

***FROM STUDENT TO MASTER:  
TOKUKO USHIODA AND HER  
TEACHERS***

*Tokuko Ushioda, Untitled 014, Early Works, Gelatin Silver Print, circa 1980s*

**ALISON BRADLEY PROJECTS**

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*From Student to Master:  
Tokuko Ushioda and Her Teachers*

Alison Bradley Projects

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Organized in collaboration with Miyuki Hinton

## Table of Contents

Introduction

Press Release

Tokuko Ushioda

*An Introduction to Tokuko Ushioda's Early Works circa 1979–83*  
Essay by Miyuki Hinton

*Early Works*  
Object Descriptions by Miyuki Hinton

Modern Prints from the series *My Husband*

Diptychs from the series *Ice Box*

CV

Yasuhiro Ishimoto

Biography

*Vintage Prints*  
Object Descriptions by Eimi Tagore-Erwin

Kiyoji Ōtsuji

Biography

*Vintage Prints*  
Object Descriptions by Eimi Tagore-Erwin

## Introduction

Tokuko Ushioda (b. Tokyo, 1940) enrolled in Kuwasawa Design School in 1960, where she studied with modern masters, Yasuhiro Ishimoto (b. San Francisco, 1921–2012) and Kiyoji Ōtsuji (b. Tokyo, 1923–2001). She later assisted Ishimoto and Ōtsuji in their classrooms at Kuwasawa and Tokyo Zōkei University, where she went on to teach photography classes between 1966–1978, and eventually crossed paths with Shinzō Shimaō, a graduate of Zōkei and one-time student of Ōtsuji. In 1978, Ushioda and Shimaō gave birth to a daughter and married. The family of three moved into a one-room unit in a historic Western-style house in Setagaya, Tokyo.

*Early Works*, the 16 vintage prints in this exhibition dating from circa 1979 to 1983, lay dormant for 40 years until their recent rediscovery by the artist. These images, along with the modern prints that make up her new publication, *My Husband*, are from these early years, when Ushioda and her family lived amidst decidedly spare and inexpensive material possessions. At the time, a young Ushioda gazed through the lens at her daughter and husband, depicting her home as a place where each family member inhabited an individual space, seemingly independent from one another. Ushioda also began her acclaimed series, *Ice Box*, during this period.

As we cast our eyes on Ushioda's photographs today, an inevitable question arises: What are the photographs' position in relation to contemporary criticism of gender and domesticity? Vice versa, how can these photographs taken circa 1979 serve as a device that we can use to interrogate current popular feminist theories? Consideration of Ushioda's biography as well provides a deeper understanding of the photographs' meaning and the artist's historical position. Yet the contemporary viewer approaching these works should be wary of asking only about gender roles and ignoring other critical aspects and historical contexts specific to Ushioda's life choices. Highly autobiographical, the photos make clear that Ushioda went against the commercial consumerism of the 1970–80s.

On view in the gallery's second room are the photographs by Ishimoto and Ōtsuji. These rare photographs include 5 works by Ishimoto (photographed circa 1950-60s, and early 1980s, and printed in the 1980s by the artist), and 2 photographs by Ōtsuji: *OBJET*, (negative date 1950 and printed circa 1987 by the artist), and *Foam is Created* (a vintage work circa 1953), created from the automatic slide projection presented by Hideko (b. Tokyo, 1927–1997) and Kazuo Fukushima (b. Tokyo, 1930), a sister-and-brother team, at the 5th Jikken Kōbō (Experimental Workshop) Presentation in 1953.

In this context, Ushioda's photographs speak to the dialogue between student and teacher, the way artistic vision gains an afterlife through the act of mentorship, and the evolution of a student staking a claim to her own territory.

## Press Release

**Alison Bradley Projects** is pleased to debut *From Student to Master: Tokuko Ushioda and Her Teachers*, early vintage photographs by **Tokuko Ushioda** (b. Tokyo, 1940) and rare photographs by her teachers, **Yasuhiro Ishimoto** (b. San Francisco, 1921–2012) and **Kiyoji Ōtsuji** (b. Tokyo, 1923–2001).

Born in 1940 in Tokyo, Tokuko Ushioda enrolled in Kuwasawa Design School in 1960, where she began to study under the noted photographers Yasuhiro Ishimoto and Kiyoji Ōtsuji.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the academic teaching of photography, then in its infancy in Japan, owed much to Yōko Kuwasawa. Kuwasawa founded Kuwasawa Design School in 1954 and recruited practicing photographers Yasuhiro Ishimoto and Kiyoji Ōtsuji to serve as teachers. Twelve years later, in 1966, when Kuwasawa established Tokyo Zōkei University, Ishimoto recommended Ōtsuji as the founding teacher for the photography course.

After graduating in 1963, Ushioda remained in the school's orbit. From 1966 to 1978 she assisted Ōtsuji and taught photography at Kuwasawa Design School and Tokyo Zōkei University. Around 1975 she began a career as a freelance photographer working mainly for magazines. Eventually, she crossed paths with Shinzō Shimaō, a 1974 graduate of Zōkei and also a one-time student of Ōtsuji, and in 1978 the pair gave birth to a daughter and married. The family of three moved into a one-room unit with a shared kitchen and bathroom in a historic Western-style house in Setagaya, Tokyo.

This exhibition presents *Early Works*, 16 vintage prints by Ushioda from this period (1979–1985) when she was making photographs in her domestic space and balancing her new roles as a mother, artist, and wife. These photographs have lain dormant for 40 years, and Alison Bradley Projects is thrilled to share them for the first time with the public. Ushioda's work raises questions about gender and domesticity and challenges notions of acceptable subject matter for the era.

On view in the gallery's second room are photographs by Ishimoto and Ōtsuji, also noted as two of Japan's leading modernist masters. These photographs include Ishimoto's depiction of the Katsura Imperial Villa in Kyoto and a scene of postwar life in Tokyo, (photographed circa 1950-60s, and early 1980s, and printed in the 1980s by the artist), and 2 photographs by Ōtsuji: *OBJET*, (circa 1950 and printed circa 1987 by the artist), and *Foam is Created* (a vintage work circa 1953), made from the automatic slide projection presented by Hideko (b. Tokyo, 1927–1997) and Kazuo Fukushima (b. Tokyo, 1930), a sister-and-brother team, at the 5th Jikken Kōbō (Experimental Workshop) Presentation in 1953.

In this context, Ushioda's photographs speak to the dialogue between student and teacher, the way artistic vision gains an afterlife through the act of mentorship, and the evolution of a student staking a claim to her own territory.

Accompanying the 16 vintage prints exhibited in the gallery is *My Husband* (1978–1983), a portfolio of 10 modern prints. The selection not only chronicles Ushioda's family life but also outlines the development of Japanese photography. Many images depict Ushioda's peers—among them photographer Shigeo Gochō (1946–1983), critic

Osamu Hiraki (1949–2009), and photo-historian Ryūichi Kaneko (1948–2001)—seen through Ushioda’s eyes in their youth. As well, the gallery will feature diptychs from *Ice Box*, a series dating from the same period, and rare first edition books by Ushioda and Ishimoto.

