with a rose somewhere in the image. To Mishima, the rose is a symbol of universality—a symbol of extremes within oneself. Mishima, the notorious Japanese traditionalist (he organized a private samurai army) and homosexual, collaborated with Hosoe in the production of ORDEAL BY ROSES and wrote the preface to this masterpiece of bookmaking. The book was first released as KILLED BY ROSES in 1963 but Mishima later asked that it be renamed "Ordeal by Roses" for the 1970 republication for two reasons. "Ordeal" somewhat more literally translates from the Japanese. But the word "killed" in the title was more bothersome to Mishima, and he preferred that it be changed. Mishima never saw the completed new edition of ORDEAL BY ROSES. He died in 1970 by means of ritual suicide in front of his personal army.

The spiritual extremes seen in Hosoe's work clearly reflect his
life experience. Perhaps the trend seen in his work after the completion of EMBRACE and ORDEAL BY ROSES is evident of a longterm calm in his life. His work has drifted from a dramatic and aggressive confrontation with his subject matter to a quietly meditative, almost naive and even humorous approach. This naivety, however, must be discounted once Hosoe is heard describing his work. The naivety becomes charm. To cite an example, Hosoe has worked on a series he calls "Pubic Hair." The images, superficially, seem to be rather ordinary photographs of the nude. But as Hosoe describes the restrictions of censorship in Japan, the intent of these images is redefined. Each culture has its limits for censorship. In Japan, pubic hair is considered inappropriate for public viewing. For centuries pornography has been an important part of Japan's artistic tradition. Yet in today's Japan, the minister of finance (the department of whom, because of tax purposes, makes censorship decisions) regards pubic hair as obscene. Hosoe himself serves on a committee which affects the final decisions regarding censorship. As a statement against censorship, Hosoe has produced this unfinished series of images. The "Pubic Hair Butterfly," for example, is a picture of a woman's pelvic area with a bow covering the pubic area. Although some pubic hair is visible, Hosoe managed to convince the censorship committee that the bow covered the body to an extent significant enough to make the image ambiguous: was it actually pubic hair? If so, where did it begin or end? This argument worked with another of his images in which a reclining female nude was bathed in very contrasty light. The pelvic region was so
brightly lit that the pubic hair became invisible. The viewer knows what is there, but my means of the photographic process, censorship is sidestepped.

The more light-hearted approach Hosoe is taking towards his work is difficult to understand without Hosoe's personal explanation. He is constantly working on new ideas and concepts, some more easily appreciated than others. His current project is that of photographing the neo-baroque architecture of Antonio Gaudi for another publication. The images are very abstract, and are reminiscent of the cut-paper work of Fredrick Sommer. The public reaction to the small number of images seen in this country has been somewhat unenthusiastic. But the images are intriguing for two very important reasons. After twelve years, Hosoe's work is leaning again toward the metaphysically abstract, and even Hosoe sees his "Gaudi" as reviving EMBRACE. This, along with the fact that much of "Gaudi" is in color (and none of his color images have ever been seen in this country) makes the "Gaudi" series another provocative project.
Eikoh Hosoe: Photographs 1960-1980
Discussion

A strongly related series of events and circumstances led me to propose my thesis project as an exhibition of Japanese photography. My background included growing up in an ethnically varied section of Los Angeles with a strong Japanese-American neighborhood. My oldest friend became a Japanese linguist, and had been encouraging me to visit Japan for some time. In graduate school, I researched the history of Japanese photography, anticipating a thesis relating to the topic. At the same time I worked as a research assistant to James Reilly, the noted 19th century albumen print conservation scientist. During my work with him I learned that the heyday of 19th century Japanese photography was marked by the magnificent hand colored albumen prints of that country. I spent much of my first year in graduate school working as an intern in the conservation laboratory of the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House. This opportunity afforded me the privilege of access to the photographic archives and library. For my thesis project I considered preparing a 19th or 20th century exhibit, and due to the limited material available in Rochester, I decided to work within the modern era. At this point I consulted with a curator at Eastman House as decided to invite one contemporary Japanese photographer to participate in a
one-person exhibition to be held concurrently at RIT and George Eastman House.

Eikoh Hosoe is the most well renowned Japanese photographer internationally. I had been familiar with his work for years. He has spent time in Rochester, and he has good friends here. I decided to write to him and invite him to exhibit his photographs in Rochester, with myself as coordinator of the with myself acting as coordinator. Mr. Hosoe's prompt reply expressed his great honor to participate in such a project. It was, of course, the greater honor for me to have the privilege of working with such a fine person and great artist.

With the great support of the administration, faculty and students of RIT's School of Photography, I was physically, financially and emotionally able to carry out the project that, from the time of its inception, ballooned into a project of a magnitude which I never anticipated.

At this early point, Nathan Lyons, director of Visual Studies Workshop, invited me to hold a third exhibition. It would be an exhibition devoted to the books by which the artist is so well known and would be displayed at the Workshop. There could be no place more appropriate or prestigious than VSW to hold such an exhibition. This, complemented by the unequaled resource of scholars of the art of books, made the experience of organizing
the project an exceptional one.

With the help of Dr. Russell Kraus, Director of the School of Photographic Arts and Sciences, the possibility of preparing an exhibition catalogue would be realized. The exhibition catalogue was the major portion of the project. This design of this publication was to be complex and time-consuming, and more expensive than we could afford. I decided to ask one of the graduate students in the Communication Design program, Susan Poulakis, to work on this portion of the project. The design of the exhibition catalogue and poster qualified as her graduate thesis project, and thus set a precedent for the different schools cooperating and collaborating on mutually beneficial projects.

From this point the catalogue became a joint project. Ms. Poulakis and I shared the responsibilities of learning what went into producing a finely printed publication, finding the resources to carry out these steps, and doing so with the highest quality possible and with the least financial expense, and we were fortunate to have the School of Printing at our fingertips to use as an initial source of information.

Both Ms. Poulakis and I had vague notions of our needs for the catalogue. We knew that the duotone offset lithograph was the most practical system to reproduce fine art photography, although the process is generally more than we could afford. We sought out those people we knew from the School of Printing and the Technical
and Education Center for advice and perhaps assistance. We hoped at least to learn enough to be able to ask intelligent questions when it came time to call printers, paper companies, typesetters and binderies for price estimates. We were able to immediately locate people who were interested, not only in the project as a concept, but who were eager to become involved in the project at no cost. One person was very interested in having the chance to shoot the duotones for fine art reproduction mostly because of the subject matter and for the chance to produce printed matter of very high caliber. He knew other people in the graphic arts on campus and help make those connections for us. A graduate student teaching in the School of Printing's stripping laboratory offered to spend as much time as was necessary to strip the catalogue and poster, again at no cost to us. Those two personal contacts alone saved us at least two thousand dollars toward a job for which our budget totaled two thousand dollars. We then began to contact typesetters, with the same results: two typesetters agreed to donate their services. We saved another fifteen hundred dollars.

