

Mikito Tanaka



Statement

My goal is to convey "analog-only sensations" in a world where everything can be digitized. These include both subjective as well as objective sensations from incidental brushes of beauty, illogical amusements, and unconventional surprises that can only come with analog actions. The sensations are not to be viewed through the rose-tinted glasses of nostalgia, but treated as seeds of something that can be woven into the future.

The pictures feature exciting locations you would least expect to see a person in. For example, you may find pictures of me standing on beams protruding out of a tall building or water surface - sometimes looking like I'm in the midst of tipping over and falling! These dangerous-looking photographs are not driven by thrills. Instead, they reflect my unadulterated desire to translate imagery into reality. When I first started producing this photo series, portraying myself as the subject wasn't necessarily something that was set in stone. I only needed "someone" who would be capable of manifesting the image in my mind. I ended up becoming the subject of the photos simply because I wanted to be the first to have a taste of the "analog-only sensations" available in that experience!

That said, when viewers find out that the subject is the photographer himself, they tend to start viewing the pictures as a type of self-portrait. Self-portraits are nothing new in the art scene. Plenty of artists have produced such works of art. There's usually a dynamic message behind the portrait, such as accusing the society of oppression, raising questions about various underdog issues, dismantling the image of a famous painting or person by morphing into the subject being discussed, and other matters of concern. For my pictures, however, they're all about the "analog-only sensations." All I did was enjoy the scenes, sorting my personal experiences with that "view that was all my own" into a little box to take home with me.

And so, the moment the viewer starts wondering, "What's he seeing from over there?", the personal view seen in that shot becomes unique and I become the only special guy who saw it. With almost everything and anything available on demand these days, it may be baffling for the viewer to be confronted by something they can't possibly see for themselves anymore, but given some time and reflection, this novel sensation is likely to feel somewhat pleasant. I used 6x7 film for the photography and arranged the settings myself, then asked someone I trusted to press the shutter. Using film also serves as physical proof that I did go to the locations personally. The photographs were touched up digitally to draw out their fullest potential and then printed on paper.

In the process of converting analog photos into a digital format and then rendering them as analog pictures again, I got to rediscover analog sensations in a world driven by both the analog and digital; sensations that can identify with those evoked by these pictures born from the space between the real and the fantastic. However, in the end the viewer will decide for themselves what sensations they take away from the experience, sharing their enjoyment with me and anyone who happens to be present at the time. And that is the most important part of it all.

1968 Born in Kyoto

1991 Graduated from Kyoto Saga University of Arts

Mikito Tanaka is a professional Japanese photographer for 25 years. He lives in Kyoto and takes pictures for magazines, advertising and portrait. He's been shooting a series of his works "Try to go over there." since 2003.

Solo Exhibition

2021 "Try to go over there" 田中幹人 Dohjidai Gallery of Art (Kyoto/Japan)

2010 "Try to go over there" Dohjidai Gallery of Art (Kyoto/Japan)

1998 Cafe Brahms (Kyoto/Japan)

1997 Gallery K1 (Kyoto/Japan)

1994 Gallery K1 (Kyoto/Japan)

Group Exhibition

- 1996 K*MoPA(Kiyosato Museum of Photo Art) "Young Portfolio" Purchase and collection (Nagano/Japan)
- 1998 Three person exhibition Gallery Sowaka (Kyoto/Japan)
- 1999~2019 Group Exhibition "How Are you, Photography? " (Kyoto/Japan) 2008~2019 Group Exhibition "Kao" (Kyoto/Japan)
- 2010~2011 Group Exhibition "KOBE HEART" (Kobe/Japan)
- 2011 13th Kyoto Photo Biennial Outstanding award
- 2013 14th Kyoto Photo Biennial Outstanding award
- 2019 Seattle Art Fair (Seattle/U.S.) Affordable Art Fair (London/UK) Context Art Miami (Miami/U.S.)
- 2020 London Art Fair(London/UK) Art On Paper(New York/U.S.)