**Alison Bradley Projects** is honored to bring these rare works to a wider audience in New York. *From Student to Master* is accompanied by an online catalog authored by photo historian **Miyuki Hinton**.

### **Biography**

Born in Tokyo, Japan, Tokuko Ushioda graduated from Kuwasawa Design School in 1963. She taught at Kuwasawa Design School and Tokyo Zōkei University from 1966 to 1978 and has worked as a freelance photographer since 1975. In 2018, her Bibliotheca series won the Domon Ken Award, the Photographic Society of Japan’s Lifetime Achievement Award, and the Higashikawa International Photo Festival’s Domestic Photographer Award. Other works include *Ice Box*, for which she photographed the contents of various families’ refrigerators.

*“Neither I nor my husband had a lot of work, so every day was like a day off. Therefore, we spent most of our time at home, with not much else to do other than nap and bask in the abundant sun that poured in from the large, south-facing window.*

*That life, which we led forty years ago, has now turned into a series of photographs. But that is only because the landlord who rented the place to us, who lived on the first floor, happened to move out after many years. Our scattered life, represented by our scattered belongings, was still in storage in that house. The heaps of souvenirs that were brought home from our many trips to China, among other things, had to be moved someplace else. And in the midst of that cleaning process, we happened to find the negatives and prints of mine from that period in our life.”*

***– Tokuko Ushioda, 2021***

## An Introduction to Tokuko Ushioda's Early Works circa 1979–83

Miyuki Hinton

On a winter day in early 1979, the storied life of a family of three, Tokuko Ushioda, Shinzō Shimao, and their daughter, Maho Shimao, with her wide, curious eyes, began at the so-called former Ozaki residence—a historic Western-style house built in 1888, with a turquoise-blue façade, that had been dismantled and then relocated near the Gōtokuji-temple—in Setagaya, Tokyo. Photographer Tokuko Ushioda and her husband, Shinzō Shimao, also a photographer, moved with their newborn into a one-room unit with a shared kitchen and a shared bathroom. As such stories do, it happened suddenly. Their move to the second-floor walk-up in the former residence of liberal politician and educator Yukio Ozaki (1858–1954) was prompted by Ushioda when she knocked at the owner's door and rather boldly asked whether there was a vacancy. Her timing couldn't have been more perfect, as a place had opened up just the day before. With her husband, she returned the following day, as warm sunlight was streaming in through a large south-facing window. Upon seeing this, he was delighted to move in.

The family had little in the way of possessions. They owned a few pieces of furniture handed down from their landlord and relatives, making their home, as the photographs portray, decidedly spare in appearance. The 16 vintage prints exhibited are from this period and date from circa 1979 to 1983 and were printed by the artist herself in the 1980s on approximately 10 1/2 by 14 inches photographic paper called photographic paper for aviation, which was available from Mitsubishi at the time; they were taken during the same period as those in Ushioda's acclaimed series *Ice Box*.

Ushioda's 16 photographs were unexpectedly discovered in 2021. This text takes both the photographs and the material objects pictured in them as its focus as it explores Ushioda's day-to-day dealings during this fertile time. Her life during this period centered on education and work, family relationships, artistic individuality and partnership with her husband, and various other elements that commanded her attention, all against the backdrop of a fast-paced society. The vintage photographs are now being presented to the public for the first time, and offer new reflection on the artist's long career.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the academic teaching of photography, then in its infancy in Japan, owed much to Yōko Kuwasawa. When Kuwasawa founded Kuwasawa Design School in 1954, she sought artists to serve as teachers, among them Yasuhiro Ishimoto (1921–2012), who brought in Kiyoji Ōtsuji (1923–2001) in 1958, initially as a substitute during Ishimoto's sabbatical. Then, when Kuwasawa established Tokyo Zōkei University in 1966, Ishimoto asked Ōtsuji to help him establish a photography course there.

Ushioda's style no doubt reflects the legacy of her two teachers Ishimoto and Ōtsuji, with both of whom she studied at Kuwasawa Design School from 1960 to 1963. Methodologically Ushioda's work is situated directly in Ishimoto's lineage. In 1961, when Ushioda was in her second year, Ishimoto returned to Kuwasawa's classroom after taking a three-year hiatus to make new work in Chicago. Ishimoto's regimented teaching methods were as clear and practical as they were impactful. One of the first assignments, as recalled by Ushioda, was to borrow a 6x6cm medium-format camera from the school and photograph the sky with telephone wires inside the frame. Another was to compose a skyscape using the



recipe “eight parts sky, two parts construction.” Ishimoto’s snapshot assignments required taking to the streets and talking to strangers, and those methods were ingrained in Ushioda’s photography. She was taught to ask for the subject’s name and mailing address before taking a portrait so that she could later send a print. This particular influence is visible in much of her magazine work of the 1970s, and also the photographs from her travels to China in the 1980s and 1990s.

Ushioda recalls Ōtsuji’s lessons, in contrast, as being largely informal. His teachings were not structured around assignments. The now-legendary classes were communal, assembled after school, late into the evenings, in the basement atelier of his home, where students paged through photography books and were fed by Ōtsuji’s wife; Robert Frank’s *The Americans* was a favorite, worn almost to the point of disintegration. Ushioda graduated in 1963, but instead of offering to write a job reference as a typical teacher would, Ōtsuji’s words to a departing Ushioda were *daijyōbu desu yo*— “don’t worry, you’ll get by.”

During this time, Ushioda remained in the school’s orbit. She had close family near Ōtsuji’s residence in Yoyogi, and she and Ōtsuji stayed in communication post-graduation. Soon afterward, the faculty of Kuwasawa offered Ushioda work as an adjunct teacher of photography. From the balcony of the Kuwasawa school, located in Shibuya, Tokyo, Ushioda would closely observe Kenzo Tange’s (1913–2005) Yoyogi stadium as it was under construction during the lead-up to the 1964 Olympics. When in 1966 Yōko Kuwasawa became the founder of another, second art school, Tokyo Zōkei University, located in Hachioji-city, Tokyo, Ushioda began teaching photography there, too. Occasionally, there were other classes, such as textile weaving, that called her for help, and she made herself useful, while still unsure whether being a photographer was really her calling. Nonetheless she was getting by, and Ōtsuji’s prophesy proved true, whether or not Ushioda realized it at the time.

Albeit indirectly, it was also through Ōtsuji that Ushioda met her husband Shimaō. Shimaō, a one-time student of Ōtsuji and a 1974 graduate of Tokyo Zōkei University, heard about a “photography teacher” named Ms. Ushioda. He sought her out to ask her to contribute work to one of the many projects he had been organizing circa 1976–77 with fellow artists and friends. This was a high moment in the late 1970s that came to be loosely referred to as an age of “independent Japanese photographers,” and that phrase also inspired the title for Shimaō, photo historian Ryūichi Kaneko (1948–2021), and artist Hiroshi Nagai’s (1951–2011) co-authored *Independent Photographers in Japan 1976–83* (Tokyo: Shashinshoseki), published in 1989. Shimaō was an active agent in a number of those circles of “independent” artists. As Ushioda adapted to her changed life as a newlywed and mother at thirty-eight, the drive for artistic growth of her own seems to have come into clear focus. Her husband, Shimaō, a charismatic yet elusive artist, was routinely photographing scenes of family life. As they both set out to photograph the same subjects in the same setting yet differentiate their bodies of work, Ushioda recalls having made parallels between her style and his, and at times questioning the validity of one over the other; out of this incubation period came a certain maturity. In this respect, the 16 photographs in this exhibition are not only Ushioda’s most private work to date but represent a pivotal moment for the development of her career.