Anticipating the work to be done as editor of the catalogue, I had arranged to work as an intern for the Visual Studies Workshop publication, AFTERIMAGE. While working there I was able to learn some of the skills and disciplines that made the job of editing the catalogue feasible. Along with writing some book reviews, these skills included such things as notations to typesetters, conventions of publication literature that I had overlooked until this time, and the appreciation of the tedious process of writing
and rewriting until you are sure there is nothing in the text to be regretted.

The images Mr. Hosoe chose for reproduction as well as the first drafts of the catalogue text arrived on schedule, and the design of the designing of the publication commenced. Along with a great respect and understanding of eastern art and culture which is well-reflected in the catalogue design. Ms. Poulakis' refusal to compromise on the details of publication design gave me a new respect for those who exceed in her field.

Of the many considerations to be had in designing the publication, the choice of typeface was a critical one. But the choice was to be based on the size and shape of the catalogue, how much text there was to be, how many pages were to be devoted to text, how the text was to relate to the size, positions and number of reproductions, and of course, what we could financially afford regarding all these production elements. The typestyle chosen was a fine line, sans-serif, small typeface, mostly for spacially and financially economical reasons. This small typeface was criticized by few for legibility reasons, but this was a sacrifice we did not find objectionable as our option would have been to omit large portions of text.

While the early comps for the catalogue were being prepared, I worked on the first stages of editing the text. I was pleased to have received permission from Mr. Hosoe to use not only manuscripts of his own, but also to use excerpts from literature
by the late Yukio Mishima, Japanese novelist and playwright, written expressly for Mr. Hosoe. Mr. Hosoe also provided me with material for the catalogue preface by the late Nobuya Yoshimura, publisher and critic of Japanese photography. Included also were a detailed biography and an exhibition and publication list. These were all wonderful resources, but they were written by several people. The writing styles of these people or the translators were very different. It became my job to form a coherent body of text without offensively changing the tone or meaning of the works. In some cases this meant locating the publication from which the Japanese text was translated and contacting my friend in the field of Japanese linguistics for the necessary services. In several cases, only Hosoe himself could answer my questions. For the most part, however, editing the text consisted of writing and rewriting, asking advice of my thesis committee as well as the advice of those friends and family who have strong writing skills or some experience in editing manuscript.

As decisions were made regarding the design of the catalogue and poster, Mr. Hosoe was informed by mail or telephone. He seemed to trust our judgement thoroughly, and gave us complete control of the execution of the catalogue. The various institutions involved in the project were kept informed as well, and by virtue of the design progress, enthusiasm for the coming events grew.

All the time the design preparations were taking place, plans for printing was another important issue. The paper stock had to be
chosen and ordered, again within our modest means. The ink had to be chosen with specific goals in mind. We decided to try to replicate as closely as possible by means of offset lithography the look of Hosoe's photographic books, which are printed in gravure. We chose a dull coated, very bright white rather heavy-weight paper stock, to be used in conjunction with a neutral black glossy ink with a matte spot varnish. We learned what these terms meant only after we had met with numerous paper companies, printers and educational resources at RIT and VSW. from the samples we had seen, this combination seemed to suit Hosoe's taste for photograph reproduction.

While preparations were being made for the catalogue, coordination of plans for exhibition institutions was also taking place. The directors and curators agreed on dates which would overlap for at least one week, if Mr. Hosoe could, in fact be here for the events. During my correspondence with him I had a good indication of when he could be here. We were fortunate that he had planned to be in this country at the time the exhibits were tentatively scheduled, and our expenses were minimized because of these plans. We could not have afforded to pay his expenses from Tokyo, but travel expenses from Los Angeles were more within our budgetary limits. It was only by lucky coincidences and help from the School of Photographic Arts and Sciences' Dr. Russell Kraus that all the plans we had hoped for finally fell into place. By means of much correspondence and many telephone calls to and from Japan the project was realized.
Planning the exhibition was a complicated process. Because I was a student and not on the curatorial staff of the Eastman House, it was important that communication between the administration of RIT and Eastman House was clear. Meetings were held on several occasions to be sure all parties were aware of each institution's role in the project. I met alone with directors and curators and the various persons involved in exhibition preparation. On only one occasion did representatives from RIT and the Eastman House meet. The meeting served to clarify our roles concerning exhibiting the photographs and to receive permission in writing from the Eastman House's representative to mention their name in the catalogue and on the poster. The administration of Visual Studies Workshop had already expressed their trust in my judgement, so in order to protect myself and RIT I wanted to hold a meeting of this sort to avoid future complications. Another purpose for this meeting was to reclarify my role as coordinator of the exhibition, and to confirm, in the presence of witnesses, that I was to be responsible for editing the prints for the two institution's exhibits. There seemed to be no problem for either institution with the plan for me to be the acting curator of the show. With these issues settled, I was able to continue preparations for the exhibition, catalogue and related events with the knowledge that I was not working in the dark.

Specific arrangements were then made. Mr. Hosoe approved of the initial editorial decisions for the catalogue, as well as of the design plans. He worked out his travel plans to suit our
schedule, and confirmed his plans to spend a week in Rochester to be present at receptions to be held at RIT and VSW, and to appear as guest speaker at both institutions. He agreed to bring a copy of his film, NAVAL AND ATOMIC BOMB, and present it to an audience at RIT. We invited him to participate in a video project which would document his visit to Rochester, and would, perhaps, be included as part of the traveling exhibition that was to follow the Rochester events. Mr. Hosoe was agreeable to all of the propositions, and a preliminary itinerary was drawn up for his approval.

Ms. Poulakis and I learned practically every step involved in publication production, including the language of the publication world. Some of the production details included finding the proper places to contact regarding having the publication catalogued through the Library of Congress and "ISBN." With this sort of detail attended to, the final editorial manuscripts were written, approved by Hosoe, rewritten and readied for the typesetters. Problems came up that were not anticipated. Because we were not paying for the expensive jobs, our project was not first priority for a small business. We learned of the importance of back-up plans if something had gone wrong. The typesetter that we planned to use could not do the work for us in time. Fortunately, we had arranged for another typesetter to donate their services. As it turned out, the alternate typesetter did most of RIT's work through the Communications department of the administration. That department used a sophisticated
telecommunication computer typesetting system. The staff of RIT Communications had already been familiar with our project and impressed with its scope, and the person in charge of publicity arranged for the text to be put on the department's floppy disk system, then typeset through their telecommunication system.

Publicity was another major portion of the planning of the project. It is a time-consuming and expensive job to do properly. I was fortunate to have the support and cooperation of the Communications Department as well as that of the School of Photography both with labor and monetary needs. Communications arranged to have news releases sent to local, national and international periodicals and art and photography-related institutions. When the posters and catalogues were printed, hundreds were sent around the United States for publicity as well as to selected institutions and individuals all over the world.

