

BOUNDARY HUNT

TOSHIO SHIBATA

NOVEMBER 11TH 2022 — JANUARY 11TH 2023

OPENING ON NOVEMBER 10TH FROM 6PM UNTIL 8.30PM

Chichibu City, Saitama Prefecture, 2003.
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«When I started, I wasn't looking for making a commentary on environmental issues. I was searching for a kind of beauty. I try to respect this very subtle balance between human and nature. This tension is necessary for my photographs to retain their strength.»

Polka Gallery is pleased to announce Toshio Shibata's exhibition, «Boundary Hunt», on view from November 11, 2022 to January 11, 2023.

Inspired by the great masters of the American West Coast (Ansel Adams, Edward Weston and Robert Adams), Toshio Shibata, a Japanese photographer born in 1949, has devoted his entire career to landscape. It was upon his return to Japan in 1979, after studying at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Ghent, Belgium, that he found his favorite theme: infrastructure. Dams, suspension bridges, land reinforcements and other developments hypnotize him. *«I tried to find something that had never been seen as a photographic subject, the kind of thing that others try to eliminate from their images.»*

Toshio Shibata chooses his views for their pictorial possibilities. Like Paul Cézanne with Provence or still-life, a major influence for the Japanese: *«Like him, I photograph motifs on which one does not stop. By distancing myself, the landscape comes to resemble a still-life.»*

Between 2000 and 2004, Toshio Shibata began a period of experimentation during which he rediscovered the Type 55 film he had used as a student, and more than 400 shots were taken in Japan and the United States with this film. The chemical process of the film produced by Polaroid caused a break: during development, a border made up of raw, almost metallic lines and chemical traces appeared. Shibata decided to keep it. *«When I look at the resulting image,»* he explains, *«I find myself on the borderline between a photograph and a drawing.»* This border will give its name to the series «Boundary Hunt» exhibited for the first time in France at the Polka gallery. A reference to the frame that is superimposed on the images, but also to the quest for new photographic frontiers.



Oshika Village, Nagano Prefecture, 2000.
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With Boundary Hunt, Shibata also reinvents the staging of his work. He was used to a contemplative scenography, made of large format prints that encourage a slow reading of his images, but in this exhibition he wants to put the photographs in relation to each other in order to create a visual dialogue. He juxtaposes different planes, different points of view. Compositions playing on the extension of a curve that crosses a set of three disparate pictures or on a geometric pattern declined in several forms and at several scales. An entire wall of contact prints gives each viewer the opportunity to create their own associations and to immerse themselves in the heart of the disconcerting landscapes of a photographer who prefers the softness of lines to the brutality of an environmental battle.

The exhibition Boundary Hunt, Toshio Shibata's search for the border, is a harmonious symphony.

TOSHIO SHIBATA

Born in Japan in 1949, Toshio Shibata joined the painting department of the Tokyo University of the Arts in 1968, before continuing his education in Europe. It was at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Ghent (Belgium) that he began to turn to photography.

Returning to Japan in 1979, he travelled the roads of the archipelago with his 8 × 10 inch camera, exploring in black and white all the possibilities of landscapes based on geometry and abstraction. With his 1983 series «Quintessence of Japan», he became one of the most important contemporary photographers on the Japanese scene. His images of large civil engineering constructions, planted in an often deserted environment, reveal the fragile balance between human infrastructure and nature.

In 1992, he received the Kimura Ihei Prize. Three years later, he was commissioned by the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago to photograph the United States, and produced bird's-eye views of the Grand Coulee Dam in Washington State.

In the early 2000s, Toshio Shibata rediscovered a Polaroid film, the Type 55. This film allowed him to consider his favorite theme, infrastructure, from other perspectives, with the borders of the prints becoming an integral part of the work.

In 2009, the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography devoted a major retrospective to his work.

Toshio Shibata is represented by Polka Gallery since 2013.



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Personal Exhibitions (selective list)

- 2022** *Boundary Hunt*, Polka Gallery, Paris, France
- 2017** *Harmony*, Laurence Miller Gallery, New-York, Etats-Unis, Paris, France
- 2015** *Night Photographs*, Polka Galerie, Paris, France
- 2013** *The Abstraction of Space*, Polka Galerie Paris France Constructed Landscapes, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, États-Unis
- 2012** *Given Forms*, Toshio Shibata / Toeko Tatsuno, The National Art Center, Tokyo, Japan
- 2010** *Expressway*, Gallery 339, Philadelphie, Etats-Unis
- 2019** *For Grey*, Zeit Foto Salon, Tokyo, Japon
- 2008** *Landscape*, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, Tokyo, Japon
- 2007** *Color Works*, Gallery Luisotti, Santa Monica, Etats-Unis
- 2006** *Toshio Shibata: Reclamation*, Laurence Miller Gallery, New York, Etats-Unis

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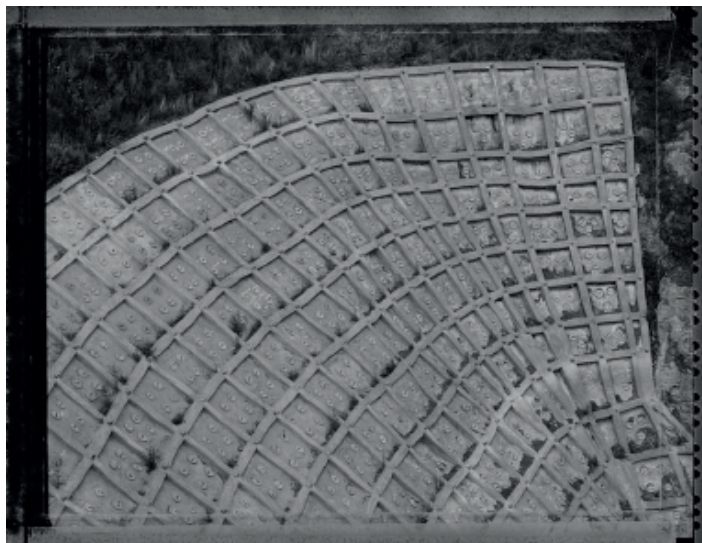
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