杉本博司　絶滅写真

HIROSHI SUGIMOTO: EXTINCTION

杉本博司 绝灭照片

The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo
June 16 – September 13, 2026
Organized by The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo; Nikkei Inc.
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- The list of exhibits provides information in the following order: exhibit number, title, year of creation, techniques and materials, dimensions (H × W cm, Three-dimensional works are described individually), collection.
- With a few exceptions, all works in this exhibition are by Hiroshi Sugimoto.
- Unless otherwise stated, all works are in the artist's collection.
- Exhibit numbers do not necessarily correspond to the order in which works are exhibited.
- Please note that the exhibited works and exhibition period are subject to change.
- Photography is permitted for personal use only. Flash, tripods and selfie sticks are not permitted. Without "Seascapes" gallery, video recording is prohibited. Please refrain from taking photographs in a manner that may disturb other visitors. Additionally, photography may be prohibited without prior notice depending on crowded conditions.

No.	Title	Year of creation	Techniques and materials	Dimensions (H x W cm)	Collection
Chapter 1｜时间、光线、记忆					
	立体模型				
1	阿比西尼亚疣猴	1980	gelatin silver print	119.4 x 185.4	
2	加拉帕戈斯	1980	gelatin silver print	119.4 x 210.8	
3	大猩猩	1994	gelatin silver print	119.4 x 185.4	
4	类人	1994	gelatin silver print	119.4 x 149.2	
5	尼安德特人	1994	gelatin silver print	119.4 x 149.2	
6	克罗马侬人	1994	gelatin silver print	119.4 x 185.4	
7	匠人	1997	gelatin silver print	119.4 x 149.2	
8	波科特族	2025	gelatin silver print	119.4 x 185.4	
9	姆布提 俾格米人	2025	gelatin silver print	119.4 x 185.4	
10	直立人	2025	gelatin silver print	119.4 x 185.4	
	剧场				
11	UA剧院，纽约	1978	gelatin silver print	119.4 x 149.2	
12	圆顶影院，好莱坞	1993	gelatin silver print	119.4 x 149.2	
13	联合市汽车影院，联合市	1993	gelatin silver print	119.4 x 149.2	
14	宫殿剧院，加里	2015	gelatin silver print	119.4 x 149.2	
15	加尼叶歌剧院，巴黎	2019	gelatin silver print	149.2 x 119.4	
	华严瀑布				
16	华严瀑布	1977	gelatin silver print	119.4 x 149.2	
	海景				
17	加勒比海，牙买加	1980	gelatin silver print	119.4 x 149.2	
18	爱琴海，佩利翁	1990	gelatin silver print	119.4 x 149.2	
19	博登湖，乌特维尔	1993	gelatin silver print	119.4 x 149.2	
20	利古里亚海，萨维奥雷	1993	gelatin silver print	119.4 x 149.2	
21	英吉利海峡，韦斯顿悬崖	1994	gelatin silver print	119.4 x 149.2	

