

Shomei Tomatsu

Biography

Shomei Tomatsu was born in Nagoya in 1930, and passed away in 2012. He began photographing while at Aichi University, and before long he would become recognized as a pivotal figure in the post-war photography world of Japan. Beginning with a series that observes the people and scenery around American Military bases (“*Occupation*”) and moving towards a recollection of the atomic bomb (11:02 Nagasaki, 1966), Tomatsu looked at the situation of his day with a sharp eye, while also opening up new possibilities for photographic expression. In 1969, after visiting Okinawa for the first time, he developed a deeper interest not just towards bases, but also towards natural beauty. This interest guided the production of his 1975 book *The Pencil of the Sun*, which won the Mainichi Art Award and The Minister of Education, Science and Culture’s Art Encouragement Prize. In 1999, he moved to Nagasaki, also setting up a residence in Okinawa and producing work at a steady clip.

Selected Solo Exhibitions

- 2018 *Plastics*, Nonaka-Hill, Los Angeles, USA
- 2016 *Shomei Tomatsu: Nagasaki*, Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Japan
- 2015 *Chewing Gum and Chocolate*, Misa Shin Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
- 2013 *Afghanistan 1963*, Misa Shin Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
Shomei Tomatsu: Island Life, The Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois, USA
Tomatsu Shomei and plants in Okinawa, Okinawa Prefectural Art Museum, Okinawa, Japan
Toki-wo-kezuru, Mitsubishi-Jisho Artium, Fukuoka, Japan
Tomatsu Shomei Photographs, Nagasaki Prefectural Art Museum, Nagasaki, Japan
Nagasaki 11:02, Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum, Nagasaki, Japan
Shomei Tomatsu: The Pencil of the Sun, Canon Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
- 2012 *Tomatsu Shomei Photographs*, Tonami Art Museum, Toyama, Japan
- 2011 *Shinjuku Turmoil*, Misa Shin Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
Tomatsu Shomei. Okinawa Photographs - Love Letter to the Sun, Okinawa Prefectural Museum & Art Museum, Naha, Japan
- 2010 *Tomatsu Shomei: Photographs*, Nagoya City Art Museum, Nagoya, Japan
- 2009 *Nagasaki 11:02*, Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum, Nagasaki, Japan
- 2007 *Tomatsu Shomei: Tokyo Mandala*, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, Tokyo, Japan
- 2006 *Aichi Mandala: Tomatsu Shomei’s Landscape*, Aichi Prefectural 2 Museum of Art, Aichi, Japan
- 2005 *Shomei Tomatsu: Skin of the Nation*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, California, USA
Shomei Tomatsu: Skin of the Nation, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., USA
- 2004 *Shomei Tomatsu: Skin of the Nation*, Japan Society, New York, USA
- 2003 *Shomei Tomatsu: Three Decades in Color*, National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, Japan
- 2002 *Okinawa Mandala*, Urasoe Art Museum, Okinawa, Japan
- 2000 *Nagasaki Mandala*, Nagasaki Prefectural Museum, Nagasaki, Japan
- 1999 *Traces: Fifty Years of Tomatsu’s Work*, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, Tokyo, Japan
- 1998 *Shomei Tomatsu: Cherry Blossoms*, Niitsu City Art Museum, Niigata, Japan
Character P: The Final Abode, epSITE Gallery, Tokyo, Japan