All the final plans for the catalogue design were complete. The image sizes and placement had been decided and the type was finally set, after several frustrating revisions. The number of people involved in the catalogue production had multiplied so, that communications were difficult. It came time to prepare the duotone and line (for the text) negatives for stripping. All the original reproduction prints had to be reduced in size for the catalogue, and the poster image was to be enlarged. To gain the greatest detail possible, a fine dot screen (200 line) was to be used. David Cohn, the graphic arts specialist who donated his
skills and resources to our project, was a perfectionist. He was patient with us because he appreciated the needs of the publication and understood our financial situation. It was not easy for him to work with a printing shop with which he was not familiar, but he made it possible to find the highest quality results even though the circumstances were far from conducive to such results. He telephoned and met with the printers on several occasion to be sure that they understood each other. Fortunately, the printers were excited about our project too, and they were very willing to cooperate for mutually beneficial ends.

The duotones and line negatives were made and were ready to be stripped. Stripping is the process whereby each image, whether it is the words, the highlight detail or the shadow detail, or a specific area masked out to be one field of color, is laid out in separate sheets, and pieced together in one sheet (flat). This is repeated with each set of images and placed in register, one atop the other. Each flat has specific exposure requirements for transferring to a photosensitive offset lithography plate, and for each flat a separate plate is made. For example, the poster alone required five separate flats, thus four separate plates. The first flat is the registration flat, so each plate will be easily registered when it goes to press. The text requires its own flat, for the exposure for line work is necessarily different than that for tone reproduction. The duotone amounts to two halftone negatives, one enhancing the highlight detail and one enhancing the shadow detail. The final flat will be a mask to
place a clear varnish only over the image area, which makes the blacks appear blacker and visually separate the image from the rest of the page. The preparations for the cataloge stripping required much more skill and work. The catalogue was to be twenty-four pages, self-cover (one paper). Because of the dimensions, two signatures were required. A signature is one sheet of paper with many pages printed on either side that is folded then trimmed to fit in a specified book format. This process is called imposition and finishing, and it is a complicated process which takes much experience to be comfortable with it. Again, we were fortunate to have the volunteer expertise of Stanley Rosen to work with and learn from. The printers were very cooperative with us, although they were making relatively little money on the project and it took a lot of effort on their part to participate.

The exhibition prints arrived from Japan, and had to be picked up from a shipping company's custom department, and the customs fee COD charge was to be paid. The prints were picked up at the airport and plans were made for editing for exhibition. A representative of the Eastman House' curatorial staff came and made choices for the exhibit to be held there, forgetting of their commitment to me as acting curator for this exhibition. It was no longer in my control: too many people were involved, and a power struggle was taking place. I had too many other things to worry about, so I was not about to argue over this issue, although I was disappointed with the editorial decisions the GEH representative made, and I had hoped that they would have lived up to the
original contract. I made multiple sets of 35mm slides to document the entire selection of images before the 25 prints the Eastman House representative chose were sent to the museum for preparation.

The catalogue and poster were readied for printing. The paper had arrived at the printers and was being conditioned to the environment. The plates were burned (exposed) and graphic arts specialist and I arrived at the printers early one morning to approve the first proofs from the press. With approval of the press proofs, the printers completed the job and sent the printed material to the bindery. After arranging for payment, I picked up the completed catalogues at the bindery. The results were very satisfying. The work was less than perfect, but with all the people, places and unfamiliar equipment involved, the results were of exceptionally high quality.
I brought several copies of the catalogue and poster to give to those people on the administration, faculty and staff who had helped so much on the project. The critical response was excellent. The next day Dr. Kraus commented, "It's our first catalogue and it's perfect." It was only three weeks until Hosoe arrived.

The day after that, problems arose. It was decided that the original cover image was inappropriate, so a different cover image was chosen. The cover was quickly redesigned, text changed, line negatives reshot, flats restripped, plates newly burned, paper reordered, binding unbound, then reprinted and rebound, all in a matter of two weeks.

At the same time, the mailing of the reception invitations, posters and catalogues was being prepared with the help of many volunteers. The labels were addressed and the envelopes were stuffed in order that the posters could be sent out immediately and in anticipation of the mailing of the reprinted catalogues.

Preparations for the exhibition began at this time. The metal section frames were purchased at wholesale cost through my small business on the West Coast. I had chosen Nielsen's #11 Contrast Grey in a quantity of 75 size 20 x 24 inches, the actual dimension of Hosoe's prints. I had received his permission, as
well as that of Light Gallery, his representative gallery, to frame them without matting since they prints exhibited at RIT would be on display for only one month. They would, therefore, suffer no ill consequences. Again, with the help of many volunteers, we prepared the gallery for exhibition. The walls were arranged and painted, the lighting tracks were repaired, details of presentation were attended to. Stats were shot from the catalogue pages to accompany each series represented in the exhibition. The glass was cleaned, the chipboard backings and high alpha-cellulose paper was conditioned to the environment. Framing the 75 prints took eight people an entire day to complete. As the prints were framed, I began the final editorial sequencing, placing them around the gallery, determining the best flow pattern and series arrangement. This was the largest and most important exhibition I had ever been involved with. I knew it would see a great audience and the display would have a strong reflection on me. It took many hours to decide the final arrangement.

The exhibition opened at the Eastman House. I was not involved in the hanging of that portion of my thesis project, but while the selection of prints on display had little conceptual coherence, the display was very attractive, and was an excellent reflection on the Eastman House's exhibition department. The first I saw of the exhibition was not until the evening of the opening reception. I found it curious that no mention of RIT was found in the written statement by Robert Sobieszek which
accompanied the exhibit.

The reprinted catalogue was complete and delivered on the day of the Eastman House opening. They were stuffed into envelopes and mailed one week before the Hosoes arrived.

They exhibition was now hung and the lights were put in place. The prints were numbered for the exhibition checklist which I typed then duplicated. The final exhibition detail was the painting of the sign that would introduce the exhibit to the viewers. Hosoe arrived the next day.

The finishing touches of gallery preparation were complete when it was time to meet Mr. and Mrs. Hosoe at the airport. It was a very exciting meeting; although we had corresponded and spoken often over the telephone, this was the first time we had actually met. We arranged a tentative agenda for the coming week. Mr. Hosoe soon brought out two boxes, one about 11" x 14" and one about 4" x 5". He opened the larger box and handed me a flyer entitled, "Minigraph." As I read the text, he briefly explained the concept of the Minigraph. He then opened the smaller box and showed me the minigraphs he wished to sell in the United States as a fundraiser for the new Museum of photography in Japan (see illustration). The next morning I brought Mr. and Mrs. Hosoe to see the exhibit at RIT. He seemed very pleased, and this reaction was a great relief for me. Mr. Hosoe spent quite a long time viewing the show. We then went to the Eastman House to see the exhibit there. His first comment upon seeing the exhibit there
The Concept of Mini-Graph

Photographers in the world consume tons of silver every year, and most of them are abandoned unused.

When you want your own fine prints, you must make a lot of test strips using a sheet piece of photographic paper or a full-size paper and pursue until you get satisfied. Then what will you do with the bunch of test strips or unsatisfied prints? You will throw them away? You are right. Because you think that those unnecessary prints are not your fine prints nor your final prints.