22	苏必利尔湖，喀斯喀特河	1995	gelatin silver print	119.4 x 149.2	
23	相模湾，江之浦	2025	gelatin silver print	119.4 x 149.2	
Chapter 2｜观念的形态					
	建筑				
24	克莱斯勒大厦	1997	gelatin silver print	149.2 x 119.4	
25	世界贸易中心	1997	gelatin silver print	149.2 x 119.4	
26	西格拉姆大厦	1997	gelatin silver print	149.2 x 119.4	
27	圣埃利亚纪念碑	1998	gelatin silver print	149.2 x 119.4	
28	萨伏依别墅	1998	gelatin silver print	119.4 x 149.4	
29	爱因斯坦塔	2000	gelatin silver print	149.2 x 119.4	
30	S.C.约翰逊大楼	2001	gelatin silver print	149.2 x 119.4	
31	巴拉甘邸	2002	gelatin silver print	149.2 x 119.4	
	风格化造型				
32	风格化造型 003［川久保玲，1995年 秋-冬］	2007	gelatin silver print	149.2 x 119.4	Costume: Collection of The Kyoto Costume Institute
33	风格化造型 008［伊夫・圣罗兰，1965年 秋-冬］	2007	gelatin silver print	149.2 x 119.4	Private Collection / Costume: Collection of The Kyoto Costume Institute
34	风格化造型 012［三宅一生，1994年 春-夏］	2007	gelatin silver print	149.2 x 119.4	Costume: Collection of The Kyoto Costume Institute, Gift of THE MIYAKE ISSEY FOUNDATION
35	风格化造型 023［玛德琳・薇欧奈，1924年］	2007	gelatin silver print	149.2 x 119.4	Costume: Collection of The Kyoto Costume Institute
36	风格化造型 118［克里斯汀・迪奥，晚装，1947年］	2025	gelatin silver print	149.2 x 119.4	
37	风格化造型 120［克里斯汀・迪奥，Bar套装，1947年］	2025	gelatin silver print	149.2 x 119.4	
	观念的形态				
38	观念的形态 0003 迪尼曲面：扭转拟球而得到的负定曲率曲面	2004	gelatin silver print	149.2 x 119.4	
39	观念的形态 0006 库恩曲面：负定曲率曲面	2004	gelatin silver print	149.2 x 119.4	
40	数学模型 014 定曲率曲面与双曲型旋转面	2012	aluminum, iron	h220.0 × ϕ40.0	
Chapter 3｜绝灭照片					
	前摄影 / 时间记录装置				
41	P.P.T.R.D. 037 带刺三叶虫	2008	platinum palladium print	82.0 x 65.0	
	摄影素描				
42	摄影素描 015 推测是居住于塔尔博特家的家庭教师，阿梅琳娜・佩蒂女士 约1840-1841年	2008	toned gelatin silver print	93.7 x 74.9	Le Musée Bernard Buffet
43	摄影素描 017 屋顶的轮廓线，拉科克修道院 约1835-1839年	2008	toned gelatin silver print	93.7 x 74.9	

44	摄影素描 001 屋顶的轮廓线，拉科克修道院 1839年11月16日	2009	toned gelatin silver print	93.7 x 74.9	Le Musée Bernard Buffet
	肖像				
45	亨利八世	1999	gelatin silver print	149.2 x 119.4	
46	理查一世	1999	gelatin silver print	149.2 x 119.4	
47	拿破仑・波拿巴	1999	gelatin silver print	149.2 x 119.4	
48	维多利亚女王	1999	gelatin silver print	149.2 x 119.4	
49	菲德尔・卡斯特罗	1999	gelatin silver print	149.2 x 119.4	
50	昭和天皇	1999	gelatin silver print	149.2 x 119.4	
51	威尔士王妃戴安娜	1999	gelatin silver print	149.2 x 119.4	
	放电场				
52	放电场 128	2009	gelatin silver print	149.2 x 119.4	
53	放电场 138	2009	gelatin silver print	149.2 x 119.4	
54	放电场 163	2009	gelatin silver print	149.2 x 119.4	
55	放电场 227	2009	gelatin silver print	149.2 x 119.4	
	Opticks				
56	Opticks 027	2018	chromogenic print	119.4 x 119.4	
57	Opticks 066	2018	chromogenic print	119.4 x 119.4	
58	Opticks 075	2018	chromogenic print	119.4 x 119.4	
59	Opticks 416	2018	chromogenic print	119.4 x 119.4	
60	Opticks 087	2025	chromogenic print	119.4 x 119.4	
	阴翳礼赞				
61	阴翳礼赞 98.0001	1998	chromogenic print	149.2 x 119.4	
	摄影师				
62	摄影师	2026	glasses with a built-in shutter mechanism prototype, production cooperation: JINS, SIGMA	w15.5 x h4.5 x d19.5	
Special Exhibit					
★1	传自寂莲法师 地狱绘词 断简残篇	Heian Period (794 –1185)	Mounting designed and partially painted by Hiroshi Sugimoto, 2026	103.0 x 52.0 (Overall mounted dimensions)	
★2	光学玻璃五轮塔 335 挪威海，韦斯特罗登群岛	2011 / 1990	Optical glass, inlaid black and white film (Neg# 335)	w7.6 x h15.5 x d7.6	