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- 1997 *Shomei Tomatsu*, Mutsuzawa Town Hall, Chiba, Japan
- 1996 *Nagasaki 11:02*, Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum, Nagasaki, Japan
Interface, Ginza Nikon Salon, Tokyo; Osaka, Japan
Nikon Salon Interface: Shomei Tomatsu, National Film Center, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, Japan
- 1995 *Shomei Tomatsu: The Light and Shadow of Postwar Japan*, Naha Citizens Gallery and Taira Central Community Hall, Okinawa, Japan
The Nagasaki Survivors, Trinity College, Vermont, USA
- 1994 *Kyoto/Cherry Blossoms-The Original Image of The Japanese Nation*, Konica Plaza, Tokyo, Japan
- 1993 *Shomei Tomatsu: New World Map + Golden Mushroom*, Inax Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
- 1992 *Southern Island Journal- The Ryukyu Archipelago*, Konica Plaza, Tokyo, Japan
Shomei Tomatsu Photographs, Gallery Emon, Nagoya, Japan
Photographs by Tomatsu: Sakura + Plastics, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA
- 1991 *Shomei Tomatsu: Weathering Time*, Maikata Citizen Gallery, Osaka, Japan
- 1990 *Shomei Tomatsu*, Perspektief Centrum Voor Fotografie, Rotterdam, Netherlands
Cherry, Cherry, Cherry, Umeda Loft, Osaka, Japan 3Yamagataya Cultural Hall, Kagoshima, Japan
- 1989 *Plastics*, Parco Galleries, Tokyo Sapporo, and Osaka, Japan
- 1988 *The Colors Blossom, Scatter, and Fall*, Polaroid Gallery, Tokyo; Picture Photo Space, Osaka, Japan
Shomei Tomatsu: Japanese Landscapes, Toyonaka Central Public Hall, Osaka, Japan
- 1986 *Shomei Tomatsu: Nagasaki*, Liberty Osaka, Osaka, Japan
- 1984 *Shomei Tomatsu: Japan, 1952-1981*, Fotogalerie im Forum Stadtpark, Graz, AT; Traklhaus, Salzburg; Museum Moderner Kunst, Vienna, AT; Kornerpark Galerie, Berlin, DE; Fotoforum, Bremen, DE; Stadtische Galerie, Erlangen, DE; Museet for Fotokunst, Odense, DK
- 1981 *What Now!! Japan through the Eyes of Shomei Tomatsu*, Yatsushiro Municipal Parking Garage Hall, Kumamoto, and twenty-nine other Japanese venues
- 1978 *The Pencil of the Sun*, Nihon Seimei Hall, Nagoya, Japan
- 1964 *Kingdom of Mud*, Fuji Photo Salon, Tokyo, Japan
- 1962 *11:02 Nagasaki*, Fuji Photo Salon, Tokyo, Japan
- 1959 *People*, Fuji Photo Salon, Tokyo, Japan

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2017 *20 Year Anniversary TOP Collection: Tokyo Tokyo and TOKYO*, Tokyo Photographic Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan
- 2016 *Provoke: Between Protest and Performance, Photography in Japan 1960- 1975*, Albertina, Vienna, AT; Fotomuseum Winterthur, CH; Le Bal, Paris, FR; Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, USA
- 2015 *For a New World to Come: Experiments in Japanese Art and Photography, 1968-1979*, The Museum of Fine Arts, Texas, USA; Grey Art Gallery, New York University, New York, USA; Japan Society Gallery, New York, USA

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- Selected Group Exhibitions
- 2015 *The 70th Anniversary of the Atomic Bombings on Hiroshima and Nagasaki: War and Peace*, Hiroshima Prefectural Museum and Nagasaki Prefectural Art Museum, Japan
Collection Exhibition 2015-16, National Museum of Modern Art Kyoto, Japan
Conflict, Time, Photography, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Dresden, Germany; Museum Folkwang, Essen, DE; *Aichi Notes – Clay, Ceramics, Landscape and Memory*, Aichi Prefectural Ceramic Museum, Aichi, Japan
 - 2014 *Conflict, Time, Photography*, Tate Modern, London, England
The Provoke Era: Japanese Photography from the Collection of SFMOMA, Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, California, Japan
 - 2013 *1968 -Japanese Photography*, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, Tokyo, JP
Memories of the Town: Yokosuka via Photography and Art, Yokosuka Museum of Art, Kanagawa, Japan
 - 2012 *Tokyo 1955-1970: A New Avant-Garde*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA
Everything Was Moving: Photography from the 60s and 70s, Barbican Art Gallery, London, England
Busan Biennale 2012 – Garden of Leaning –, The Busan Biennale 2012, Busan, KR
 - 2011 *Breaking News – Fukushima and the consequences –*, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, Germany
 - 2008-09 *Ryukyu, Okinawa Two People Exhibition Higa Yasuo Ritual of Ryukyu: Tomatsu Shomei Chewing Gum and Chocolate*, Canon Gallery S, Tokyo; Urasoe Art Museum, Okinawa, Japan
 - 2003 *Japan 1945-1975: A Photographic Renewal*, Patrimoine Photographique, Paris, FR
The History of Japanese Photography, Museum Fine Arts, Houston, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, USA
 - 2000 *How You Look at it: Photographs of the Twentieth Century*, Sprengel Museum, Hannover, Germany
 - 1999 *Memories of Twentieth-Century Japan: Ten Photographers' Visions*, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, Tokyo, Japan
 - 1995 *After Hiroshima: The Message from Contemporary Art*, Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Hiroshima, Japan
The History of Contemporary Photography: The Documenting and Creative Eye, Mitsukoshi, Tokyo; Nabio Art Museum, Osaka, Japan
The Half-Life of Awareness: Photographs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, Tokyo, Japan
 - 1994 *Scream Against the Sky: Japanese Art After 1945*, Yokohama Museum of Art, Kanagawa, JP; Guggenheim Museum Soho, New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, USA
Neo-DaDa Exhibition, Fukuoka City Art Museum, Fukuoka, Japan
 - 1993 *Modern Japanese Art*, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, Japan
Photographs from the Real World, Lillehammer Bys Malerisamlung, NO; Bergen Kunstforening Museum, NO; Copenhagen Photography Museum, Copenhagen, Denmark
 - 1992 *More Than One Photography*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA

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- Selected Group Exhibitions
- 1991 *The Toppan Collection*, International Center of Photography, New York, USA
Innovation in Japanese Photography in the 1960s, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, Tokyo, Japan
- 1990 *The Past and Present of Photography*, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo; National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, Japan
Photographs of the 1940s and 1950s, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA
- 1989 *Eleven Photographers in Japan 1965-75: Has Japanese Photography Been Changed?*, Yamaguchi Prefectural Museum of Art, Yamaguchi, Japan
Photography Until Now, Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA; Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, USA
150 Years of Photography, Konica Plaza, Tokyo, Japan
Japanese Photography, Museum Voor Fotografie, Chaleroi, Belgium
- 1986 *Avant-Garde Art, Japan: 1910-1970*, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France
- 1985 *Paris, New York, Tokyo*, Tsukuba Photography Museum, Miyagi Prefectural Art Museum, Miyagi, Japan
The Incredible Image: Photographs of War, 1846 to the Present, Grey Art Gallery and Study Center, New York University, New York, USA; Institute for the Arts, Rice Museum, Houston, Texas, USA; Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., USA
- 1985 *Black Sun: The Eyes of Four*, Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, UK; Serpentine Gallery, London, UK; Philadelphia Museum of Art, USA; University of Iowa Museum of Art, Iowa City, USA; Japan House Gallery, New York, USA; Museum of Contemporary Art, 6 Los Angeles, USA; Baltimore Museum of Art, Maryland, USA
- 1982 *Twentieth-Century Photography from the New York Museum of Modern Art*, Seibu Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan
- 1979 *Japan: A Self-Portrait*, International Center of Photography, New York, USA
- 1976 *New Photography from Japan*, Kulturhausder Stadt, Graz, AT
- 1975 *The History of Modern Japanese Photography*, Seibu Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan
- 1974 *New Japanese Photography*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA; Denver Art Museum, Colorado, USA; Saint Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, Missouri, USA; Minneapolis Institute of the Arts, Minneapolis, USA; Winnipeg Art Gallery, Manitoba, CA; Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois at Urbana- Champaign, Illinois, USA; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, USA; Seattle Art Museum, Washington, USA; Portland Art Museum, Oregon, USA
- 1963 *Contemporary Photography Exhibition 1961-62*, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, Japan
- 1962 *Non, Matsuya, Tokyo, Japan 1957,'58,'59 Eyes of Ten*, Konishiroku Photo Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
- 1956 *Five Photojournalists*, Matsushima Gallery Tokyo, Japan

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Awards

- 2005 The Photographic Society of Japan Distinguished Contributions Award
- 1995 The Medal with Purple Ribbon from the Japanese government
- 1976 The Minister of Education, Science and Culture's Art Encouragement Prize
- 1976 The Mainichi Art Award
- 1961 The Japan Photo Critics Association Artist Award
- 1958 The Japan Photo Critics Association Newcomer's Award