Expanding on the range of subjects from a previous orientation toward 35mm street portraits, Ushioda rigorously incorporated medium-format still life objects, and from that new threshold she put forth her

first critically acclaimed series, *Ice Box*, which she began working on in 1982. In a similar image vocabulary, various old furniture and rugged home interiors are not infused with nostalgia, but are tempered by their usage. An assuring presence created by enduring necessity is often observable. Ushioda's signature manner of seeing, which dates to this period, demonstrates her interest in personal stories that are layered on the surface and lurk in the background of material things.

In this period, the artist couple also started traveling to China on a frequent basis and began to show and publish their photographs together. Their primary venue was the independent space Owl (1979–81), run by a group of artists including themselves. Establishing a hierarchy in their artistic careers may have been on Shimao's mind at this early stage of their companionship. To this day, Shimao often takes on the role of producer, editor, critic, and designer, servicing Ushioda's photographic endeavors. Risk of competition might have been too intense, and discontent could have been bred, had the two not been able to put life before work. But for Shimao, supporting his wife's photographs became a lifelong passion. This is not to say that he ever gave up his own practice. In fact, recently being asked about his decision to take a subordinate role between the two prompted Shimao's quick response with a smile: "I am *not* a subordinate."

Looking back, Ushioda recalls her lifestyle at the time as being "like playing house." Both Ushioda and Shimao took pride and found joy in the idea that they somehow retained a "playfulness" even as they worked, and doing so helped them when they felt very poor in the strong economic society of the 1970s and 1980s that was defining the way of life for many other families. Perhaps this was what motivated them to travel to rural parts of China, to observe another type of societal behavior that decentered what was "normal" in Tokyo.

As we cast our contemporary eyes on Ushioda's photographs from 1979 to 1983, an inevitable question arises: What is the photographs' position in relation to contemporary criticism of gender and domesticity? Vice versa, a photograph taken circa 1979 serves as a device that we can use to interrogate current popular feminist theories. Consideration of Ushioda's biography as well provides a deeper understanding of the photographs' meaning and the artist's historical position.

Yet the contemporary viewer approaching these photographs from 1979 to 1983 should be wary of asking only about gender roles and ignoring other critical aspects and historical context specific to Ushioda's life choices. Highly autobiographical, these photos make clear that Ushioda went against the tide of consumerism of the 1970s and 1980s. While the meaning of iconography surrounding domesticity, mothering, and family has undergone rigorous reconstruction since 1979, Ushioda's photographs lay bare the diversity of positions within the artistic radicalism that is their source. Ushioda was initially unselfconscious about the critical questions and possible arguments raised by her work. It is worth noting that by valuing a photographic language of everyday details over an engagement in critical discourse, Ushioda leaves enough space in this work to include even the blind spots of our myopic and often hyper-focused critical arguments forty years later—arguments conveniently entrenched in the present. Such radicalism itself has a lineage traceable from Ushioda back to Ushioda's teachers: the modernist masters Ishimoto and Ōtsuji. In this context, Ushioda's photographs speak to the dialogue between student and teacher, the way artistic vision gains an afterlife through the act of mentorship, and the evolution of a student staking a claim to her own territory.

Out of her two mentors, perhaps it was Ōtsuji to whom Ushioda was most closely related philosophically. Some years after Ōtsuji's death in 2001, Ushioda photographed his eclectic collection of objects—books, antique toys, rusty tools, and curios—as if they were cloaked under a layer of dust. In her photographs, Ōtsuji's objects that were frozen in time at his atelier come into focus one by one in a gentle silver light. Rendering them on film, Ushioda's camera tasks Ōtsuji's possessions with a mission of remembrance. Across a plane of time of 40-something years, we can observe today in these 16 photographs a decisive moment in Ushioda's private life as she made a home with her husband and daughter. At the same time that they inherited the weighty history of their new home in Setagaya, they also seem to have thrived in an artistic immunity that allowed them to step back from the velocity of contemporary life.

\*All translations from Japanese by Miyuki Hinton.

### *Acknowledgments*

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I thank Sayaka Takahashi of PGI for her introduction to Tokuko and Shinzō several years ago, and for sharing her deep insights into Japanese photography with me.

I am also grateful to Alison Bradley of Alison Bradley Projects, my former teacher who has remained a friend and mentor, for this opportunity, and my gratitude goes to Rebecca Humphreys and Eimi Tagore-Erwin, also of Alison Bradley Projects. Their rigorous questions about the work spurred a rich dialogue that ultimately formed the course of this text.

Last but not least, I thank Tokuko Ushioda and Shinzō Shimaō for the generous amount of time they have spent answering my many questions. It goes without saying that they are a wellspring of constant inspiration and generosity. I know of no other couple always as open and willing as they are to field questions about their work and personal life with honesty, clear objectivity, and always with the most delightful sense of humor.

Miyuki Hinton

Early Works (circa 1979–83)



**Tokuko Ushioda**

*Untitled 001*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date 1981

Printed 1980s

Paper size (hand-cut by the artist) approx. 11.5 x 10 inches

Image size approx. 9.5 x 6.7 inches

Matted size 16 x 20 inches

Signed on verso in pencil

PROVENANCE

Artist

A photograph taken while defrosting a refrigerator. It is believed that this was the inspiration for Ushioda's critically acclaimed series *Ice Box*.



**Tokuko Ushioda**

*Untitled 002*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date circa 1982

Printed 1980s

Paper size (hand-cut by the artist) approx. 11.5 x 10 inches

Image size approx. 7.5 x 7.6 inches

Matted size 16 x 20 inches

Signed on verso in pencil

**PROVENANCE**

Artist

Kettle, pot, and frying pan from a simple stove supplied by Tokyo Gas. Del Monte canned pineapple. As Ushioda reminisced in a 2021 statement: “In our makeshift kitchen that looked like a playhouse set, we used a lid from a sweets container as our cutting-board and a small fruit knife for preparing our meals.” The iconography of a kettle and pot do not live in a class of the “domestic realm,” an often restrictive space where women were marginalized before these norms were challenged. Nor do they, in reverse, symbolize a reclamation or cynical rebuttal that challenge those types of strategic imagery. Here, Ushioda’s kitchen signifies an art of making do, and this corner in her home was where she took command as the private chef of the family. However subtle, we may read this as a feminist statement, in which Ushioda makes a clear distinction between the two positions—feminist nonaggression, and female submission.



