



DATE: June 23, 2014  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM SPOTLIGHTS MODERN JAPAN WITH  
*IN FOCUS: TOKYO***

**At the J. Paul Getty Museum, Getty Center**  
**August 5–December 14, 2014**



*picnic [2]*, 1998, Masato Seto. Silver-dye bleach print. The J. Paul Getty Museum, purchased with funds provided by the Photographs Council. © Masato Seto

LOS ANGELES—On view at the J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center from August 5 through December 14, 2014, *In Focus: Tokyo* features more than thirty photographs from the Museum's collection that portray Japan's capital city as a dense and hyperreal megalopolis.

Organized by senior curator Judith Keller and assistant curator Amanda Maddox, both in the Department of Photographs at the J. Paul Getty Museum, this exhibition includes the work of four contemporary Japanese photographers: Mikiko Hara, Daido Moriyama, Shigeichi Nagano, and Masato Seto. Their work engages with different aspects of life in Tokyo, from the city's anonymous residents and towering buildings, to its serene parks and frenzied nightlife. Shown together, the selected photographs reflect the complexity of Japanese society and the variety found in Tokyo's urban landscape.

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For nearly a decade, the Getty Museum has been collecting Japanese photography in earnest. This show represents the first occasion on which these works have been exhibited at the Getty. All of the works in the exhibition were purchased with funds provided by the Getty Museum's Photographs Council, who generously support the expansion of the Museum's collection.

"We are fortunate to have had the opportunity, with the support of our Photographs Council, to acquire these wonderful works of art, now on view. The photographers in this exhibition tell very different visual stories about the city they call home, but each of them has a unique and compelling viewpoint," said Keller.

The oldest photographer in the exhibition, Shigeichi Nagano, has observed the perpetual rebuilding of Tokyo since the 1950s. He is largely recognized for his treatment of that city's ever-changing street scene, with its reconstruction both above and below ground. His images showcase the built environment in Tokyo as a melting pot of traditional and modern architecture, revealing the city as simultaneously intimate and giant in scale. Capturing residents of Tokyo as they walk the streets and perform routine activities, Nagano underscores how people interact with their surroundings and how they exist in this fast, densely-populated capital. Made within the last twenty five years, the photographs on view reveal how the urban landscape of Tokyo reflects the duality between Japan's historic past and its contemporary, forward-looking ambitions.

Daido Moriyama actively seeks the underground scene in Tokyo, often focusing on the neighborhood of Shinjuku, known for its colossal train station, skyscrapers, bright neon signage, and alleyways crowded with small bars and clubs. His images represent the gritty side of the metropolis associated with yakuza mobsters, gambling houses, dive bars, and prostitution. Moriyama's photographic style, characterized in Japanese as *are, bure, boke* (rough, blurred, out of focus), heightens the inherent darkness and strangeness of Tokyo's clandestine underbelly.

Scenes captured outdoors, in locations scattered around Tokyo, can be seen in Masato Seto's series *picnic*. Produced between 1996 and 2005, the project depicts the hard-won leisure of local couples escaping the cramped quarters of high-rise living for the scarce green space of public parks. Representing one family, couple, or individual at a time, Seto situates his subjects in the detached reality of their own private or public space. He created what critic Hiro Koike referred to as "invisible rooms"—plots of grass often defined by the customary plastic sheet—in which intimate moments have been openly displayed and captured by the photographer.

Working primarily in Tokyo's labyrinthine subway system, Mikiko Hara also creates intimate, subdued portraits of individuals or couples isolated amid the throngs of businessmen, school children, and other Tokyoites. The anonymous passersby in her photographs become captivating subjects that appear frozen in a dreamlike world, suspended in time and detached from the chaos of the city that surrounds them. The muted tones

displayed in Hara's prints—achieved by the artist, who prints her own work—convey an intimacy somewhat at odds with the open spaces in which they occur.

"All of the photographers featured in *In Focus: Tokyo* portray their city at human scale," says Maddox. "They have managed to represent an otherwise stratified, vertical metropolis as a place we can access intimately."

*In Focus: Tokyo* is on view at the J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center beginning August 5 through December 14, 2014.

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**The J. Paul Getty Trust** is an international cultural and philanthropic institution devoted to the visual arts that includes the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Getty Research Institute, the Getty Conservation Institute, and the Getty Foundation. The J. Paul Getty Trust and Getty programs serve a varied audience from two locations: the Getty Center in Los Angeles and the Getty Villa in Malibu.

**The J. Paul Getty Museum** collects in seven distinct areas, including Greek and Roman antiquities, European paintings, drawings, manuscripts, sculpture and decorative arts, and photographs gathered internationally. The Museum's mission is to make the collection meaningful and attractive to a broad audience by presenting and interpreting the works of art through educational programs, special exhibitions, publications, conservation, and research.

### Visiting the Getty Center

The Getty Center is open Tuesday through Friday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. It is closed Monday and major holidays. Admission to the Getty Center is always free. Parking is \$15 per car, but reduced to \$10 after 5 p.m. on Saturdays and for evening events throughout the week. No reservation is required for parking or general admission. Reservations are required for event seating and groups of 15 or more. Please call (310) 440-7300 (English or Spanish) for reservations and information. The TTY line for callers who are deaf or hearing impaired is (310) 440-7305. The Getty Center is at 1200 Getty Center Drive, Los Angeles, California.

Same day parking at both Museum locations (Getty Center and Getty Villa) is available for \$15 through the Getty's Pay Once, Park Twice program.

**Additional information is available at [www.getty.edu](http://www.getty.edu).**

## Related Events

Special programs complement the exhibition *In Focus: Tokyo*. All events are free, unless otherwise noted. For reservations and information, please call **(310) 440-7300** or visit [www.getty.edu](http://www.getty.edu).

### Talks

#### Curator's Gallery Talk

Judith Keller, senior curator of photographs, the J. Paul Getty Museum, leads a gallery talk on the exhibition *In Focus: Tokyo*. Meet under the stairs in the Museum Entrance Hall.

Wednesday, August 20, 2:30 p.m.

Museum galleries

**Curator's Gallery Talk**

Amanda Maddox, assistant curator of photographs, the J. Paul Getty Museum, leads a gallery talk on the exhibition *In Focus: Tokyo*. Meet under the stairs in the Museum Entrance Hall.

Wednesday, August 20, 2:30 p.m.

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