



©Masumi Kura, Courtesy of Yumiko Chiba Associates, Zeit-Foto Salon

Masumi Kura

Men are Beautiful

December 5 (Fri) - 27 (Sat), 2014

Venue: Yumiko Chiba Associates viewing room shinjuku

Opening Party: December 5 (Fri) 18:00-20:00

Yumiko Chiba Associates viewing room shinjuku is pleased to present, from December 5, 2014, a solo exhibition, *Men are Beautiful*, by Masumi Kura.

Kura's photographs evade a photographer's consciousness: how they want to take a photograph or how the person whose photograph is taken wishes to look in the photograph. She catches the moment people are released from the tension of every day and records the presence itself brought out beyond an individual. What she presents can be described with those common words like "daily" or "familiar." However, they show up in front of us by accident and can only exist at that moment in that place.

This exhibition is, as the title shows, enormously influenced by Garry Winogrand's photo book, *Women Are Beautiful*, published in 1975, in which he admired women from a heterosexual viewpoint. Kura was inspired by Winogrand's photographs which burst with overflowing energy of women walking in American cities from the 60s to the 70s. Then, as homage to the photographs, she started taking photographs of men she found attractive when she walked around town. However, when we take a look at each of the photographs in the exhibition, we notice that those men are given a role different from the viewpoint of Winogrand's admiration of women. Her viewpoint is complemented by the gender gap, which cannot be settled by merely replacing "Women" with "Men" in the title.

There was a time when we believed that women would be more open and could become stronger and freer. Nowadays, however, things have become much more complex than before and so has our society been filled with an increasing sense of stagnation, in which we are restricted in an invisible way. Not only as a photographer, Kura faces the reality seriously as a woman, living in such a situation and keeps clicking the shutter.

The exhibition will present 30 color photographs. Please enjoy them.



■ Artist Statement

This is a collection of photographs of men that were taken in public places like streets and parks in Tokyo. Throughout history, most “beautiful” images of people shown in photographs, works of art such as paintings, and the mass media were created by men, who were in control, in short, of defining attractiveness. Women have always been looked at or drawn by men. I got the idea that if men had more chances to have their pictures taken and looked at by others, it might help a little in decreasing the division of roles by gender, and perhaps men and women could foster a more balanced and mature relationship with each other. Then I started working on these works.

I kept taking photographs of men walking around town who were attractive. Attraction is subjective, and everyone finds different things attractive in people. I think that physical appearance is important, but inner charm is definitely shown outwardly. I tried to reflect the air that people created by their presence in the photographs, just as it is. While making me a little nervous, it is still fun to chat with people to get permission to take their photographs. But if I get too close to them, it becomes hard for me to accurately catch their rough attractiveness. A crucial point is to keep a suitable distance from the subject, which I have realized over and over again through this experience.

By the way, I am a common heterosexual and think that it is free for anybody to be charmed by anybody else and it is fascinating anyhow.

Masumi Kura
October, 2014

■ Profile

1975 Born in Toyama
1998 BA, English Literature, Doshisha University
2001 Studied in the Photography Dept., Tokyo Visual Arts
2010 Received the 10th Photo City Sagamihara Award, New Figure Encouragement Prize

Currently lives in Tokyo.

[Selected Solo Exhibitions]

2013 *Men are Beautiful in Fukui*, FUKU +, Fukui
2013 *Himi*, Art Gallery C. Square, Chukyo University, Aichi
2013 *my favorites*, Zeit-Photo Salon, Tokyo
2012 *kura*, Visual Arts Gallery, Osaka
2011 *Kura's Pilgrimage to Ise Vol.7: Kyoto & Osaka*, Zeit-Foto Salon, Tokyo
2010 *Kura's Pilgrimage to Ise Vol.6: Shiga*, GALLERY Kaido Ribbon, Tokyo
2010 *Kura's Pilgrimage to Ise Vol.5: From Futagawa to Ise*, Zeit-Photo Salon, Tokyo
2006 *Kura's Horoki Part 1: Shinjuku*, Golden-gai Kodozi, Tokyo
2005 *Kura's Pilgrimage to Ise Vol.4 : From Kanaya to Shirasuka*, PLACE M, Tokyo
2004 *Kura's Pilgrimage to Ise Vol.2 : From Kanagawa to Hakone*, photographers' gallery, Tokyo
2004 *Kura's Pilgrimage to Ise Vol.1 : From Nihonbashi to Kawasaki*, photographers' gallery, Tokyo
2003 *love machine vol.4*, photographers' gallery, Tokyo
2002 *love machine vol.3*, photographers' gallery, Tokyo
2002 *love machine vol.2*, photographers' gallery, Tokyo
2002 *love machine*, photographers' gallery, Tokyo
2001 *Neo Documentary "Face of Humanity" Project : "Tokyo-Osaka"*, Guardian Garden, Tokyo



[Selected Group Exhibitions]

- 2012 *somewhere between me and this world - Japanese contemporary photography*, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, Tokyo
- 2012 *Hong Kong International Photo Festival 2012--Parallel Visions: Japan & Korea Contemporary Photography Exhibition*, Hong Kong Arts Centre, Hong Kong
- 2012 *PORTRAIT*, Art Gallery X, Takashimaya Nihombashi, Tokyo
- 2011 - *HAKKATEN - Department of photograph/picture/image, Art and Architecture School of Waseda University - HEIKATEN*, Ryugu Bijutsu Ryokan, Kanagawa
- 2011 *The 10th Photo City Sagamihara Award Exhibition*, Shinjuku Nikon Salon, Tokyo
- 2010 *The 10th Photo City Sagamihara Award Exhibition*, Sagamihara Citizen's Gallery, Kanagawa
- 2010 *20 Years Since Then, 20 Years From Now Carrying Art to the Future Exhibition*, Guardian Garden, Tokyo
- 2008 *The History of Arts and Cities - Paris, New York, Tokyo and Shanghai*, Sendai Mediatheque, Miyagi
- 2007 *Japan Caught by Camera - Works from the Photographic Art in Japan*, Shanghai Art Museum, China
- 2005 *The Portrait Today: You are here*, Parthenon Tama, Tokyo
- 2004 *Screening "Ecstasy + Terror"*, space harappa, Aomori
- 2004 *Yokohama Shashinkan, Kura's Pilgrimage to Ise Vol.3 : From Mishima to Shimada*, BankART1929, Kanagawa
- 2003 *HITOSHU: human smell against cat smell, love machine vol.5*, Space Laboratory, Aomori
- 2003 *photographers' gallery exhibition*, Chukyo University Art Gallery C.SQUARE, Aichi
- 2002 *Photonesia: the memory of light, the fruits of time: photographers' gallery exhibition*, Maejima Art Center, Okinawa
- 2001 *Opening Exhibition*, photographers' gallery, Tokyo

[Public Collection]

Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography
San Francisco Modern Art Museum
Sagamihara City, Kanagawa Prefecture
Shanghai Art Museum
Okinawa Prefectural Museum & Art Museum

[Collection of Photographs]

Himi, Sokyusha, 2013
Adventures of Kura, Sokyusha, 2011
kura, Sokyusha, 2010