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中平卓馬 Takuma Nakahira，原點復歸—橫濱

Degree Zero - Yokohama，1993-2003，chromogenic print

## Naked Photography—中平卓馬（節選）

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所謂的攝影，是把所有普通名詞做固有名詞化，把所有的存在轉換為「此」，而「此」（haecceity）中任何存在都為等價。意即，人類的通常認識是「這是貓」，但攝影的認識則為「貓為此」，而由「流浪漢為此」「鳥為此」—流浪漢與鳥便劃上等號。所以，攝影就是人間性區別的被蒸發，只剩純粹等價的「此」且反覆存在的世界。攝影的世界是瘋

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狂的世界。

中平卓馬是現代裡拍攝最純粹攝影的人。他的作品指出攝影的「原點」，即單以固有名詞的「此」和等價性—中平卓馬的攝影會讓那些汲汲營營為作品取名字、講道理的多數攝影家感到羞愧。中平卓馬這樣的風格，從 1975 年「奄美大島」、1976 年「國境・吐噶喇列島」開始，到 1978 年「沖繩 写真原点 I」、「写真原点 1981」時已大抵成立，而在攝影集《新的凝視》(1983)、《Adieu a X》(1989)、《Hysteric Six NAKAHIRA Takuma》(2002) 更加深刻嚴密，直至現在。

這個「深刻嚴密」是怎樣的呢？如果手上有這三本攝影集，一比較立刻可留意到，《新的凝視》仍是充滿控制感的橫幅照片，《Adieu a X》已經幾乎改為直幅，直到《Hysteric Six NAKAHIRA Takuma》後僅剩直幅作品。中平卓馬在此之後也只拍攝直立照片。更者，比較 80 年代初到 2000 年代的拍攝主題，也可察覺聚焦性的改變：水平線和地平線連同著橫幅作品一起消失，市井人物和凝視著拍攝者的小孩也不復見，現在只剩沈睡的人、俯臥的人、人的背影、貓、鳥、或其他動物、流水、風景、單個物件、整片植物、文字、招牌、比較例外的是人物的單獨正視圖（也僅有數件作品）。而且最後，這些被嚴選的被攝體的直幅攝影除去了黑框被呈現出來。

由主題來看，中平卓馬的被攝體大多是「無法返還視線」的對象，意即吸收性 (absorptive) 的主題。更者，作品不是為了接受那飛出的偶然瞬間而水平開放的橫幅構圖，卻是為了對特定對象凝視的沈潛視線而垂直縱深的直幅構圖，且去除了因為與對象間的距離而自然產生的水平線與地平線。如此中平卓馬從陰暗處望遠窺視對象的構圖，結果產生似乎可以觸摸的質感、飽滿的色調、強烈的對比。彷彿浮在面前的對象卻又被之埋沒，那股空間的縱深感、以及一種不可言論的深刻感，應該正是中平卓馬所追求的。

但是，和以上主題共同登場的文字，又是怎樣的情況呢？會對「森山出租船」、「東照寺」等文字有興趣的人大概不多，但是這和森山大道、東（松）照（明）有不可脫離的關係。也就是中平卓馬關於文字的影像，如同「中平卓馬」四個字與該主體之間在記憶喪失前後所產生的差異，意即，即使文意相同，卻與實體完全不同的攝影。其他例如在橫濱拍攝的「北海道拉麵」、「四國烏龍麵」這些所謂「不理解為何出現於此」的「置地不宜之奇妙文字」，呈現固有名詞指涉的虛無，也是與記憶喪失連結著的。文字系列，與其他對象一樣具有吸收性 (absorptive)，意即中平卓馬的吸收，是為了充填因記憶喪失而空虛的名字。「我的攝影 幾乎是完全地忘卻了的我自己的 無法停歇的行為。」(《新

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的凝視》開頭)

喪失記憶。喪失充滿自己名字的實存感。「我是中平卓馬」的認同 (identity) 消逝了，被告知的是我完全沒有記憶的「中平卓馬」是我。為了繼續以「中平卓馬」與「這個我」生存下去，不得不每天去充填那空蕩蕩的名字。「I photograph」與記憶一起被忘卻之後，只殘留下「It photographs」。宛如外界的光進入相機內部充滿後誕生的一張照片，世界進入了「中平卓馬」這個名字的空殼然後充滿它，再生了已經逝去的存在。不再是「我是中平卓馬」，而是「中平卓馬為此」。不再是與「這是貓」同一的照片，而是「此」照片。日日的「此」照片，充滿了此日、此我、此鮮明色彩的生。中平卓馬的攝影，就是日復一日「It photographs me」形式的吸收。(中略)

無論是動物或沈睡者，中平卓馬的攝影向著吸收性的對象，接近、對焦。那股潛入感，構成強調攝影另一種等價性的構圖－遮蔽或模糊、前景或旁景，這些要素不斷地在照片中重複切換著－意即，中平卓馬的攝影為「此」照片的同時，也是「為此為彼」的照片，是一種二重狀態。

從人類角度而言可能達到純粹攝影的極限，又往著真正的純粹攝影而進行著。

(翻譯：黃亞紀)

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## Critical Fieldwork 14

### Naked Photography: Takuma Nakahira's 'Documentary'

Minoru Shimizu, 13, April, 2011

Art It Magazine

<https://shorturl.at/airxY>



Left to right: Images of "tactile surface layers" (2007), (2009), (2007).