But wait a minute! Those prints are surely yours or at least a part of your own prints. Natural resources are limited. In a photographic print you have made there are limitless images even if it is cropped or torn. This means there exist as many images as grams of silver in a print.

Look at these Mini-Graph prints. These are the fruitful products while I wasted hundreds of 20-24 silver papers to get the fine prints for my concurrent exhibitions both at the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House (February 25th through June 14th, 1982) and at Rochester Institute of Technology (March 5th through April 5th, 1982).

"Mini" is a term to symbolize saving Natural Resources and Energy. So I named the print Mini-Graph. It is widely recommended that Mini-Graph be applied by anyone who is seriously thinking of saving natural resources and energy of our living world and to pursue photography and a photographer.

A Mini-Graph print you make is always original because each image is different. and you can date your Mini-Graph print at the time it is made regardless of the date of its image photographed.

A part of profit through the sales of my Mini-Graph print will be donated to the Fund for the Promotion Committee of the first Museum of Photography in Japan.

Eikoh Hosoe
January, 1982

Mini-Graph

EIKOH HOSOE
1982

1982 Price $10, 9F Fr., 300DM 3000yen each

Printed by Hayuppun Press
was, "Very strange."

I then took them home for a dinner engagement with the Lyons' and the Kraus'. He was greeted at the door by a newspaper reporter who interviewed him at length. I had planned a casual reception at my home for the students to meet the Hosoes that evening. Although the interview caused them to arrive quite late, the students appreciated the chance to meet and greet the artist in an informal setting.

The next day was the artist's reception. It was an impressive affair if only for the unusual turnout of guests. The directors of the three participating institutions were there. Richard Clark, director of Nikon House in New York, came to Rochester for the occasion. The event was documented on video tape by a fellow MFA student, James E. Lyle, and his crew.

A formal dinner was then held for the artist and representatives of the RIT, GEH, VSW and Nikon House.

That night I came down with the worst case of the stomach flu anyone would have believed possible. Still violently ill the next day, it was impossible for me to participate in the scheduled events. The plans were carried through, however, again with the help of the students, faculty and administration. An extensive video interview was taped at the Kraus' home. I was very sorry not to have been there; many interesting things were discussed,
but there were things I would have liked to ask Mr. Hosoe on this occasion. I received phone calls all day regarding the day's events: Hosoe's first speaking engagement was to be that evening, and I was to be the speaker introducing him. I doubted if I could be present, so alternative speaker arrangements were made. As the time for the slide presentation grew nearer, it became clear that there were too many details that only I knew of to be taken care of, so I had to be there if things were to move along smoothly. The slides had to be delivered to the projectionist. The catalogues, posters and Minigraphs to be sold had to be prepared, and the vendors briefed. Various other problems needed attention, and I had not prepared my presentation.

More people attended the presentation than I had expected. I had fears that the attendance would be low mostly because the day upon which it was scheduled was the day before school started Spring quarter. In anticipation of this problem, posters were hung weeks in advance at RIT with the hand-inscribed message, "Registration Day" along the copy for the slide presentation. Five minutes before the lecture was to begin, I found the time and energy to make notes for the introduction. Mr. Hosoe gave an informative and charming presentation. The response from the audience was excellent, and people seemed genuinely grateful for his presence here.

The following day was set aside solely for the purpose of recreation. Fortunately the flu I had was the 24-hour variety,
and I was able to join Mr. and Mrs. Hosoe for a trip to Niagara Falls. We drove through a snow storm to get there, but the sun came out as we arrived. The tourist in us all came out as we snapped pictures and browsed souvenir shops.

The next day, Mr. Hosoe met with administrators of the Eastman House and of Visual Studies Workshop to discuss their involvement with the plans for the new Internation Museum of Photography of Japan. That evening, two students and myself discussed plans for the Laser Disk Portfolio over dinner with Mr. Hosoe. Ronald J. Gregory, project director, invited Mr. Hosoe to participate on the disk. Mr. Hosoe agreed to the proposal, and plans were made to tape a commercial for the Minigraph as Hosoe's contribution to the portfolio. The tape was made the following day, both in English and in Japanese.

Mr. Hosoe, upon my request, brought with him from Japan a copy of his 1960 film, NAVAL AND ATOMIC BOMB. Before the screening, Mr. Hosoe explained that at first he could not decide whether to show the film in Rochester. But he decided to bring it as he realized that he made the film when he was about the average age of our students. Believing that we could learn from his early work, he brought the film. Along with the film, Hosoe also brought a video tape he had made from still work taken during his mid-seventies visits to Yosemite. This tape was also screened on the evening of NAVAL AND ATOMIC BOMB. After the screening, the audience was invited to a question and answer session in the MFA
Gallery where the session was recorded on video tape. This was the night Hosoe signed his name on the gallery wall.

While I had the flu, the book exhibition was being hung at Visual Studies Workshop. Although I regret not being able to participate in the hanging, I was very pleased to see the results. Because the workshop owned a copy Hosoe's book, KAMAITACHI, and the binding was in disrepair, the decision was made to disassemble the book and hang the pages in a linear fashion on the wall. The presentation was dramatic, and made the book into a completely different object from a traditional book; it took on a filmic quality.

The reception at Visual Studies Workshop was well attended, again by representatives of the three participating institutions' administration. The reception was preceeded by Hosoe's lecture on his involvement with photographic books. Nathan Lyons introduced Hosoe that evening. The introduction described Hosoe not only as a great artist, but as a good friend. Mr. Lyons then presented Mr. Hosoe with a copy of the albumen print album of Commodore Perry's expedition to Japan as a gift from the workshop to the new International Museum of Photography in Japan. The reception followed, and was attended by Les Krims. Krims was another old friend of Hosoe's, having taught a workshop together in Japan.

This was the last evening of Hosoe's stay, and it went by very quickly, as did the entire week. It was appropriate that it
should conclude at Visual Studies Workshop. It was Nathan Lyons who introduced Hosoe to this country and it was Lyons who made Hosoe's last evening in Rochester a very memorable one not only for Hosoe, but for the guests at the workshop and for the collection of Japan's Museum of Photography.
Conclusion

As this project evolved, there were many times I doubted that it would be completed. Financial limitations, unexpected situations, personality conflicts, and learning the physical and political complexities of exhibition and catalogue production were some of the obstacles to overcome. Upon completion of the project—having seen the catalogue, three exhibitions at major photographic institutions, then meeting Mr. Hosoe and participating in the events for which he came to Rochester—I was first relieved and exhausted. It was difficult to hold in perspective the magnitude of a project with which I was so intimately involved. I found the project had more impact than I had expected. Since Mr. Hosoe left and the exhibitions have closed, I have received correspondence, phone calls and comments from people I did not know, from across the United States. The project had an impact which I never expected. The catalogue is being revised for distribution by the Susan Spiritus Gallery of Newport Beach, California, on the occasion of Mr. Hosoe's West Coast premier retrospective. Through this thesis project, I have had the opportunity to learn publication, curatorial, and public event coordination skills. I have, at the same time, learned much that I never would have thought was a part of graduate school. Those were lessons that proved to be the most difficult, but probably the most valuable, and cannot be expressed in writing.
Nov. 21, 1981

Constance McCabe
R.I.T. H.C./M.P.
One Long Memorial Drive
Rochester, N.Y. 14623
USA

Dear Constance McCabe,

Thank you for your letter of November 7th together with the
envelope and photographs. I am pleased to receive your letter and
the accompanying photographs. The photographs are of great
interest. I have included them in my letter. In response to your
question about the translation credits, I would like to say that
they are not required by any of the publishers or by me. I
thought that you might want to include them in your submission.