**Tokuko Ushioda**

*Untitled 003*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date 1983

Printed 1980s

Paper size (hand-cut by the artist) approx. 11.5 x 10 inches

Image size approx. 7.5 x 7.6 inches

Matted size 16 x 20 inches

Signed on verso in pencil

#### PROVENANCE

Artist

Snow falls on the tin-rooftop house and Gōtokuji forest outside the south-facing window of Ushioda and Shimao's room.



**Tokuko Ushioda**

*Untitled 004*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date 1981

Printed 1980s

Paper size (hand-cut by the artist) approx. 11.5 x 10 inches

Image size approx. 7.2 x 7.2 inches

Matted size 16 x 20 inches

Signed on verso in pencil

#### PROVENANCE

Artist

Curtains on a tall cabinet that serves as a storage loft. The calendar says March 1981, and a toaster and a small refrigerator are pictured. The clocks, normally a signifier of timekeeping, seem to be tricking us purposefully. Why are there two clocks? We may hear the slightly amplified ticking in unison. Occasionally, one clock would run behind and would need to be wound by its owner, Shimaou.



**Tokuko Ushioda**

*Untitled 005*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date 1983

Printed 1980s

Paper size (hand-cut by the artist) approx. 11.5 x 10 inches

Image size approx. 7.5 x 7.6 inches

Matted size 16 x 20 inches

Signed on verso in pencil

#### PROVENANCE

Artist

A Hello Kitty apron for children, a rabbit mask made of wool with bright eyes, towels, and a bag hanging on a doorknob. On the left shelf are a handy tape recorder and two flashlights. Remarkably few things in the photographs bear commercial logos, which give away the time period in which Ushioda lived. Hello Kitty and Donald Duck, as well as a can of Del Monte pineapple, are the few exceptions. And while those are ubiquitous and therefore still make it difficult to pin down the exact time period, they also suggest an iconography related to a modest way of life. In this type of sociological reading of codes, the most widely marketable image of “home” out of these 16 photographs is the pie that is pictured in front of the child-size Hello Kitty apron.





**Tokuko Ushioda**

*Untitled 006*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date 1982

Printed 1980s

Paper size (hand-cut by the artist) approx. 11.5 x 10 inches

Image size approx. 7.4 x 7.4 inches

Matted size 16 x 20 inches

Signed on verso in pencil

#### PROVENANCE

Artist

Piles of bedding and clothes, paper bags on the floor. A Donald Duck print suggesting the presence of a child.



**Tokuko Ushioda**

*Untitled 007*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date 1982

Printed 1980s

Paper size (hand-cut by the artist) approx. 11.5 x 10 inches

Image size approx. 7.4 x 7.4 inches

Matted size 16 x 20 inches

Signed on verso in pencil

#### PROVENANCE

Artist

Husband Shinzō Shimao and his friend, photographer Chōtoku Tanaka, playing with a 16mm film camera.



**Tokuko Ushioda**

*Untitled 008*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date 1980

Printed 1980s

Paper size (hand-cut by the artist) approx. 11.5 x 10 inches

Image size approx. 6.8 x 9.5 inches

Matted size 16 x 20 inches

Signed on verso in pencil

#### PROVENANCE

Artist

Two children playing on the stairs, covered with a sheet or towel. According to Ushioda, they are playing “ghost.”



**Tokuko Ushioda**

*Untitled 009*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date 1981

Printed 1980s

Paper size (hand-cut by the artist) approx. 11.5 x 10 inches

Image size approx. 7.1 x 9.5 inches

Matted size 16 x 20 inches

Signed on verso in pencil

PROVENANCE

Artist

A 16mm camera projector in a room that looks like a salon.



**Tokuko Ushioda**

*Untitled 010*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date early 1980s

Printed 1980s

Paper size (hand-cut by the artist) approx. 11.5 x 10 inches

Image size approx. 7.5 x 7.6 inches

Matted size 16 x 20 inches

Signed on verso in pencil

**PROVENANCE**

Artist

Two girls look through the window of a tin-roofed house on the neighboring property, shot from the window of the room. The long, makeshift chimney of the neighboring house is in the picture. Quoted from Ushioda's text in the publication *Bibliotheca* (Genkishobo, 2017): "*From the second-story room my husband and I had rented, we could see right across through the window the research lab of entomologist Okada Toyohi, located in his home. On occasion I spotted him burning the midnight oil. Once we found flocks of drosophila with red eyes that looked like they had come from his house. After he passed away, his family decided to tear down the house.*"



**Tokuko Ushioda**

*Untitled 011*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date circa 1983

Printed 1980s

Paper size (hand-cut by the artist) approx. 11.5 x 10 inches

Image size approx. 7 x 9.5 inches

Matted size 16 x 20 inches

Signed on verso in pencil

#### PROVENANCE

Artist

At night, a child is filmed in the backseat of a car, lifting her foot to a front window. Only the feet can be seen in the picture. According to Ushioda, the photo was taken in Ryūichi Kaneko's car. The lights of a commercial building are shining brightly.



**Tokuko Ushioda**

*Untitled 012*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date 1985

Printed 1980s

Paper size (hand-cut by the artist) approx. 11.5 x 10 inches

Image size approx. 7.5 x 7.6 inches

Matted size 16 x 20 inches

Signed on verso in pencil

#### PROVENANCE

Artist

A tablecloth hangs over a lamp in the house. An oil lamp decorates the frame of a south-facing window. The Encyclopedia Britannica, first published in Japan in 1972, a television set that is old-fashioned for the time, and dolls block a door leading to the neighbor's room. The family's progressively intellectual tendency and inclination to invest in artistic production are demonstrated by the contrast between the modest "essential" consumer goods juxtaposed with brand-name "non-essential" items on the opposite end of the scale, such as the encyclopedia and a 16mm film camera and projector.



**Tokuko Ushioda**

*Untitled 013*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date circa 1981

Printed 1980s

Paper size (hand-cut by the artist) approx. 11.5 x 10 inches

Image size approx. 7.5 x 7.6 inches

Matted size 16 x 20 inches

Signed on verso in pencil

#### PROVENANCE

Artist

A child, Ushioda's daughter, Maho, is lying on her stomach in a high chair. The husband's leg resting on the chair can be seen on the far right. On the south windowsill is an icon of an infant Jesus Christ. A bundle of notes and envelopes stapled together. A young Ushioda gazed unselfconsciously through the lens at her daughter and her husband and depicts her home as a place where each family member inhabits an individual space, seemingly independent from one another.





**Tokuko Ushioda**

*Untitled 014*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date early 1980s

Printed 1980s

Paper size (hand-cut by the artist) approx. 11.5 x 10 inches

Image size approx. 6.5 x 9.4 inches

Matted size 16 x 20 inches

Signed on verso in pencil

PROVENANCE

Artist

Chairs for the parlor. Round table. The house of a relative.



**Tokuko Ushioda**

*Untitled 015*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date circa 1970s

Printed 1980s

Paper size (hand-cut by the artist) approx. 11.5 x 10 inches

Image size approx. 7.5 x 7.6 inches

Matted size 16 x 20 inches

Signed on verso in pencil

PROVENANCE

Artist

Sheep on a poster hung by the landlord and a fluorescent light under the stairs.