Chapter 1
Time, Light and Memory

Dioramas

Sugimoto used a large-format camera to photograph wildlife dioramas at the American Museum of Natural history in New York in extraordinary detail. A medium that normally arrests motion worked here in reverse, making motionless taxidermy appear as living animals caught mid-movement. As Sugimoto has said, "**However fake the subject, once photographed, it's as good as real.**" The first work in the series, shot in 1975, launched his career as a contemporary artist. This exhibition brings together, for the first time in comprehensive form, works from the series that trace the history of humankind, including new additions.

Source for quote from Sugimoto: *Hiroshi Sugimoto: End of Time*, exh. cat., Mori Art Museum, p. 45.

Theaters

Sugimoto often thinks by posing himself questions and answering them. "**Suppose you shoot a whole movie in a single frame?**" was one such question. His answer: "**You get a shining screen.**" A long exposure spanning a film from beginning to end reduces its narrative to a single radiant white rectangle. His locations were theaters built in cinema's golden age. Illuminated by the screen, the opulent interiors testify to a lost grandeur. But by the late 1970s, when he began work on "Theaters," cinema was itself already in decline, and a sense of impending extinction ran through the series from the start. He later extended it to drive-ins, abandoned theaters, and the opera houses of Europe.

Source for quote from Sugimoto: *Hiroshi Sugimoto: End of Time*, exh. cat., Mori Art Museum, p. 77.

Kegon Waterfall

In 1977, returning to Japan for the first time in five years, Sugimoto made his way to Nikko. His years in the US had deepened his interest in Japanese spirituality, and he had arrived at the idea of photographing water, specifically the water of Japan. When he reached the observation deck at Kegon Falls, the mist obscuring the view lifted and the falls came into view. He hurriedly assembled his large-format camera, took a single shot, and the mist closed over the falls again. The next day he traveled deeper into Oku-Nikko, visiting other waterfalls and spending a night in the forest, overcome by the presence of the natural world around him. "**I found myself in the morning dew. Watching a single drop fall, I followed it in my mind to its final destination. And in that instant, the sea appeared before me.**" The first "Seascapes" photograph followed three years later.

Source for quote from Sugimoto: *Kagerō nikki*, Shinchosha, p. 107.

Seascapes

The horizon bisects the frame: sea below, sky above, nothing else. This view has remained unchanged for billions of years, since water and air first appeared on earth. "Seascapes" is Sugimoto's answer to a question he posed himself: "**Can someone today view a scene just as primitive man might have?**" In this series, he turned photography into a vehicle for reaching back across time to the first stirrings of human consciousness. His own earliest memory is of a view of the Bay of Sagami. Since the first work in the series, *Caribbean Sea, Jamaica* (1980, exhibit number 17), he has shot the horizons of seas around the world, always with the same identical composition, a practice he continues today.

Source for quote from Sugimoto: *Hiroshi Sugimoto: End of Time*, exh. cat., Mori Art Museum, p. 109.

Chapter 2
Conceptual Forms

Architecture

"**I wondered whether a large-format camera, with its focus deliberately blurred, might reproduce the architect's vision as it existed in his mind before the building was constructed.**" Sugimoto began the series in 1997, after being invited to participate in an exhibition on 20th-century architecture, and set his camera's focal length at "twice infinity." Modernist architecture, which stripped away ornament in pursuit of function, structure, and formal principles, was shaped by the architect's imagination and by a new age of capitalism and technological progress. The blurred images catch architecture at the threshold between imagination and built form.

