

Media Release

**HIRSHHORN
MUSEUM**

 Smithsonian

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**Hirshhorn Announces Major Acquisition of Japanese
Avant-Garde Photography
11 Important Works Span 1960s and '70s**



The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden announced the acquisition of 11 new photographic works—its first by major figures **Eikoh Hosoe**, **Minoru Hirata**, **Tatsuo Kawaguchi**, **Miyako Ishiuchi**, **Kōji Enokura** and **Takashi Arai**—introducing an unprecedented critical history of the postwar Japanese avant-garde to the museum’s collection. These acquisitions build on the Hirshhorn’s commitment to global modernism across media and to creating a core collection devoted to innovation and experimentation in Japanese postwar art.

Some of the most significant contributions to the art of photography have come from Japan, and

these newly acquired works provide fresh insight into the use of photography to capture a new artistic interest in conceptual art practice and performance art, Postminimalism, Conceptualism and Mono-ha (School of Things), and reinforce the museum's commitment to championing important artists and artistic movements across the globe.

The additions join "Rhyme-S" (1960), the Hirshhorn's recently acquired painting by acclaimed Japanese artist Natsuyuki Nakanishi, in exploring the avant-garde of the 1960s. Nakanishi's absurdist street performances, staged as part of the experimental collective Hi Red Center, are captured in "**Nakanishi Natsuyuki's Clothespins Assert Churning Action**" (1963) by **Hirata** (b. 1930) humorously mocking the city's rapid sanitization efforts in preparation for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. Working in Tokyo in the same period, **Hosoe** (b. 1933) is best known for his psychologically charged images, epitomized by the surrealist "**Man and Woman #24**" (1960) and "**Kamaitachi #24**," which documented an improvisational performance by the legendary founder of Ankoku Butoh (Dance of Darkness), Tatsumi Hijikata.

Created for the 1970 Tokyo Biennale, "**Land and Sea**" by **Kawaguchi** (b. 1940) consists of 24 photographs that record four wooden planks, cut from a single log, floating along a sea current for three days. The serial nature of photography offers a means to incorporate temporal elements that invariably "sculpt time." **Enokura** (b. Tokyo, 1942–1995), a seminal artist associated with the Mono-ha movement, is known for depicting the relationship of the body to its surroundings, such as in "**Symptom—Sea, Body (P.W.-No. 40)**" (1972), or ephemeral passages, such as in "**Symptom—Lump of Lead to the Sky: Mountain in Nagano (P.W.-No. 47)**" (1972) or "**Symptom—Floor, Hand (P.W.-No. 51)**" (1974).

"**Apartment #9**" (1977–78) by **Ishiuchi** (b. 1947) documents the artist's memories spent in the cramped, crumbling postwar apartment complexes made common in the subterranean decay of the post-oil crisis. The most recent acquisitions from this selection take the aftermath of the Fukushima nuclear disaster as its subject. "**July 25, 2011. Radioactive Lilies, litate Village, Fukushima**" (2011) and "**May 21, 2012. Annular Eclipse at 7:42am Onahama, Fukushima No. 1**" (2012) by **Arai** (b. 1978), one of the world's few remaining artists to use the daguerreotype photographic process.

About the Hirshhorn

The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden is the national museum of modern and contemporary art and a leading voice for 21st-century art and culture. Part of the Smithsonian, the Hirshhorn is located prominently on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Its holdings encompass one of the most important collections of postwar American and European art in the world. The Hirshhorn presents diverse exhibitions and offers an array of public programs on the art of our time—free to all, 364 days a year. For more information, visit hirshhorn.si.edu.

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Image: Eikoh Hosoe, "Man and Woman #24," 1960. Gelatin silver print, 16.8 x 30 cm. © Eikoh Hosoe. Courtesy of Taka Ishii Gallery New York.