The translations I have done are all self-translation, and I
believe that they are all correct. I have always been careful to
check the accuracy of the translations, and I have always
attempted to ensure that the translations are accurate.

As for the layout and design of the photographs, I have
always been careful to ensure that they are presented in a way
that is appropriate for the work. I have always tried to
ensure that the photographs are presented in a way that is
consistent with the style of the work.

I am pleased to hear that you will be coming to Rochester,
and I look forward to seeing you there.

Please let me know if there is anything else that I can do to
assist you.

The best wishes,

[Signature]

Elisha House

Nov. 21, 1981

Constance McCabe
R.I.T. H.C./M.P.
One Long Memorial Drive
Rochester, N.Y. 14623
USA

Dear Constance McCabe,

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Please let me know if there is anything else that I can do to
assist you.

The best wishes,

[Signature]

Elisha House
Office Memo

Rochester Institute of Technology

Dear Mr. Howie,

I have enclosed a press release about the exhibition and a copy of the catalogue and exhibition and program.

The copy of the programme will read:

Rochester Institute of Technology presents

Fine Art Photographs 1990 - 1991

The catalogue and poster will be available on the opening date and will be on display in the exhibitor's office.

I hope you will be able to come to Rochester in March.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Rochester Institute of Technology

July 30, 1990

Mr. Howie,
The image contains text, but the resolution is too low to read clearly. It appears to be a page from a document with some content that is not legible. Due to the low resolution, it is not possible to provide a natural text representation of the document.
Dear Sir:

This is to thank you sincerely for the gift you received from us. You may be sure that we appreciate on the

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at Carbondale
Carbondale, Illinois 62901

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Catalogue and poster "Eikoh Hosoe: Photographs

1960 - 1980"

museum

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
RIVERSIDE

The Museum of Modern

11 West 53rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10020 Tel. 530-6000 Cable: Museum

March 4, 1982

Constance McCabe
ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
1131 East Ave., Rochester, New York 14623

Dear Connie:

ook you for your letter of February 9. It

and, of course, very busy as usual.

so much for the Hosoe catalogue. You

t next time you're out our way.

The Dean of Librarians

Rochester Institute of Technology
School of Photographic Arts and Sciences
One Lamb Memorial Drive
Rochester, NY 14623
The Hosoe retrospective

by Susan Dodge Peters

The Hosoe retrospective is a rare opportunity for art lovers to view the works of the legendary Japanese photographer, Hiroshi Hosoe. This exhibition, held at the City Life Gallery, showcases Hosoe's remarkable talent and unique vision through a series of photographs that span his career.

Hosoe is renowned for his groundbreaking work in the realm of photography, with a focus on exploring the relationship between human beings and their environment. His work often delves into themes of nature, society, and cultural identity, and he is celebrated for his ability to capture the essence of a moment with clarity and precision.

The exhibition features a wide range of Hosoe's most celebrated works, including images that have become iconic in the world of photography. Visitors will have the chance to explore Hosoe's artistic process and gain insight into the techniques he employed to create such powerful and moving images.

Beyond Hosoe's photographic works, this exhibition also highlights his influence on other artists and photographers, as well as the broader impact his art has had on contemporary culture. It is a testament to Hosoe's enduring legacy and a celebration of his contributions to the world of art.

The Hosoe retrospective is not to be missed by anyone interested in photography or the arts in general. It offers a unique opportunity to appreciate the depth and breadth of Hosoe's work, and to reflect on the power of art to inspire and challenge our understanding of the world.
*A mad view of reality*

From the camera of Eikoh Hosoe comes a new view of ourselves.

**Photographer Eikoh Hosoe**

I have never taken a photograph that's been published until now.

I wanted to capture the essence of a dream-world between man and woman. I was impressed by a man and a woman sitting together in a large chair of black velvet.

When asked where he would choose to live, he said "I want to live in a world of dreams." He suggests a dream-world between man and woman.

It is a very dreamy world, but it is not a world of dreams. It is a world of reality. It is a world of imagination.

He gave an example of a "dream-world" scene - a man and a woman standing on a mountain-top, looking at the moon. The moon is not real, but it is important to the dream-world. It is a symbol of the dream-world.

He says that photography is not just a tool for capturing a moment, but it is a tool for creating a dream-world. It is a tool for creating a world of imagination.
ART REVIEW

Images

Eikoh Hosoe's haunting photographs: brooding displays of a different world

By Linda Stewart

Hosoe's photographs are a haunting reminder of a different world. They portray the soul and the despair that underlines the more literal tension of the rubber hose wrapped around his body. They are a blend of photographic and photographic techniques, some of which are clearly evident in his work. The result is a captivating and powerful display of Hosoe's talent.

Like the breathtakingly beautiful close-ups in Man and Woman (1960), showcasing the skin's every pore and flaw, and the barely contained fury of Hosoe's childhood memories of a malevolent ghost in the 1969 series Kamisashita, Onna by River blends rage and passivity. The result is an ominous sense of madness, as though Hosoe has served tough doses of life. He deals with his subjects so strikingly that it's often difficult to get far enough past the theme to appreciate the beauty of his photographic technique.

In RIT's A Holy Maiden Wears a Scar (1979), a female figure stands out, her eyes partly hidden behind a loop of string. Her "nose," a wrinkled sheet, hangs open to reveal drooping breasts and an ugly surgical scar below the ribs. She is depressed and despairing.

It's partly that blend of language and despair that makes Hosoe's most affecting prints work so well. The tension between opposites is the root of his vision.

At the International Museum of Photography, two studies from Embrace use two light bodies, clearly female, and one dark, the male. The tension between the opposites of form and the contrasting contrasts of light and shadow are satisfying, but it is the gap — the space between forms — that take them to a last step to compelling.

In Eikoh Hosoe: Photographs 1957-1964, RIT's exhibition shows this important body of work that marked a turning point in contemporary photography.

SUNDAY DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE, ROCHESTER, N.Y., MARCH 14, 1982
ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT 36
Bibliography


Eikoh Hosoe: Photographs 1960-1980
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© 1982 Dark Sun Press
Rochester, New York

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 81-86077
ISBN 0-937968-01-3

Dark Sun Press is a non-profit organization composed of faculty, students and friends of the MFA photography program at RIT.


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Eikoh Hosoe is represented in the United States and Canada by Light Gallery, New York.