Source for quote from Sugimoto: *Kagerō nikki*, Shinchosha, p. 148.

Stylized Sculpture

"**The history of clothing is as old as that of humanity itself.**" Clothing began as animal fur worn for bodily protection, then diversified in material and form, its meaning and function shifting as adornment became an end in itself. In the 20th century, fashion developed in close dialogue with modern art. Sugimoto began this series

for a 2007 US exhibition of contemporary Japanese fashion, photographing the work of era-defining designers from "**a view toward the human body clothed in 'artificial skin' as modern sculpture**" and reassessing modernism in the process. The result is a hybrid: the body, the part of nature closest to us, merged with clothing, an artifact conceived in the mind.

Source for quote from Sugimoto: Artist's official website
https://www.sugimotohiroshi.com/stylized-sculpture

Conceptual Forms |

This series of photographs of plaster mathematical models gives three-dimensional form to cubic equations. "**An equation is a representation of a phenomenon inside the human brain. You might say it shows the movement of points in an imaginary function space.**" Sugimoto saw an analogue to art in these models, which render otherwise invisible equations in visible form. Art, too, is the work of giving form to the normally invisible. Mathematics, a product of the human mind, underpins the natural sciences, our scientific understanding of the world, and the progress of modern technology. Among the fruits of that progress are photography and the camera themselves. After photographing the Meiji era (1868–1912) mathematical models in the collection of the University of Tokyo, Sugimoto pursued a still more perfect embodiment of the "conceptual form," commissioning metal models fabricated on computer-controlled machine tools with the highest possible precision.

Source for quote from Sugimoto: *Sense of Space*, MAGAZINE HOUSE, p. 108.

Chapter 3
Extinction

Pre-Photography Time-Recording Device |

"**Why did I start collecting fossils? Because fossils and photographs work on the same principle. Both register the passage of time.**" Sugimoto named this series of photographs of fossils from his own collection "Pre-Photography Time-Recording Device." The resemblance between photography and fossils first struck him while he was photographing a diorama reconstructing the Cambrian period seafloor. To photograph a trilobite reconstructed from a fossil sealed in geological strata hundreds of millions of years old is to seal it once again, as an imprint of time, inside a photograph. "**I realized that photography is the act of fossilizing the present.**"

Source for quote from Sugimoto: *Enoura kitan*, Iwanami Shoten, Publishers, p. 251; *History of History*, New Material Research Laboratory, p. 14.

Photogenic Drawing |

Before the first practical photographic process, the daguerreotype, was made public in 1839, the English scholar William Henry Fox Talbot had already succeeded in capturing images. His earliest photographs, which he called photogenic drawings, were negative images. The negative-positive process, in which a negative is reversed to produce a positive with correct tonal values, was realized in 1841. From the mysterious negatives made at photography's dawn, Sugimoto set out to produce the positive prints that Talbot himself never saw. "**As the self-appointed chief mourner at the funeral of silver halide photography, I print the negatives of its inventor Talbot. In the crematorium, which is to say the darkroom, I breathe in the chemicals as though they were funeral incense and get on with my work.**"

Source for quote from Sugimoto: *Utsutsu na zō*, Shinchosha, p. 44.

Portraits |

"**If a taxidermied polar bear can be photographed so it appears alive, so can a wax figure.**" "Portraits," shot at Madame Tussauds in London, extends Sugimoto's debut series "Dioramas," and at the same time reaches back to photography's origins. Photography transcribes the image of whatever is before the lens at a given moment; the making of wax figures originally began in the same way, with a plaster cast taken from a living person at a single moment. Madame Tussauds was founded in 1835, at the very dawn of photography. To stand before a wax portrait is to meet its subject across time, and to acknowledge the desire, present at photography's origin, to arrest time itself.

Source for quote from Sugimoto: *Kagerō nikki*, Shinchosha, p. 124.