Permanent Installations, Museum and Public collections

Art Institute of Chicago, USA
Harvard Art Museums, USA
Nagasaki Prefectural Art Museum, Japan
National Gallery of Art, USA
Okinawa Prefectural Museum & Art Museum, Japan
Philadelphia Museum of Art, USA
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, USA
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, USA
The Museum of Modern Art, USA
The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, Japan
Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, Japan

Selected Bibliography

- The Pencil of the Sun: New Edition, Tokyo: Akaaka Art Publishing Inc., 2015
- Chewing Gum and Chocolate: Photographs and texts by Shomei Tomatsu. Leo Rubinfien and John Junkerman, New York: Aperture, 2014.
- Tokyo Mandala: The World of Shomei Tomatsu, Tokyo: Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, 2007.
- Aichi Mandala: The Early works of Shomei Tomatsu. Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art and Chunichi Shinbun, 2006.
- Nagasaki mandara: Tomatsu Shomei no me 1961-. Nagasaki: Nagasaki Shinbunsha, 2005.
- Shomei Tomatsu: Skin of the Nation. Leo Rubinfien, Sandra S. Phillips, John W Dower, Preface by Daido Moriyama. San Francisco Museum of Art / Yale University Press, 2004.
- Shomei Tomatsu (Phaidon Tomatsu 55s) Ian Jeffereys. London and New York: Phaidon Press, 2011.
- Tomastu Shomei: Nagasaki Mandara, Nagasaki: Nagasaki Prefectural Museum, 2000.
- Tomatsu Shomei 1951- 60, Tokyo: Sakuhinsha, 2000.
- Traces: 50 years of Tomatsu's works, Tokyo: Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture, 1999.
- Tomatsu Shomei. Nihon no Shashinka 30, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1999.

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- Visions of Japan: Tomatsu Shomei, Kyoto: Korinsha, 1998.
- Toki no Shimajima (Island of Time). With text by Ryuta Imafuku. Tokyo: Iwatani Shiten, 1998.
- Shomei Tomatsui Interface, Tokyo: The National Museum of Modern Art, 1996.
- Nagasaki 11:02 1945 nen 8 gatsu 9 ka (Nagasaki, 11:02, August 9, 1945). Tokyo: Shinchosha, 1995.
- Sakura 66:photographed by Shomei Tomatsu. Osaka: Brain Center Inc., 1990.
- Sakura 120: photographed by Shomei Tomatsu. Osaka: Brain Center Inc., 1990.
- Hikaru kaze: Okinawa (The Shining Wind: Okinawa), Vol 8 of The Beauty of Japan: Complete Collection of Contemporary Japanese Photography. Tokyo: Parco, 1987.
- Ruinous Gardens: photographed by Shomei Tomatsu, Tokyo: Parco Publishing, 1987.
- Showa Shiashin Zenshigoto 15: Tomatsu Shomei (Anthology of the Photography of the Showa Period, vol.15: Shomei Tomatsu). Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsh, 1984.
- Doro no okoku (Kingdom of Mud). Tokyo: Asahi Sonorama, 1978.
- Akemodoro no hana: Okinawa nikki (Scarlet Dappled Flower: Okinawa Journal). Tokyo: Senseido, 1976.
- Taiyo no enpitsu (The pencil of the Sun: Okinawa and South- East Asia). Tokyo: Mainichi Shimbunsha, 1975.
- I am a King. Tokyo: Shashin Hyoronsha, 1972.
- Sengoha (Apre's-Guerre). Tokyo: Chuo Koronsha, 1971.
- Oh! Shinjuku. Tokyo: Shaken, 1969. Okinawa, Okinawa, Okinawa. Tokyo: Shaken, 1969.
- Saramu areikomu (Salaam Aleikum). Tokyo: Shaken, 1968.
- Nippon (Japan). Tokyo: Shaken, 1967. "11 ji 02 fun" Nagasaki (11:02 Nagasaki). Tokyo: Shashin Dojinsha, 1966.
- Hiroshima-Nagasaki Document 1961, with Ken Domon et al. Tokyo: Japan Council against A-and H-Bombs, 1961.
- Yakimono no Machi-Seto (Pottery Town -Seto), No. 165 of the Iwanami Photography Library. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1955.
- Tomatsu, Shomei, et al. Suigai to Nihonjin (Floods and the Japanese), No.124 of the Iwanami Photography Library. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1954.