**Tokuko Ushioda**

*Untitled 016*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date 1982

Printed 1980s

Paper size (hand-cut by the artist) approx. 11.5 x 10 inches

Image size approx. 7.5 x 7.6 inches

Matted size 16 x 20 inches

Signed on verso in pencil

PROVENANCE

Artist

Radio and a stack of old newspaper. Ushioda and Shimao's child hides behind an umbrella.

Modern Prints from the series *My Husband*



**Tokuko Ushioda**

*Untitled*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date 1981

Printed 2021

Paper size 11 x 14 inches

Signed on verso

PROVENANCE

Artist



**Tokuko Ushioda**

*Untitled*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date 1980

Printed 2021

Paper size 11 x 14 inches

Signed on verso

PROVENANCE

Artist



**Tokuko Ushioda**

*Untitled*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date 1983

Printed 2021

Paper size 11 x 14 inches

Signed on verso

PROVENANCE

Artist



**Tokuko Ushioda**

*Untitled*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date 1981

Printed 2021

Paper size 11 x 14 inches

Signed on verso

PROVENANCE

Artist



**Tokuko Ushioda**

*Untitled*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date 1978

Printed 2021

Paper size 11 x 14 inches

Signed on verso

PROVENANCE

Artist





**Tokuko Ushioda**

*Untitled*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date 1979

Printed 2021

Paper size 11 x 14 inches

Signed on verso

PROVENANCE

Artist



**Tokuko Ushioda**

*Untitled*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date circa 1979

Printed 2021

Paper size 11 x 14 inches

Signed on verso

PROVENANCE

Artist



**Tokuko Ushioda**

*Untitled*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date 1979

Printed 2021

Paper size 11 x 14 inches

Signed on verso

PROVENANCE

Artist



**Tokuko Ushioda**

*Untitled*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date 1981

Printed 2021

Paper size 11 x 14 inches

Signed on verso

PROVENANCE

Artist



**Tokuko Ushioda**

*Untitled*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date 1981

Printed 2021

Paper size 11 x 14 inches

Signed on verso

PROVENANCE

Artist

**Diptychs from the series *Ice Box***



**Tokuko Ushioda**

*Untitled, Set from the series Ice Box*

Gelatin Silver Print

Printed 2008

Paper size 8 x 10 inches

Signed and dated on verso

PROVENANCE

Artist

## CV

### Solo Exhibitions

- 2018 *Domon Ken Award Winner's Exhibition*, BIBLIOTHECA, Ken Domon Museum of Photography (Yamagata)  
*Domon Ken Award Winner's Exhibition*, BIBLIOTHECA, The Gallery, Nikon Plaza (Shinjuku, Osaka)
- 2017 *BIBLIOTHECA*, PGI, Tokyo  
*BIBLIOTHECA*, Galerie 412, Tokyo
- 2010 *BIBLIOTHECA*, Morioka Shoten, Tokyo
- 2009 *ICE BOX*, CAFÉ UNIZON, Okinawa
- 2008 *ICE BOX*, Port Gallery T, Osaka
- 2006 *BIBLIOTHECA*, Imbrie Hall Meiji Gakuin University, Tokyo
- 2004 *Bookmart*, Contemporary Photo Gallery, Tokyo
- 2003 *BIBLIOTHECA*, Waseda University Library, Tokyo  
*BIBLIOTHECA*, Contemporary Photo Gallery, Tokyo  
*BIBLIOTHECA*, The 5th Library Fair at Tokyo International Forum
- 2002 *Seika/Sacred Song*, Contemporary Photo Gallery, Tokyo
- 2001 *HATS*, Contemporary Photo Gallery, Tokyo
- 1999 *ICE BOX*, Setagaya Lifestyle Design Center, Tokyo
- 1998 *ICE BOX*, Art Gallery Artium, Tokyo
- 1994 *HATS*, Gallery MOLE, Tokyo
- 1992 *ICE BOX*, Tokyo Design Center, Tokyo
- 1989 *Seikatsu/LIFE*, Film Round Gallery, Tokyo
- 1976 *Hoboemi no tejo/Smile was handcuffed*, Shinjuku Nikon Salon, Tokyo

### Group Exhibitions

- 2021 *Anneke Hymmen & Kumi Hiroi, Tokuko Ushioda, Mari Katayama, Maiko Haruki, Mayumi Hosokura, and Your Perspectives*, Shiseido Gallery, Tokyo
- 2019 *A Bright Home*, Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Hiroshima
- 2018 *The Higashikawa Awards*, Award Winning Exhibition, Higashikawa Bunka Gallery, Hokkaido  
*The Photographic Society of Japan Awards*, Winner's Exhibition, Fujifilm Square, Tokyo  
*A Moveable Feast*, Xian Memories Museum, Xian, China
- 2016 *Dislocations*, Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, MA
- 2015 *The Kaji House*, Hayama, Kanagawa
- 2012 *Reinventing Tokyo*, Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, Amherst, MA
- 2008 *China/Bibliotheca/Manga*, Lee Ka-sing Gallery, Toronto, Canada
- 2004 *Maho-chan-chi (Maho-chan's Lovely Home)*, Contemporary Art Gallery, Art Tower Mito, Ibaraki
- 1995 *Tokyo/City of Photo*, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, Tokyo

- 1989 *6•un•expressionism*, FROG, Tokyo  
1982 *China Life Report*, Polaroid Gallery, Tokyo  
1981 *Jinwa Jinminkosha*, OWL, Tokyo

### **Awards**

- 2019 Kuwasawa Special Award  
2018 The 37th Domon Ken Award  
Lifetime Achievement Award, Photographic Society of Japan Awards  
Domestic Photographer Award, The 34th Higashikawa Awards

### **Publications**

- BIBLIOTHECA*, Genkishobou, 2017  
*My Teacher's Atelier*, Genkishobou 2017  
*Misuzu*, Genkishobou, 2016  
*HATS*, Parol, 2004  
*ICE BOX*, Beebooks, 1996  
*Chinese People*, Self-published, 1986

### **Collections**

- Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, USA  
Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, Amherst, USA  
Kyushu Sangyo University, Fukuoka, Japan  
National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, Japan  
Tokyo Photographic Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan  
Ken Domon Museum of Photography, Yamagata, Japan  
Japan Higashikawa Town, Hokkaido, Japan



## YASUHIRO ISHIMOTO

### Biography

Yasuhiro Ishimoto (石元泰博, *Ishimoto Yasuhiro*, b. San Francisco, 1921–2012) was a Japanese-American photographer. Photographer and critic Minor White called Ishimoto a “visual bilinguist,” due to Ishimoto’s development of a subtle syncretism of Eastern and Western aesthetic sensibilities in capturing both fleeting human moments and stolid urban architecture during his long career.

Ishimoto was born in California and raised in his parents’ hometown in Kōchi Prefecture in Japan. After graduating from high school in Japan in 1939, he returned to California to work and study in agriculture until he and his family were subjected to internment in the remote plains of Colorado at the Amache Internment Camp from 1942 to 1944. During this period of internment, Ishimoto began to learn photographic techniques from fellow Japanese-Americans. He returned to Chicago in 1944 after his release, briefly studying architecture at Northwestern University in 1946—he did not finish the program, but architecture remained central to his career thereafter.