Lightning Fields |

Subtle variations in temperature and humidity cause film in the darkroom to accumulate static electricity, and when it discharges, small sparks damage the film. Sugimoto described this troublesome phenomenon, a side product of silver halide photography's reliance on darkroom work, as the "demon" that haunted his darkroom. Over the years he tried every conceivable countermeasure, from custom-built anti-static devices to a household Shinto shrine installed in the darkroom, but never defeated it. "**If you can't beat your enemy, the next best thing is to make him your ally.**" This series, in which he produced artificial electrical discharges inside the darkroom and captured their small lightning-like trails, was first shown at a solo exhibition in 2006. During the exhibition opening, there was a torrential downpour with crashing thunder.

Source for quote from Sugimoto: *The Origin of Art*, Shinchosha, p. 61.

Opticks |

In "Opticks," Sugimoto re-creates the prism experiments in which Sir Isaac Newton split light into its component colors in the 17th century, and observes the resulting colors of light. The series reaches back to the beginnings of modern optics, which would later give rise to the precision manufacture of lenses. The production method breaks with Sugimoto's usual practice: the images are shot on Polaroid film, digitally processed to remove noise, and then printed on large-format color photographic paper. Sugimoto made the series by splitting winter-morning sunlight through a prism at the window of his Tokyo home and standing before the sea of color that played across his white plaster wall. Of the work, he has written: "**With light as my pigment, I believe I successfully created a new kind of painting.**"

Source for quote from Sugimoto: Artist's official website
https://www.sugimotohiroshi.com/polarized-color-1

In Praise of Shadow |

On a midsummer night, in a room with every window thrown open, a single candle was lit and allowed to burn down. Throughout that time Sugimoto held the camera's shutter open, in the darkness, watching the flame waver in the wind and documenting "the life of a candle." The series takes its title from an essay by Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, who found the essence of traditional Japanese beauty in the shadows of the Japanese house. Tanizaki had no taste for the artificial light of modern civilization that leaves nothing in shadow, and revered instead the beauty that dwells in dimness. Sugimoto writes: "**I, too, am an anachronist: rather than live at the cutting edge of the contemporary, I feel more at ease in the absent past.**" The work on view, shot on color film with the focal distance set to twice infinity as in the "Architecture" series, stands apart within the series.

Source for quote from Sugimoto: Artist's official website
https://www.sugimotohiroshi.com/new-page-44

The Path of Humanity

2. Galapagos

Biological life on Earth is believed to have originated in the sea over 3.5 billion years ago. Plants and animals have both gradually evolved since, bringing us up to the present day. That, however, is a concept we only became capable of grasping in 1835, the year Charles Darwin reached the Galapagos Islands aboard the *Beagle* and observed the singularity of the natural life there—an experience that led to his formulation of the theory of evolution.
In those days, God was thought to have created all living things, including people. Darwin noticed that although the organisms on the Galapagos resembled those on the South American mainland several hundred kilometers away, they were in fact different. Likewise, human beings may have evolved within the mammalian lineage to become what we are today; but we remain a species of animal nonetheless.

3. Gorilla

Mountain gorillas are great apes that live in forested areas in Central East Africa. Weighing up to 200 kilograms, they have long arms and short legs, and thick fur suited to cold mountainous environments. Despite their being distant relatives of humans, the mountain gorilla population has plummeted due to hunting and habitat destruction by humans. Now that conservation efforts are underway, they should escape extinction. And should humans instead go extinct, their population should rebound.

1. White Mantled Colobus

These monkeys, which live in the forested regions of Central Africa, including Kenya and Nigeria, have beautiful coats of glossy white and black. They spend most of the day up in the trees in forests with canopy heights of up to 30 meters, eating fruit and leaves and seldom descending to the ground. When night falls, they sleep in groups in the tops of so-called sleeping trees though at least one of them stays awake to keep an eye out for predators. Just like a luxury high-rise for humans, really.

