



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEWS RELEASE

The University Gallery is pleased to present a retrospective exhibition of work by the Japanese photographer Eikoh Hosoe from September 15 through October 21. Eikoh Hosoe: META includes over one hundred photographs from nine series that Hosoe produced between 1959 and 1989. Hosoe, widely regarded as one of Japan's greatest contemporary photographers, is a pivotal figure in the development of Japanese photography. His photographic series create narratives which explore themes drawn from traditional Japanese culture that have been mixed with external influences. These series were produced primarily for publication in Japanese books rather than for exhibition, making the present exhibition extremely important to Hosoe's recognition outside of Japan.

In the early 1950s, Hosoe was a key contributor to an expressive style that emerged during the postwar era as a reaction against the realist documentary tradition previously prevalent in Japanese photography. Hosoe and a group of similarly-minded artists were influenced by the American notion that photography could be a medium of personal orientation, and experimented with photographic materials and techniques as a means to greater interpretative ends. Hosoe's first series, Man and Woman, 1959-60, was inspired by a performance given by Tatsumi Hijikata, the originator of Butoh, an avant-garde form of dance/theater that addressed the psychological and emotional confusion of postwar Japan. In Man and Woman, Hosoe explores the elemental relations between the sexes by using members of Hijikata's dance troupe as models within the confined space of Hosoe's studio. The combination of models who exude great physical presence, the disturbing sense of space, and Hosoe's overt manipulation of the photographic process contribute to the depiction of tensions at the heart of male-female relationships.

Working in collaboration with the famous Japanese writer Yukio Mishima, Hosoe produced his next series, Barakei or Ordeal by Roses, 1961-62. Barakei is a complex work that uses Mishima as the primary model in a study of entangled eroticism, suffering, and martyrdom. Hosoe employed a full range of techniques, such as bird- and worm-eye views and double printing, to weave the baroque backdrop of Mishima's house and Christian and pagan symbols into a seamless though bizarre reality. The highly staged scenes are evidence of Hosoe's belief at that time that photographs should be assembled, not discovered. The success of Barakei's publication in 1963 placed Hosoe in the vanguard of Japanese photography.

Since 1963, Hosoe has produced four other major series: Kamaitachi, 1965-68; Embrace, 1969-70; The Cosmos of Gaudi, 1979-84; and an unfinished series begun in 1970, Shifukei (Simon: A Private Landscape), and has conducted a number of workshops involving the nude as subject. The majority of Hosoe's work focuses on the individual's search for a secure sense of place...."the search for a place in which flesh can live and realize its potential."

Eikoh Hosoe lives in Japan where he is a professor of photography at the Tokyo Institute of Polytechnic. He frequently teaches workshops in the United States. Hosoe's photographs are included in the collections of The Museum of Modern Art, New York City; the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris; and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, among other institutions.

Eikoh Hosoe: META has been organized by Curatorial Assistance, Los Angeles. The exhibition's American tour includes venues at the Center for Photography, New York City; the Georgia Museum of Art, Athens; the Japanese American Community and Cultural Center, Los Angeles; and the Museum of Photographic Arts, San Diego. The exhibition's presentation at the University Gallery is supported in part with funds from the University Arts Council and Alumni Association.