Ishimoto’s photographic career began when he joined the Fort Dearborn Camera Club in 1947 (now Fort Dearborn-Chicago Photo Forum) upon introduction by Japanese-American photographer Harry Kinzi Shigeta. His work was well-received in the club and won many competitions. At Shigeta’s recommendation, Ishimoto enrolled at the Institute of Design (ID) of the Illinois Institute of Technology, also known as The New Bauhaus (the American descendent of the German Bauhaus). At ID, Ishimoto studied Bauhaus aesthetics before entering the photography department, where his instructors included renowned American photographer Harry M. Callahan. Ishimoto was the recipient of numerous photography awards, including the Moholy-Nagy Scholarship during his 3rd and 4th years of study. In 1955, Edward Steichen selected Ishimoto’s work for the legendary *Family of Man* exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York. From the 1950s on, Ishimoto also experimented in color, producing vibrant, multi-exposure abstractions for the design magazine *Approach*, studies of the Katsura Imperial Villa in Kyoto, and a full-size reproduction of Monet’s immense *Water Lilies* triptych at MoMA. In 1969, he published a photo book of monochrome street scenes, *Chicago, Chicago* (シカゴ、シカゴ), which cemented his reputation as a keen observer of city life; at the time, he was also teaching at various design schools in Tokyo. In 1996, the Cabinet of Japan named him a Person of Cultural Merit.

Ishimoto’s work can be found in many major institutions including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Art Institute of Chicago; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo; the Museum of Art, Kochi; and the Bauhaus-Archiv/Museum für Gestaltung, Berlin.



**Yasuhiro Ishimoto**

*Japan c.1950s-60s*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date circa 1950s-60s

Printed early 1980s

Paper size 11 x 14 inches

Signed and blind stamped on recto

PROVENANCE

Artist

In Ishimoto's work, one can find a confluence of iconography that is reflective of the photographer's Japanese-American personal roots as well as the post-war, post-occupation moment in which this photograph was taken. The highly formalist construction of *Japan c.1950s-60s* is an iconic representation of Ishimoto's snapshot photography as he skillfully captured the mood of this tumultuous era on the streets of Tokyo.

The sense of formal abstraction evidenced in this work is clearly a testament to Ishimoto's highly influential teacher, Harry M. Callahan at the Chicago Institute of Design. The extreme contrast of the print and reduction of form are resonant of Callahan's signature style, an approach that Ishimoto incorporated into his own work. The exacting structure of the image, with its clearly slanted lines abounding, also alludes to Ishimoto's earlier study of architecture at Northwestern University and his ongoing intellectual association with the leading architects of the time, Walter Gropius and Kenzō Tange, with whom he collaborated for their celebrated book *Katsura, Tradition and Creation in Japanese Architecture* (1960).

The stark white stockings of a modern Japanese woman wearing traditional *geta*, or wooden clogs, are counterbalanced by the dark silhouette of the architectural structure of the traditional building behind her, as well as the tiled details of the building in the background. The draped car, a nod to Americanization and the concurrent cultural mix of the post-occupation years in Japan, is reminiscent of an image one might see by Robert Frank, the well-known photographer of American culture from the same era—another figure that was hugely influential within the Japanese photo community.



**Yasuhiro Ishimoto**

*Informal Stone Pavement and Stepping Stones in Front of the Koshojin*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date circa 1953-54

Printed early 1985

Paper size 11 x 14 inches

Signed and embossed on recto

PROVENANCE

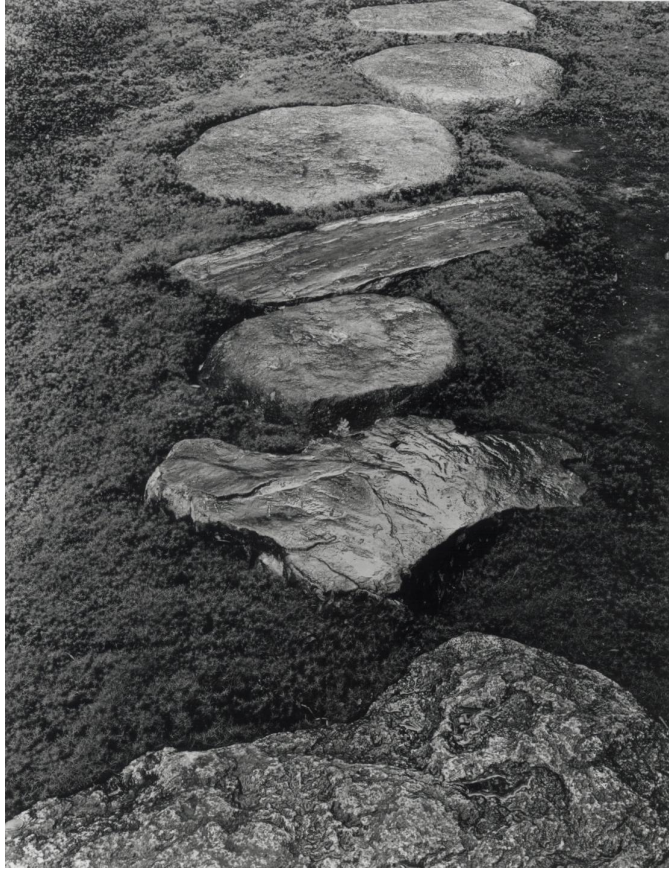
Artist

Ishimoto first visited the Katsura Imperial Villa in Kyoto in 1953, when he was invited by Edward Steichen, then the photography curator at MoMA, to aid in research on Japanese traditional architecture for an upcoming exhibition. Having studied a combination of American photographic theory and Bauhaus design at Chicago's Institute of Design, as well as architecture at Northwestern University, Ishimoto immediately recognized the potential of the Katsura Imperial Villa as a modern subject. He returned for an extended stay in 1954, photographing the villa and its beautiful gardens over the course of a month with his 4 x 5 German Linhof camera.

The two prints from the early 1950s of the garden pathways in the grounds of the Katsura are representative of the extensive body of work that the photographer then arranged to be published in 1960 as the influential book *Katsura, Tradition and Creation in Japanese Architecture*, for which he collaborated with Herbert Bayer, Kenzō Tange, and Walter Gropius. This book served as an important contribution to the growing international interest in postwar Japanese art at the time—and in particular, the convergence of the fields of photography and architecture.

In the early 1980s, Ishimoto visited Katsura again after the villa had undergone a renovation process that restored much of its original decoration and ornamentation. Capturing these shifts with the same 4 x 5 German Linhof camera, Ishimoto focused his lens on the renovated details of the interior, embracing a broader visual sensibility informed by two decades of photographic work since his earlier shots of the Katsura. A significant group of these images make up his second publication on the villa, entitled *Katsura Villa: Space and Form*, published in 1983 in collaboration with Arata Isozaki. The two prints from Ishimoto's visit to Katsura in the early 1980s invite viewers to observe the evolving nature of a particular location as well as Ishimoto's photographic practice.