4. Earliest Human Relatives

Around three and a half million years ago, two early hominins who walked upright were crossing the grasslands of East Africa. The fallen ash from a volcano erupting nearby has settled on the ground and the two have just passed through an area with the consistency of wet cement, where their footprints turned to fossils and survived. A man and a woman (or should I say a male and a female?) with a stride length roughly the same as that of people today were walking side by side. I cannot believe that they themselves were aware that standing upright had freed their hands and enabled them to evolve into humans. No, we are talking about a time when the mind was still incapable of thought.

7. Homo Ergaster

Numerous hominin fossils from two million years ago have been discovered in East Africa. In the course of evolution, various hominin emerged and died out. These Homo ergaster were able to pick up stones they used to stop vultures snatching away the prey they had brought down. Apparently, this was the period when early humans learned to make more sophisticated tools and more effective strategies to hunt. The brain capacity of early upright humans supposedly expanded, making them capable of thinking and of inventing things. The population was rising.

10. Hominin vs. Hyena

Around 500,000 years ago, an early hominin living in what is now the outskirts of Beijing is about to be attacked by a hyena and finds himself in desperate straits. This individual Homo erectus was sniffed out just as he was about to drink some water. The background depicts the hyena's den where the hungry cubs watch in fascination as their father stalks his prey.
The fossilized remains of more than 40 hominins were discovered in what is believed to be the site of an ancient hyena den in eastern China. Hyenas typically bring their prey back to their dens. People were gobbled up. It's a hard reality to swallow.

5. Neanderthal

Neanderthals lived in Europe and West Asia from 400,000 years ago. They were excellent toolmakers, skilled in crafting spears and tanning leather. Regardless, their lineage went extinct some 40,000 years ago. The likelihood that they were wiped out by anatomically modern humans (Homo sapiens) is high. Genetic analysis has, however, revealed that a small amount of Neanderthal DNA is found in modern human DNA. Physically larger than modern humans, Neanderthals would defeat them in a one-on-one combat situation, but when Homo sapiens fought in groups, they gained the upper hand. Clever and opportunistic, they won over other species of humans to their side—or simply slaughtered them—to shape the world of today.

9. Mbuti Pygmy

Homo sapiens spread around the world some 20,000 years ago. Their lifestyle was based on hunting and gathering. They would forage for plants and hunt game in small bands. Even today, the Mbuti pygmies live as

hunter-gatherers in the Ituri rainforest of Central Africa.
Long ago, people lived in harmony with nature, neither hunting nor gathering to the point that nature was unable to rebound.

8. Pokot

Something more than 10,000 years ago, people began to domesticate animals. Domestication started with the dogs who accompanied humans on their hunting expeditions. Over time, goats, sheep, cows, pigs and horses were domesticated as well. Agriculture got underway at the same time as pastoralism; people formed groups and established permanent settlements. The Pokot people, who live in the west of Kenya up to the Ugandan border region, still live a life of cattle-herding and agriculture today. In this scene, blood is being drawn from a cow for a religious ritual.

6. Cro-Magnon

This is a recreation of an archeological site in Ukraine where the direct ancestors of modern humans lived some 15,000 years ago. They wore pelts and built structures from mammoth bones weighing as much as 17 tons. A needle—made by whittling down a bone—with an eye through which a thread could be passed was also found at this site. By this stage, consciousness has appeared in the minds of the early modern humans; they have acquired language capability; and by means of sharing fictional concepts, they start developing toward a civilization which can collaborate on a grand scale. Fiction in this instance refers to such things as myths, the idea of the nation, and money.
Standing at the apex of the animal kingdom, humans achieved civilization around 6,000 years ago. By the seventeenth century the human mind became capable of grasping scientific findings, the influence of God was diluted, and capitalism—whereby money begets more money in a never-ending cycle—emerged for the first time. The eighteenth century industrial revolution led to a dramatic increase in the world's human population, propelling it to 700 million people. By the nineteenth century, it stood at 1 billion and by the twentieth, 2.5 billion. Today, in the twenty-first century, world population has reached 8 billion. These numbers upset global environmental equilibrium. Now it is the human race that is the endangered species.