Catalogue designed by Susan Poulakis
Printed by Ayer and Streb, Rochester, New York

Reproductions printed with a 200-line screen, block-on-block duotone with spot varnish on Frostbrite dull-coated stock.

Duotones by David Cohn
Typeset by Setronics, Rochester, New York

Cover Photograph: Embrace, #48, 1970

Nobuya Yoshimura is known in Japan for his work as a publisher and critic of photography.

Yukio Mishima was an internationally renowned Japanese writer noted for such works as The Sailor Who Fell From Grace With the Sea and Confessions of a Mask.

Eikoh Hosoe: Photographs 1960-1980 is a presentation made possible by Rochester Institute of Technology's School of Photographic Arts and Sciences in cooperation with Visual Studies Workshop and the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House.

Erratum. "Plates" section indicates the cover photograph as "Embrace, #48, 1970." It should read as "Ordeal by Roses, #32, 1962."
Eikoh Hosoe: Photographs 1960-1980

Introduction and Acknowledgments

“Eikoh Hosoe: Photographs 1960-1980” has been published to accompany three exhibitions representing the visual evolution of a master in the contemporary photographic community. These exhibitions, presented concurrently at Rochester Institute of Technology, Visual Studies Workshop and the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, were conceived and produced as a thesis project for my master of fine arts degree at Rochester Institute of Technology. Mr. Hosoe graciously consented to participate in this project, entrusting to me the details of exhibition and catalogue preparation. He has my warmest gratitude for his generous and enthusiastic contributions of time, thought and energy. Thanks are especially due to Dr. Russell Kraus, director of RIT’s School of Photographic Arts and Sciences, for his support and understanding. In addition, I am deeply grateful to Professor Elliott Rubenstein for his valuable time and counsel as well as to my advisors, Professor Charles A. Arnold, Jr. and Catherine Lord. Sincere appreciation must be expressed to the following individuals without whose assistance and patience this project would not have been realized: David Brown, Helen Brunner, Hope Carson, David Cohn, Robert Cooper, Dana Davis, Edie Freedman, Ronald J. Gregory, Rick Hack, Nora Kennedy, Jeff Love, James E. Lyle, Nathan Lyons, Jan Markels, John Massey, Mary K. McCabe, Neal McCabe, Steven and Deborah Mosch, Toshihira Nakajima, Susan Poulakis, Barbara Power, Leigh Privitera, James and Linda Reilly, Stanley Rosen, Caroline Rude-Zaft, Donald Russell, Wendy Snyder-Nakajima and Dr. Richard Zakia.

Constance McCabe, Editor and Curator
Preface

Nobuya Yashimura

Some people during their lifetime have suddenly heard a loud clap of thunder and then seen the world around them as though it were a scene made of transparent glass. Things both very near and very far away are seen by them in minute detail with a serene perspective as though they were calmly observing an arid desert scene. All is seen as extraordinary panoramic space, exactly like a picture by Dali or D’Arbo. Here the word O includes both the visible and the invisible, the physical and the metaphysical. This type of hallucinatory experience has been called the “Dawn of Cognizance” by a European philosopher. And it may be called “Sator” by the Zen priest of the Orient.

On a certain day in 1960, Eikoh Hosoe had such an inspiration which resulted in the masterpiece, Man and Woman, a work made in a spirit completely opposite to that of pornography. In other words, this monumental photographic masterpiece shows a group of nude men and women with every trace of pornography fastidiously removed. After Man and Woman, it was but a small step to Embrace. Actually, Hosoe started photographing for Embrace immediately after completing Man and Woman, but Embrace wasn’t published until 10 years later, in 1971.

According to Hosoe, “Around the time I started photographing Embrace, Bill Brandt’s Perspective of Nudes was imported to Japan. I was greatly shocked to find that one of the photographs in the Brandt book quite resembled those in Embrace which I had been photographing, so I stopped working on it for a time.” Although this was pure accident, perhaps it was something Hosoe couldn’t bear since he places such great emphasis on originality.

During this time, Hosoe published a photographic collection called Killed by Roses in 1963. The title was later changed to Ordeal by Roses Kamaitachi was published in 1969.

All of these works, including Embrace, are near mad, extremely high-voltage products of passion and genius. Hosoe’s works have surely brought a fresh new shockwave that has rippled open in the stagnant standard of artistic appreciation and bigoted feelings of value. Hosoe is one of the few photographers in Japan who continuously produces masterpieces. And in the future the flash of his “creative madness” will, without doubt, shine ever brighter.
**Man and Woman** Eikoh Hasoe 1960

My first Man and Woman was an attempt to catch the human drama, its secret rites held in darkness. In my next "Man and Woman" I intend to bring it into the light of the sky and earth and sun.

**Ordeal by Roses** from preface by Yukio Mishima 1963

One day, without warning, Eikoh Hasoe appeared and transported me badly to a strange world. Even before this, I had seen some of the magical work produced with the camera, but Hasoe's work is not so much simple magic as a kind of mechanical sorcery; it is the use of this civilized precision instrument for purposes utterly opposed to civilization. The world to which I was abducted under the spell of his lens was abnormal, warped, sarcastic, grotesque, savage, and promiscuous... yet there was a clear undercurrent of lyricism murmuring gently through its unseen conduits.

It was, in a sense, the reverse of the world we live in, where our worship of social appearances and our concern for public morality and hygiene create fault, filthy sewers winding beneath the surface. Unlike ours, the world to which I was escorted was a weird, repellent city—naked, comic, wretched, cruel and overdecorative—yet in its underground channels there flowed, inexhaustibly, a pellucid stream of unsullied feeling.

Yes, it was a strange city to which I was taken... a city not to be found on the map of any land, a city of awesome silences, where Death and Eros trudged wanly in broad daylight on the squares...

...This is the record of our stay [in that city], as told by Hasoe's camera.

Before that camera, as I soon realized, my own spirit and psychology become totally redundant. It was an exhilarating experience, a state of affairs I had long dreamed of. Hasoe merely explored via the medium of his camera—much as the novelist uses words and the composer sounds—the various combinations in which the objects to be photographed could be placed, and the light and shadow which made those combinations possible. For him, in short, the objects correspond to words and sounds. The objects are stripped of their various meanings, which are flung into a meaningless arrangement where their meaningless reflection of each other eventually restores a certain order to the light and shadow. It is only by such means that the elements with which he composes can acquire an abstract quality similar to that of words and sounds.

A first requirement for this process, of course, is that the objects photographed should have some meaning of which they can be stripped... if the photographer is to create works that will stand for his spirit in the same way as artists in other genres, he must first—having no ready-made, abstract components such as words and sounds—supply other means to abstraction instead...

Before Hasoe's camera, I was trained until it meant exactly the same whether I stared into the lens or turned my back on it completely. If the flesh of my back and the retina of my eye were both treated simply as externals, what sense could there be to looking?