In Ishimoto's photographs from both the 1950s and 1980s, the photographer's lens deftly captured traditional elements of Japanese architecture and landscape design through his Western training, exploring the boundaries between interior and exterior while highlighting the villa's material construction. He emphasized line and form, as well as texture and pattern in ways that formally abstracted the traditional villa's recognizable structure. Each of these four prints are titled with their specific location at the Katsura Imperial Villa, offering insight into the placement of Ishimoto and his camera, as well as allowing viewers to observe the timeless beauty of its design.



**Yasuhiro Ishimoto**

*Stepping Stones to the Okoshikake*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date circa 1953-54

Printed early 1980s

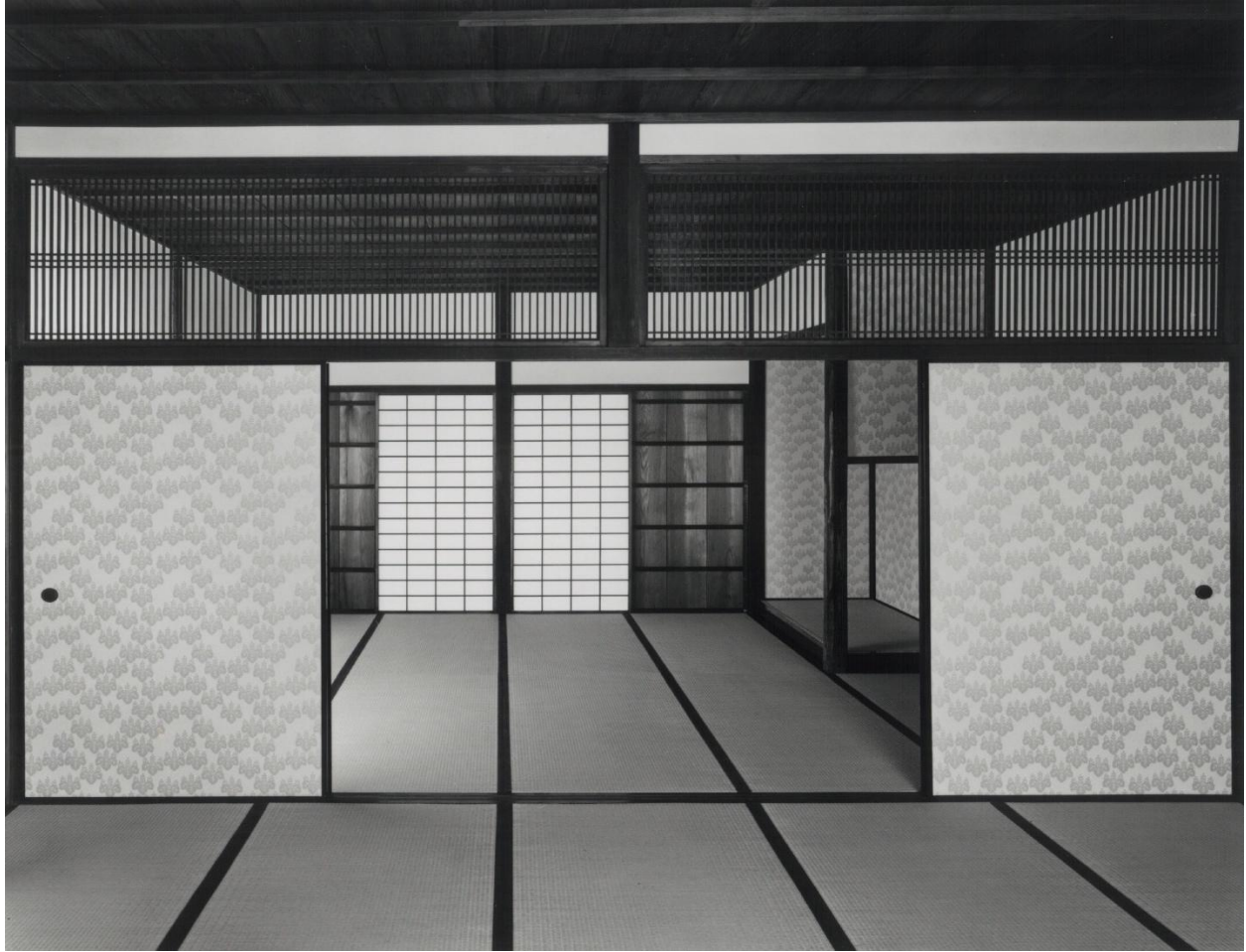
Paper size 11 x 14 inches

Signed and embossed on recto

PROVENANCE

Artist





**Yasuhiro Ishimoto**

*Koshojin: View of the First Room from the Second Room*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date circa 1981-1982

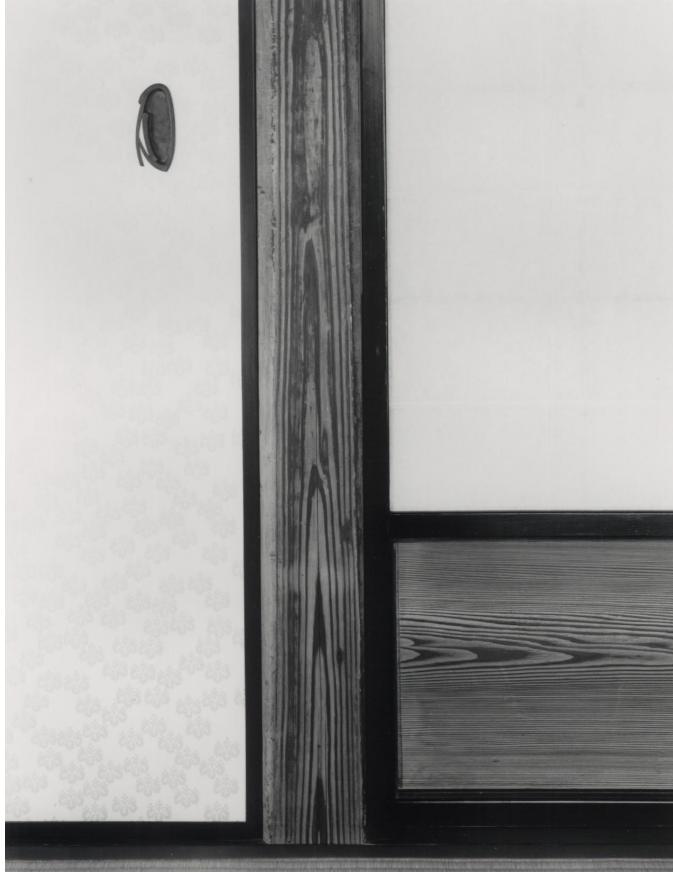
Printed early 1985

Paper size 11 x 14 inches

Signed and embossed on recto

PROVENANCE

Artist



**Yasuhiro Ishimoto**

*Lower Part of the Column Between the Main and Second Room of the New Goten*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date circa 1981-1982

Printed after 1985

Paper size 11 x 14 inches

Signed and embossed on recto

PROVENANCE

Artist



## KIYOJI ŌTSUJI

### Biography

Kiyoji Ōtsuji (大辻 清司, *Ōtsuji Kiyoji*, b. Tokyo, 1923–2001) was a Japanese photographer active in the avant-garde art world in Japan after World War II. He created his own experimental and sculptural photographs and took widely circulated documentary photographs of other artists and art projects. He was deeply inspired by the photography criticism of Shūzō Takiguchi and Abe Nobuya and went on to become an authority on photography as well, extensively publishing texts—both criticism and theory—that have widely influenced later generations.

Ōtsuji graduated from the Tokyo Professional School of Photography in 1944. At the beginning of his photography career, Ōtsuji worked mostly in the field of commercial photography, creating studio work and magazine photographs. He first worked as a photographer at Takabayashi Studio run by Takafusa and Yasushi Takabayashi, before meeting Yoshishige Saitō in 1947 and joining the magazine *Katei Bunka (Home Culture)*, where he worked for one year. Ōtsuji opened his own photography studio in Sendagaya, Tokyo, in 1947. In 1953, together with Kosaku Ito and Hamao Hamada, Ōtsuji founded the photography and design studio Graphic Group. Thereafter, he participated in the interdisciplinary avant-garde art collective Jikken Kōbō (Experimental Workshop), which brought together young musicians and artists under the mentorship of Takiguchi.

Ōtsuji also left behind a significant legacy as a teacher: from 1960, he taught at Kuwasawa Design School, Tokyo Zōkei University, University of Tsukuba, and Kyushu Sangyō University, among other places. His students include Tokuko Ushioda, Yutaka Takanashi, Shinzō Shimao, Shigeo Gochō and Naoya Hatakeyama. Among Ōtsuji's main exhibits include *Kiyoji Ōtsuji Exhibition* at Tokyo Gallery (1987), *Kiyoji Ōtsuji Retrospective – Experimental Workshop of Photography* at The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (1999), and *Kiyoji Ōtsuji: Encounter and Collaboration* at The Shōtō Museum of Art, Tokyo (2007). Ōtsuji's photographic archives are held by the Musashino Art University Museum & Library. Prints of his photographs are also held in the institutional collections such as the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo; the Tate Modern, London; the Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; and M+, Hong Kong. He received The Photographic Society of Japan Distinguished Contributions Award in 1996.



**Kiyoji Ōtsuji**

*OBJET*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date circa 1950

Printed circa 1987 by the artist

Image & Paper size approx. 8 ¾ x 6 ⅛ inches

PROVENANCE

Ōtsuji Estate

In 1949, Ōtsuji joined Bijutsu Bunka Kyōkai (Art and Culture Association), an association of anti-war surrealist painters and poets central in bringing back surrealist ideas that had been censored and criminalized during the war. Ōtsuji had experienced the war himself; his studies at the Tokyo Professional School of Photography were interrupted when he was drafted into the army and trained as an aircraft mechanic. Influenced by the guidance of Shūzō Takiguchi and fellow Bijutsu Bunka member Nobuya Abe, Ōtsuji explored the surrealist notion of *objet d'art* in the postwar period, with an aim to defamiliarize and activate the reverberant poetry of objects in ways that might confront the viewers' subconscious.

*OBJET* (printed by the artist in 1987) was part of a series of photographs Ōtsuji shot in Abe's studio in 1950, exploring the prominence of the nude in 1950s photography in which female representation was a vehicle for visualizing modernity. The photographs from this series depict female models, including Jikken Kōbō (Experimental Workshop) member Hideko Fukushima, posed by Ōtsuji in Abe's studio within a geometric network of strings. Some historians have asserted that the series is a direct response to the sexual and spiritual "liberation" of the 1950s, arguing that Ōtsuji's suspension of the nude female body amongst strings like a puppet or doll is a metaphor for the paradoxical position of the Japanese *kokutai*, or national body, in 1950—both liberated and restricted under the US occupation. Ōtsuji seems to investigate the objectification of the nude by deliberately hiding the model's face behind a cloth, as can be observed in *OBJET*—in contrast to another photo from the series in which the model's nude form is posed next to the empowered gaze of the fully clothed Hideko Fukushima. Ōtsuji continued to explore the presence of objects for the rest of his career, but this series is unique in that the photographer's hand is made particularly obvious in the provocative staging of the composition.

This rare print of *OBJET* was printed by Ōtsuji himself for his retrospective exhibition in 1987 at Tokyo Gallery. It is one of eight total recognized prints; one is in the Boston Museum and the others belong to the collection of Musashino Art University.



**Kiyoji Ōtsuji**

*Foam is Created*

Gelatin Silver Print

Negative date circa 1953

Printed 1953 by the artist

Still from automatic slide projection "Foam is Created" by Hideko and her brother, Kazuo Fukushima, at the 5th Jikken Kōbō (Experimental Workshop) Presentation in 1953

Image & Paper size approx. 12 ¼ x 10 ⅛ inches

PROVENANCE

Ōtsuji Estate

Ōtsuji became involved with members of the cross-disciplinary avant-garde art collective Jikken Kōbō (Experimental Workshop) following his photographic collaborations with founding member Hideko Fukushima in 1950, and his deep interest in the works of their mentor Takiguchi Shūzō. In 1953, Ōtsuji collaborated directly with Jikken Kōbō members Shōzō Kitadai and Katsuhiro Yamaguchi on a project for the weekly graphic magazine *Asabi Picture News* (a serialized section of *Asabi Graph*), with their photos being featured in 71 issues of the magazine between 1953-1954.

The photographic collaboration with Kitadai and Yamaguchi led to Ōtsuji's involvement with Jikken Kōbō's concurrent "autoslide" project at the 5th Experimental Workshop Presentation at Daiichi Seimei Hall in 1953, an endeavor sponsored by Tokyo Tsūshin Kōgyō, the predecessor of Sony. Jikken Kōbō's goal was to utilize the newly developed autoslide device, an automated combination tape recorder and slide projector, to synchronize sound and slides for the first time in the field of art. Ōtsuji contributed photographs of the group's autoslide projections for the 5th Experimental Workshop Presentation, an event which is historically acclaimed as one of the earliest "intermedia endeavors" and a significant confluence of technological experimentation, art, audio, and theatre.

*Foam is Created* (*Minawa wa tsukurareru*, negative date 1953), is a rare vintage print of composition of 66 autoslide projection (6:18-minute) of the same name exhibited at the 5th Experimental Workshop by Hideko Fukushima and her younger brother Kazuo, who composed the music that synchronized with Hideko's visual composition. The original slides and tape were lost along with Jikken Kōbō's other autoslide works, making this print a rare and insightful window into the elusive content of the 1953 multimedia event. As the original work was lost, not much is known about the multimedia *happōkai* (happening), but it is speculated that the Fukushima siblings aimed to cross genres by fusing art, music, and technology for their multifaceted piece—adding an organic element by using light and a foam/bubble machine of some kind to create a Bauhaus-inspired, futuristic arrangement. Ōtsuji continued to photograph Jikken Kōbō's events and rehearsals until they dispersed in 1957.

Courtesy of Alison Bradley Projects, Miyuki Hinton, Tokuko Ushioda, Yasuhiro Ishimoto, and Kiyoji Ōtsuji

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