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**THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM PRESENTS THE YOUNGER GENERATION:  
CONTEMPORARY JAPANESE PHOTOGRAPHY**



(Left) *Mother's Gentle Hands*, 2009. Shiga Lieko, Japanese, born 1980. From the series *Rasen Kaigan (Spiral Shore)*. Chromogenic print. 35 7/16 x 23 5/8 in. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Purchased with funds provided by the Photographs Council © Shiga Lieko 2015.1.6. (Center) *Portrait of Second-hand Clothes No. 52*, 1997. Onodera Yuki, Japanese, born 1962. Gelatin silver print. 16 1/2 x 16 1/4 in. Courtesy of the artist and Yossi Milo Gallery, New York © Onodera Yuki, Courtesy Yossi Milo Gallery, New York. L.2015.17.6. (Right) *1980 and 2009, Nagayama, Japan*, 2009. Otsuka Chino, Japanese, born 1972. From the series *Imagine Finding Me* Chromogenic print. 5 1/2 x 3 3/4 in. Wilson Centre for Photography © Otsuka Chino L.2015.16.8

LOS ANGELES – The history of Japanese photography, long dominated by men, experienced a dramatic change at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Challenging the tradition that relegated women to the role of photographic subject, a number of young women photographers rose to prominence during this period by turning their cameras on themselves. The resulting domestic, private scenes and provocative self-portraits changed the landscape of the Japanese art world. *The Younger Generation: Contemporary Japanese Photography*, on view at the Getty Center October 6, 2015 – February 21, 2016, features works by five contemporary photographers born in Japan who emerged in the 1990s and 2000s: **Kawauchi Rinko, Onodera Yuki, Otsuka Chino, Sawada Tomoko, and Shiga Lieko.**

"These photographers bring a variety of approaches to their explorations of living in contemporary Japan and how they observe and respond to their country's deep cultural traditions," says Timothy Potts, director of the J. Paul Getty Museum. "From quiet morning rituals to scenes of matchmaking and marriage, this body of work provides a rich perspective on Japan's ongoing examination of its cultural uniqueness and place in the wider world."

As these younger photographers began to emerge at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century they were often viewed collectively and their work labeled *onnanoko shashin*, or "girl photographs," despite their wide-ranging aesthetics and interests. This term, coined by critic Iizawa Kōtarō,

was largely perceived as derisive, though some considered it a celebration of these women's achievements. Countering the idea that "girl photography" could define a generation of practitioners, *The Younger Generation* showcases the breadth of work made by five midcareer photographers during the past twenty years. Selected images from one series by each of the five photographers will be featured in the exhibition, including recent acquisitions of photographs by Sawada Tomoko and Shiga Lieko made possible by the support of the Getty Museum Photographs Council.

## The Photographers

In 2001, **Kawauchi Rinko** burst onto the Japanese photography scene with her signature snapshot style of photographing moments of everyday life that frequently escape notice. Using color film and often employing a 6x6 cm Rolleiflex camera, she presents the world around her in quiet, fragmentary scenes, as if suspended in a dreamlike state. In the featured project *Cui Cui*, named after the French onomatopoeia for the twitter sound made by birds, Kawauchi concentrated on the passage of time as it relates to her family and hometown. Some photographs feature ordinary objects and everyday rituals such as meals and prayer, while other images record significant events that constitute turning points in Kawauchi's life.



Untitled, 2005. From the series *Cui Cui*. Kawauchi Rinko, Japanese, born 1972. Chromogenic print. 9 5/8 x 9 5/8 in. Courtesy of and © Kawauchi Rinko. EX.2015.8.1

Born in Tokyo, but based in France, **Onodera Yuki** pursued photography after her disenchantment with the fashion industry. Interested in subverting the notion that photography represents the world accurately—the Japanese word for photography, *shashin*, translates as "to copy reality"—Onodera uses the medium to generate surrealistic images that defy reality. On view in the exhibition will be photographs from her series *Portrait of Second-hand Clothes*, wherein Onodera repurposes garments she collected from *Dispersion*, an installation by the artist Christian Boltanski that contained large piles of clothing for visitors to take home and "disperse." Onodera photographed each piece against an open window in her apartment in Montmartre, and her use of flash enhances the ghostlike quality of the garments.