Yet I was not the only one who was placed in a position where he did not rely on his own eyes. It was the same for Hasoe, too, as the photographer. Quite obviously, as he peered into the viewfinder, he was waiting for a metamorphosis to overtake the objects he saw there. From beginning to end, his operations were aimed at a state of affairs where his own eyes might be successfully betrayed, where a successful reversion to the kind of primary images already seen in his subconscious world would be achieved...
Kamaitachi  Eikoh Hosoe 1969

Kamaitachi, or “Weasel’s Sickles,” translated literally from the Japanese, is a record of the memory I experienced during World War II when I was evacuated from central Tokyo to the country village where my mother was born. I was twelve years old in 1944 when the American firebombing was the worst. Most of the school children had to be evacuated to the remote countryside. Those who had no relatives were sent to the country to live communally. Those who had relatives in the country, as I did, were sent to live with them. Some had brothers or sisters, but my only younger brother, then three years old, could not be separated from my mother and father who had jobs in Tokyo. I was alone.

I liked the landscapes and the environment of the country, but I hated the country itself. This feeling was due to the poor communication between the country boys and the neighborhood children. My relatives were very good to me, but when I would go out to the towns or villages, children playing around the corner watched me with cold eyes. It was hard for me to join them. It was not only me. Other children were from big cities like Tokyo. We were called “city kids.” They thought city kids were different from country kids. Farmers’ children were plump, but we from the city were thin from hunger. Their laughing expressions were awful.

The dark, snowy country seemed to be full of ghosts. In fact, there were ghosts. We children were always frightened that something terrible would catch us when we went outside after dark. Yuki-onna, or “Snow Woman,” and Kamaitachi were among them. I pictured the snow woman not as terrible but on the contrary, as rather romantic.

Kamaitachi, on the other hand, was something very awful. Kamaitachi is a small, invisible animal which attacks good people walking in the rice field lanes in the late springtime. A man who is attacked by Kamaitachi finds his arms or legs or some other part of his flesh sliced as if cut by a very sharp knife, but with no blood. In Japanese, koma means sickle and irochi means weasel. So Kamaitachi is an invisible weasel with very sharp teeth like a sickle. But no one has ever seen him. No one knows where or when he appears, only that he attacks people in the fields.

I had the strange feeling, though, that I should never hate the land where my mother was born. If I hated it, I would hate my own mother.

Kamaitachi, then, is a very personal record of my own memory from my boyhood, with all the complex feelings of love and hate from those days in the country.

Photography cannot directly express one’s memory. But a photographer wants to record his memory. In writing? In painting? In singing? Photography? I wanted to express it in photography because I was a photographer. To do so I needed a catalyst. I found it in Tatsumi Hijikata, a good friend of mine and a great dancer. He was sympathetic to my ideas. Photography expresses the subjects themselves in their own time. Outwardly, this is a documentary of the dancer, Tatsumi Hijikata. At the same time, Kamaitachi is an inner document of myself and of my background in Japan.

Embrace  From the Preface by Yukio Mishima 1970

The piercing beauty of Eikoh Hosoe’s series of photographs entitled Embrace has deeply moved me since I first saw it published in a magazine. The viscosity which is associated with sex—those earthy odors and temperatures of soft and intimately formed internal organs—has been meticulously removed from these photographs. To me this is a series filled with hard and athletic beauty. More than anything else, it is about form.

One should not think of Hosoe as wandering into the realm of abstractionism. It is not like him to make an abstract work of the flesh and then intertwine other meanings into it. The original brilliancy possessed by the flesh is irreplaceable and cannot be changed by mode of expression. The flesh has no characteristic of its own other than this brilliancy, yet, by dividing it into sections, as Hosoe has done, it releases more natural light within a certain time and place. Moving close to the flesh, his camera skillfully snatches these unique images of the body—just as a shrewd fox moves down from the hills and skillfully snatches a chicken from a farmyard.

Embrace creates an awareness of the human being as a creature who is pathetic, elegant and powerful. Yet I would hesitate to call it a song of praise to mankind, for it also has an undercurrent of gloominess. This gloominess runs throughout Hosoe’s art and can best be expressed as a feeling of isolation which refuses to be emancipated. The same corresponding undercurrent is apparent in his humorous and cruel Kamaitachi—God is dead, and naked human beings face the world shameless and without pride.

One of the reasons for the feeling of pathos which Embrace creates is that it portrays humans as being tightly driven into a corner, capable of expressing their rapture only by means of hard and willful tension. The models in the photographs seem as if they are fighting each other. Then suddenly, brilliant and lyrical white flesh appears like lingering snow between them. The whiteness of this flesh is not a fluid whiteness to vanish in a moment, but a whiteness of utmost elegance—awe-inspiring and never fading.

The dignity of Embrace is apt to make those who are used to seeing ordinary nude photographs stagger. It expresses the true nobility of nature and represents the everlasting yearnings of the mechanism of the camera.

As an intimate friend of Eikoh Hosoe, I have followed him on the journey which led to the creation of Embrace. I have always respected him as a master of self-discipline, conquering each obstacle he meets one by one. Despite the obstacles encountered on the road to Embrace, the plateau reached is a remarkable one, even for Hosoe.
Ansel Adams Gallery Workshop, Eikoh Hosoe 1974

In 1974 Ansel Adams invited Eikoh Hosoe to co-teach one of his Yosemite workshops. The theme was “Nude in the Landscape,” and it was directed by Norman Locks. Also participating in the workshop were photographers Imogen Cunningham, Wynn Bullock, Lucien Clergue, Robert Heinecken, Judy Dater, and Jack Welpott. One day, while photographing in the forest, all participants, including the instructors, removed their clothing. Hosoe gives the following account of his experience: “In such a magnificent natural environment, being nude brought everyone closer to nature. I was the only one who remained dressed. But upon falling into a waterfall pool, along with my camera, I was forced to take off my clothes. Then I too became one with nature—nude. The camera was soaked and the film inside absorbed nature’s spirit.”

Gaudi: Eikoh Hosoe 1977

Eikoh Hosoe first encountered the neo-baroque architecture of Antonio Gaudi while visiting Barcelona in 1964. Hosoe was profoundly moved by the experience, but it was not until 1977 that the second “International Conference of Photography” in Barcelona again brought Hosoe to Gaudi. Hosoe recalls:

“Thirteen years ago, when I first visited Barcelona, Gaudi was a great shock to me. I could not expose even one negative for fear that I, like Don Quixote, would be destroyed if I should attempt to approach such a strange-looking monster without knowledge and spiritual preparation. This giant would never fade away.

“The second ‘International Conference of Photography’ gave me the chance to see Gaudi again. After careful study and preparation, I returned to Barcelona. I was ready to confront Gaudi. After the conference, my concentration centered on photographing Gaudi—Sagrada Familia, Guell Park, Casa Calvet, Palacio Guell, Casa Vicens, Bellesguard, Crypt of the Guell Colony Church—one week passed as if it were one day. I photographed quite a lot, but it was difficult to approach Gaudi. I knew I must return again. I exhibited my photographs upon my return to Tokyo, and although the response was good, I knew my first shooting was only a superficial interpretation. I am so haunted by Gaudi. Why?