11-13, 15. Theaters

Life is a one-act comedy. Film takes all life's emotions and turns them into a play of moving images. The trick works like this: if you are shown 24 still images in a second, then they seem to be moving. Look at a pretend image long enough and the pretense becomes reality. But what would happen if I took a step back and chose not to take on trust the world which we all think we see? That was the thinking that impelled me to try photographing an entire film. When I did so, both the pretend and the real were transformed into a barefaced, blank and blindingly brilliant whiteout.

14. Abandoned Theater

As the twenty-first century dawned, the decline of certain cities which had flourished in the early twentieth century became impossible to ignore. The Rust Belt of the American Midwest was particularly grim. I took a projector into dilapidated and abandoned old theaters and projected famous films from years past. *Snow White*, one of the most celebrated films from Disney's early years, glowed brilliant white in the peopleless ruin. The world is already dotted with such portents of our own extinction.

16. Kegon Waterfall

Man turns to God only in times of trouble. From time to time and for whatever reason, people all feel the need to worship something. The Kegon Waterfalls are so sublimely awe-inspiring that the mere sight of them is enough to make one want to bow down and worship. The first person ever to catch sight of them—I suspect it was some time in the Jōmon period—must have been amazed and prostrated themselves, full of fear and trembling. This was the point of origin for Japan's religious spirit. I felt that I had witnessed that moment long ago when Mt. Nantai erupted; when the lava dammed the river's flow; when the lake was formed; and when the water started cascading down. It seems to me as though that spirit of dignity and grace took up residence inside my camera.

17-23. Seascapes

The sea is vast—so I thought the very first time I caught sight of it. The sky, too, is vast but one cannot really grasp its scale because there are no limits to it. The outer edges of the universe just dissipate. The sea is bigger than the sky because it has a horizon; and one gets the sense that the sea bleeds into something far, far beyond the horizon. Contemplating the sea soothes my soul. And stirs my blood, albeit quietly. My blood remembers that the sea is where the long, long-ago life of my distant, distant ancestors first began.

24-31. Architecture

In the old days, people lived within nature and in tune with nature. Fearfully and unobtrusively, just like all the other animals. At some point, as people became more curious, they nervously brought the fire from lightning strikes back into their caves. It was warm. It was bright. All good, nothing bad. As curiosity turned into consciousness, humans changed from animals into people. They became slightly more confident and constructed little dwellings by piling up logs and rocks. Their dwellings began to grow larger, because the fire had frightened away the wild beasts. With the fear of being devoured gone, it was now the turn of people to attack the animals, and their dwellings became more robust, deserving of the name of "architecture." Architecture then became a symbol of the overweening power of gods and kings. Enter the twentieth century and, with gods and kings going into decline, the artificial stone known as concrete became ubiquitous. Buildings are now paper-thin, see-through. As ants build anthills everywhere, so people are assiduously constructing the human anthills they call cities all around the world. Like castles built on sand.

32-37. Stylized Sculpture

In the Garden of Eden, people lived unclothed and in a state of paradise. At some point, as people detached from animals and became people, they contrived to stay in heat all year round, in a way that animals are not. Through using fire, they survived the cold winters and slept comfortably at night without needing to worry about being attacked by wild animals. Being in heat year-round is a positive for procreation. These perpetually-in-heat people started to conceal their genitals with fig leaves and to rein in their lust. In this way, fashion took off just as paradise was lost. Our clothing choices came to express our intellect, our rank and our wealth. Even now, people continue to devote themselves whole-heartedly to self-idolization.
The perfect fashion model can be found in the shape of mathematical forms. For the sake of contrast, I opted to use a level-headed mathematical model quite untroubled by lust.

41. Fossil (Pre-Photography Time-Recording Device)

Fossils and photographs have the same function. Both can preserve time. This Ordovician-period fossil was discovered near the Russian Baltic Sea. Over a period of 500 million years, this spiny trilobite inscribed its shape into the stone. My photographs are ephemeral things printed on paper. They can't hold a candle to fossils.

42-44. Photogenic Drawing

The realization that silver iodide reacts to light prompted Englishman William Henry Fox Talbot to invent the negative-positive photographic process. In this method, which dates from the earliest days of photography, the subject appears as a negative. I decided to collect paper negatives from Talbot's early period and print them as positives, a format that Talbot was never able to see for himself. I did it because I had the feeling that Talbot himself was telling me to do so.

45-51. Portraits

In Ancient Egypt, bodies were embalmed so that the souls of the dead could come back. Over time, portraits assumed the role of preserving people's likenesses. Royalty and heroes were always depicted with their majesty

much played up. When photography was invented in the nineteenth century, people were flabbergasted: would its extreme lifelikeness suck out their souls? Photography is the art of spirit extraction, and there were some people who refused to be photographed because they thought it would shorten their life. I have dedicated my life to mastering this form of sorcery. As a photographer, I sometimes get requests for portraits. I have a readymade response for these occasions. “Come back and see me when you’re dead and a wax figure has been made of you.”

52-55. Lightning Fields

Animals run madly in all directions when lightning strikes. People used to do the same until the day when they approached a fire ignited by lightning, took it home and tamed it. “Playing with fire” shaped us. Curious to experience that situation for myself, I attempted to replicate old experiments. I sought guidance from Benjamin Franklin, who proved that lightning was electricity by flying a kite; from Michael Faraday, who experimented with electromagnetic induction; and from Henry Fox Talbot. Talbot is the inventor of photography. After Thomas Edison invented the electric light as part of this chain, human nighttime became bright, and electricity banished any aura of mystery. No wonder that spiritual people are on the verge of extinction too.

56-60. Opticks

Thinking that, as a photographer, I really ought to have my own personal opinions on light, I acquired a first edition of Isaac Newton’s *Opticks* from 1704. One of the plates in the book is a detailed illustration of a light dispersion experiment using a prism. From it, people learned that sunlight, which appears to be white, separates into seven principal colors. A look is worth a thousand words, as they say, so in order to recreate this experiment, I polished up a piece of optical glass, set it up as a prism, and walked into the different color fields, my camera in my hand. I was able to observe that an infinitude of colors exists in the chromatically complicated spaces between the color bands.

61. In Praise of Shadows

Tanizaki Jun’ichirō’s “In Praise of Shadows,” a paean to the murk of the premodern era, has won a readership outside Japan. Rather taken with the idea of photographing darkness myself, I resolved to use a candle as a light to illuminate darkness. After all, you need light to see darkness! The darkness is as dark as dark can be; the light of the candle twinkles and sways in the darkness like a living creature. I seem to feel in my bones that light is both wave and particle.

62. CAMERA MAN

The camera is an apparatus that mimics the structure of the human eye. The camera lens is the eye’s crystalline lens, the f-stop the pupil, and film is the retina. Somewhat troublingly, though, the human eye is not equipped with a shutter. I came up with the idea of fitting a shutter to the human eye to create a human camera.

I set the shutter speed at one second and release the shutter manually, using the shutter release button. Prior to doing so, I spend three minutes in the dark. Then, just for a moment, one second’s worth of the exterior world is exposed onto my retina. The external scenes suspended there are saved on the film of memory. As a rule, image deterioration is exceedingly rapid, though varies from person to person.

Thinking metaphorically, I equated that single second to the entire lifespan of a person. Assuming that most people live to the age of 85, then the three-minute waiting time is equivalent to the passage of roughly 15,000 years. This corresponds closely enough to the time it took humans to acquire consciousness and establish civilization. I had invented a device that enabled people to get a true sense of the time span of civilization by comparing it to a single human lifetime.