Caught between two cultures for much of her life after leaving Japan to study in England at the age of ten, **Otsuka Chino** draws upon the intersection of her Japanese and British identities for many of her photographic projects. The "double self-portraits" from Otsuka's series *Imagine Finding Me*, a selection of which will be featured in *The Younger Generation*, were motivated by her curiosity about the prospect of speaking with her younger self. With the help of a digital retoucher, Otsuka seamlessly inserts contemporary self-portraits into old photographs of herself from a family photo album. The results combine pictures from different ages and moments in her life. In this context, the photograph acts as a portal to the past, a time machine that allows the artist to become a tourist in her own memory.

Born and raised in Kobe, Japan, **Sawada Tomoko** has used self-portraiture to explore identity. She transforms into various characters with the help of costumes, wigs, props, makeup, and weight gain, all of which drastically alter her appearance. Her work—a cross between portraiture and performance—plays upon stereotypes and cultural traditions in order to showcase modes of individuality and self-expression. Her project *OMIAI*, recently acquired by the J. Paul Getty Museum, includes thirty self-portraits, each one made in the same photo studio but intended to represent a different kind of woman. These images mimic photographs traditionally produced as part of the Japanese custom of *omiaï*, or a formal meeting that occurs as part of the arranged marriage tradition. This unique set of *OMIAI* includes vintage frames selected by Sawada to represent how such portraits would traditionally be displayed in the windows of local photo studios in Japan.



*OMIAI* ♡, 2001. Sawada Tomoko, Japanese, born 1977. Chromogenic print. 27 7/8 x 22 1/16 in. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Purchased with funds provided by the Photographs Council © Sawada Tomoko. 2015.2.28

"Sawada's playful, charming self-portraits belie a deeper commentary on her culture," says Amanda Maddox, assistant curator in the Department of Photographs at the J. Paul Getty Museum and curator of the exhibition. "With *OMIAI* she reminds us how such traditions still play a significant role in Japanese society."

In her practice, **Shiga Lieko** works with local communities, immersing herself in them and incorporating their histories and myths into her photographs. In 2008 Shiga moved to the Tōhoku region in northern Japan, a largely rural area known for its association with Japanese folklore. Working out of a small studio in Kitakama, she became the official photographer of the town, documenting local events, festivals, and residents. After much of Kitakama was devastated by the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami, Shiga continued to photograph, recording the impact on the land and people. Made between 2008 and 2012, the series *Rasen Kaigan* (Spiral Shore) showcases the chaos and mysteriousness of this strange place. With a history associated with mythology, natural disaster, and trauma, Kitakama resembles an otherworldly, postapocalyptic site. Six works from *Rasen Kaigan* will be on display, including photographs made after the disaster in Tōhoku, during which Shiga was forced to flee her home.

*The Younger Generation: Contemporary Japanese Photography*, is on view October 6, 2015 –February 21, 2016 at the J. Paul Getty Museum, Getty Center. The exhibition is curated by Amanda Maddox, assistant curator in the Museum's Department of Photographs. On view concurrently in the Getty's Center for Photographs is the exhibition *Ishiuchi Miyako: Postwar Shadows*.

Related events include an in-gallery Point of View talk with Sawada Tomoko and Shiga Lieko on Thursday, October 8 at 1:30p.m. and a panel discussion titled **Contemporary Japanese Photography: A Reaction Against "Girl Photography"** with Sawada and Shiga, moderated by Kasahara Michiko, chief curator at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, on Thursday, October 15 at 7p.m. at the Getty Center.

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