“I returned later that year to photograph more of Gaudi. This time I began to see more clearly the outline of Gaudi’s essence. While walking on a path in the Guell Park, I suddenly came to suspect that what Gaudi tried to pursue in his life might possibly be Zen. His attitude toward nature, toward his way of life, the formations of round stones in the garden, the design of the entrance to Casa Mila...Gaudi must have created another kind of Zen on the opposite side of the earth. Is this hypothesis too extravagant? I, as a photographer, must prove this hypothesis through my work.

“In 1979, I again returned to Barcelona to photograph. A telegram was waiting for me at the Ritz Hotel: ‘Mr. Shuzo Takiguchi passed away.’ Mr. Takiguchi, who wrote the preface for Kamaoriuchi, was the first to introduce the work of Gaudi to Japan. I used to talk to him about the progress of my project after each visit to Barcelona, and he was to have written the preface for the book. Who else could have been a more appropriate person to write the preface? Three days passed without taking any photographs.

“Mr. Takiguchi was a good friend of Miró, whom I knew respected Gaudi very much. Oh! Why should I not ask Miró to write a preface—even a short one? Would it be too impolite, too unreasonable? Never mind, just try!

“While I was in Barcelona, Miró was on vacation, so I spoke with his assistant about my idea. Two months passed without answer. Finally, a letter came from Barcelona. Miró made two drawings with beautiful poems. One is in homage to Gaudi, the other is to Mr. Takiguchi.”
Plates

Cover Photograph: Embrace, #48, 1970

Plate 1  Man and Woman, #20, 1960
Plate 2  Man and Woman, #19, 1960
Plate 3  Man and Woman, #24, 1960
Plate 4  Ordeal by Roses, #32, 1962
Plate 5  Ordeal by Roses, #16, 1962
Plate 6  Kamaitachi, #8, 1969
Plate 7  Kamaitachi, #23, 1969
Plate 8  Embrace, #46, 1970
Plate 9  Embrace, #62, 1970
Plate 10 Man on the Rock, 1975
Plate 11 On the Great Plain Rock of Yosemite, 1974
Plate 12 Gaudi’s Ceiling, Barcelona, 1979
Plate 13 Gaudi’s Ceiling, Barcelona, 1980
Biographical Notes

Eikoh Hosoe

1933 Born March 18, in Yonezawa City, Yamagata Prefecture, Japan. Son of a Shinto priest; raised in a Shinto shrine in Tokyo. Tokyo remains his home.

1944 During wartime evacuation, Hosoe lives with relatives in Yonezawa until the end of World War II.

1951 Decides to become a photographer after winning the Grand Prize in the Fuji Photo Contest, student division.

1954 Graduates from Tokyo College of Photography. Unlike many of his classmates, Hosoe is not hired by a photographic firm; he decides to become a free-lance photographer.

1955 First book, 35mm Photography.


1960 One-person exhibition, “Man and Woman,” published the following year in book form. Produces 16mm block and white film, Naval and Atomic Bomb

1961 Meets Yukio Mishima and begins photographing him for the later publication Killed by Roses.

1962 Marries Misako Imai. Photographing of Mishima nearly complete, preparations for publication begin.

1963 Barakei, or Killed by Roses, is published. Son, Kenji, born.


1965 Publishes Kamaichichi, preface by Shuzo Takiguchi.

1968 Organizes the exhibition “Europe’s Great Photographers” with the cooperation of George Eastman House.


1972 Tours United States extensively. Meets Allen Dutton, Jack Welpott and Judy Dater, who become important friends. Meets Cole Weston, who gives Hosoe permission to translate Edward Weston’s Daybooks into Japanese. This project remains one of Hosoe’s continuing lifeworks.


1975 Again invited by Ansel Adams to teach workshop, Hosoe is accompanied by his family. Accepts professorship at Tokyo College of Photography (now Tokyo Institute of Polytechnics) where he establishes a photographic gallery and a program of collecting internationally important photographs for educational purposes.


1979 Teaches workshop in Aries, France, with Ralph Gibson, and another at Salzburg College, Austria.


1981 First stage of Gaudi project complete.

Selected One-Person Exhibitions

1956 “An American Girl in Tokyo,” Konishiroku Gallery, Tokyo
1960 “Man and Woman,” Konishiroku Gallery, Tokyo
1968 “An Extravagantly Tragic Comedy,” Nikon Salon, Tokyo and Osaka
Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
Focus Gallery, San Francisco, California

1970 Phoenix College, Arizona
1971 Gallery Shunjū, Tokyo
1973 Light Gallery, New York City
1974 International Culture Center, Antwerp, Belgium
Fotogalerie Fiolet, Amsterdam, Holland
1975 Light Gallery, New York City
Spectrum Gallery, Barcelona, Spain
1976 Friends of Photography, Carmel, California
1977 “Gaudi,” Nikon Salon, Tokyo and Osaka
1978 Susan Spiritus Gallery, Newport Beach, California
1979 Salzburg College, Salzburg, Austria
Portfolio Gallery, Louvaine, Switzerland
1980 FNAC Forum, Paris, Toulouse, France
Paule Pia Gallery, Antwerp, Belgium
Nikon Gallery, Zurich, Switzerland
Photo Art Basel, Basel, Switzerland
1981 FNAC Forum, Lille, Grenoble, France
1982 Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, New York
Susan Spiritus Gallery, Newport Beach, California

1977 “Neue Fotografie Aus Japan,” organized by Dr. Brecho,
Museum of Modern Art, Graz, Austria
Eyes of Photographers,” organized by Suomen Kameraseurujen
Luoto, Helsinki, Finland
Lorenzo Merlo & others, Galleria d’arte Moderna, Bologna, Italy
“VIVO” Group Show, organized by Bob Werling, Santa Barbara, Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, California

Selected Books

1963 Baroke, or Killed by Roses (Tokyo: Gendai Shichosha Publishing
House).
1971 New edition of Baroke with new title, Ordeal by Roses (Tokyo:
Shuessa Publishing Incorporated).
Embrace, or Haya (Tokyo: Shoshin Hyoronsha Publishing).

Selected Children’s Books

1965 Why, Marher, Why? with Miyuki Fututa (Tokyo: Kodansha
International Publications).
Takochan and I with Betty Jean Lifton (New York: Norton).
1971 Return to Hiroshima with Betty Jean Lifton (New York
Atheneum).

Selected Group Exhibitions

1957 “Eyes of Ten Photographers,” organized by Tatsuo Fukushima,
-59 Konishiroku Gallery, Tokyo
1960 “You Live Here,” organized by J.P.S., Tokyo
1962 “NON,” organized by Tatsuo Fukushima, Motsuyo Department
Store Gallery, Tokyo
of Modern Art, Tokyo
1966 Ten Japanese Contemporary Photographers,” Museum of
Modern Art, Tokyo
1967 “Photography in the Twentieth Century,” organized by Nathan
Lyons, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa
and Shoju Yamagishi, Museum of Modern Art, New York
organized by J.P.S., Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka