

My Artistic View

A time span of human's life is extremely short compared to the life of the earth and the universe. Human beings can exist only for brief time, live everyday life in a small range and visit finite number of places in one's life. We are bound by time and space. For example, it is impossible for us to be at multiple locations at the same time. Moreover, you cannot go back to the past, or go to the future. We live in moment in a limited

Our surroundings are not intended to be beautiful. They just exist as they are. Human being, however, can find beauty in them. Not only that, everyone has a distinct sense of beauty. The difference brings about the uniqueness of each person. We value and enjoy the diversity. I would like to share my own surprise and happiness when I find beauty in the land where I live. I believe that the success of my work is entirely dependent on whether I can sublimate my personal aesthetics into universal beauty by the aid of camera and photography.

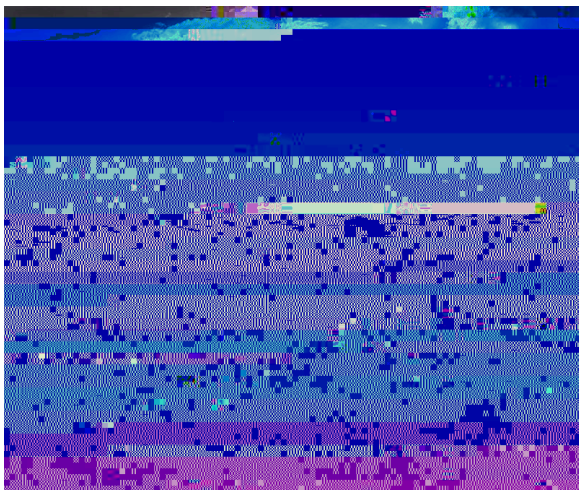
To take advantage of the full capability of photography, I always try to keep my eyes wide open to new trends as well as eagerly research its history and past works. I apply this knowledge to my artistic expression and try to find my own way in the art of photography.

My Artistic Traditions

After becoming an MFA student, I began to build my photography book library and to learn photography's history and the great artworks of the medium. I own almost three hundred photography books now, and have some knowledge that enables me to trace the rough outline of the history of photography. In the presence of my accumulated knowledge of camera development and the vast quality and quantity of photographs taken by many photographers dealing with rich variety of theme like place, theory, ideology and identity, I feel everything has been done already. In the relatively short history of photography, less than two hundred years, a staggering number of photographic artworks have been accomplished. Photography is not only for art, but for the general public too. The recent popularity of digital cameras has made this trend more ubiquitous. There are photographs of all kinds of styles, materials, forms, colors, sizes and ideas today. What can I do to add to the history of photography today? There is no room for me. I was floored by this realization and I felt there was nothing left for me to do with

provide, but there are differences. Humans cannot fix our sight nor focus on our entire view, because our eyes are always moving and can only focus in the center area of the sight. We also don't live in the past, nor stay in a particular moment. We live only in the present and feel reality as a continuous and steady stream as time flows. On the other hand, a camera device can capture images with the entire field of view in perfect focus. The entirely focused image eliminates the depth and creates a flat two-dimensional surface, which is impossible with the human eyes. A camera also enables us to fix the view and capture a scene in front of us as a framed image in a time span from a fragment of one second to several seconds, minutes, hours or longer. While the time span differs according to each photograph, the captured picture shows an image of a length of time through a specified format like square or rectangle. These functions of cameras are different from our way of seeing and enhance our capability. Photography has a photographic reality as we have human reality.

For example, Ansel Adams explored the capacity of the camera to achieve his pre-visualized image in his mind and in his works we find beautiful photographic reality. He



explained in his book, “I drove my station wagon to a place I had often visited. Never before had the conditions been right for me at this location, but this time there was a glorious storm going on in the mountains. ... I pointed the camera down a little and tilted the back to hold both the near rocks and the distant peaks in sharp focus.” and “several times I moved the car a few feet to position the camera precisely for

the composition of boulders and peaks.”⁴ His photograph (Figure 2) and explanation reveal that carefully set-up compositions, precise focus, and a critically decisive moment are the key to achieving this pre-visualized image. The characteristics of his photographs, accomplished by Adams’ deep knowledge and abundant experience, are derived from the camera’s function which is the enhancement of our way of seeing. As Ansel Adams and many others, photographers have traditionally pursued the photographic reality and have enjoyed the pictures produced by a camera device which has expanded-functions of human vision. And now, it’s my turn. How do I take advantage of photographic reality?

One of the characteristics of the expanded-functions of the human vision, flatness, has been important attribute of my works. Recently, I have realized that I have tendency to use this visual flatness, which is also common throughout the history of Japanese art, in my photograph’s composition. Born and raised in Japan, I was strongly influenced by Japanese artists like woodcuts printmakers like Hokusai Katsushika and Hiroshige Ando who made great landscape woodcuts prints called “Ukiyo

for me as an artist.

us vividly recall the moment when we were there at that time in that space, and we will never encounter the moment again. Consequently, we sense immense nostalgia from photography. Thus photography is naturally endowed with a potential to evoke melancholy. This is a great attribute innately bestowed on the photographic reality, and I think it's the key to develop new artistic expressions in my photography. I hope to consciously create photographs that evoke the wistful feeling in viewers' mind.

I will keep exploring the medium and search for the better way to sublimate my personal feeling and aesthetics into a universal appreciation. In that way, I can call myself a photographer and live my own life.