In photography, every common noun becomes a proper noun, every being becomes "this," and in this thisness, or haecceity, everything becomes equivalent. If "this is a cat" is the usual understanding, then the photographic understanding is "a cat (proper noun) is this," and in terms of the "this" in statements like "a vagabond is this" and "a bird is this," the vagabond and the bird are linked by an equal sign. The result is a world in which human distinctions evaporate and in which "this" alone is endlessly repeated as pure difference, or in other words a world of madness. I can think of no other photographer working today who takes photographs as pure as those of Takuma Nakahira. Harking back to the "origins" of photography, in essence, relying solely on the haecceity and equivalence of proper nouns, his work is enough to put to shame the legions of photographers who attach knowing hindsights (captions, etc) to their photographs. This style began with 1975's "Amami Oshima" and 1976's "Tokara Islets," continued with 1978's "Okinawa," and after coming to a conclusion of sorts with "Shashin Genten 1981," has continued, albeit in an increasingly rigorous form, to the present with A New Gaze (1983), Adieu a X (1989) and Hysteric Six Nakahira Takuma (2002).

What do I mean by "increasingly rigorous"? Comparing the three publications above, which are all

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available as separate photobooks, what one notices immediately is that the horizontal orientation that was still dominant in *A New Gaze* largely loses its place to vertical orientation in *Adieu a X* and is entirely absent from *Hysteric Six* Nakahira Takuma, with Nakahira focusing exclusively on vertical orientation ever since. Furthermore, comparing the motifs from the early 1980s to those of the 2000s, one can see that these, too, have been narrowed down considerably. As the horizontal orientation disappeared, so too did scenes with horizons and skylines, groups of ordinary people and children looking directly into the camera. Today these motifs are even more limited. Sleeping people, people with downcast eyes, people seen from behind. Cats, birds and other animals. Running water, landscapes and solo shots of things. Vegetation (filling the entire frame). Characters and signboards. Frontal views of objects (stone-carved guardian dogs, etc). In extremely rare cases (as far as I am aware, one black-and-white photo and two color photos to date), frontal shots of people on their own. And finally, a method was established whereby two vertical photographs of these carefully selected subjects were laid out or displayed on walls in pairs either without black borders or at full bleed.

If one looks at the motifs, it should probably be clear “Nakahira-esque” subjects are for the most part subjects that “don’t look back”; his motifs are absorptive. As well, he looks not for horizontal orientation in the form of compositions that extend horizontally to take in whatever subjects happen to leap out, but for vertical orientation in the form of compositions with vertical depth that enable the viewer to study and become absorbed in a particular subject. He also eliminates horizontal and horizon lines that automatically create a distance between the viewer and the subject. Other things to note are the compositions in which the viewer is peeking from the shadow at a subject in the distance; close-up solo shots; tactile textures such as thatch roofing and vegetation; rich, heavy tones; and conspicuously strong contrast. Looking at these, one can see that Nakahira is trying to bring the subject closer, make it stand out, and allow the viewer to become absorbed in it; trying to create a sense of depth that is different from spatial depth. Together with the frameless page composition and display methods, these all have the effect of encouraging absorption, and the rigorousness is actually something that has arisen as a result of these methods

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Left: "Moriyama kashiboto" (Moriyama rental boats, 2004).

Right: "Toshoji" (Tosho temple, 2009).

But what about the “characters” that appear alongside the aforementioned motifs? I doubt that anyone would be absorbed in “Moriyama kashiboto” (Moriyama rental boats) or “Toshoji” (Tosho temple). But what these two actually signify are “(Daido) Moriyama kashiboto” and “To (matsu) Sho (mei) ji.” In other words, the series of photographs of characters are photographs of things that have the same name as something else but whose realities are different, just as the reality associated with the name “Takuma Nakahira” is different before and after his memory loss. Furthermore, there are photographs with characters such “Hokkaido ramen” and “Shikoku Sanuki udon” – both taken not in their namesake cities but in Yokohama – of a type one could refer to as “characters in odd locations” in that they prompt us to ask, “What are these characters doing in a place like this?” but also in that here, too, the referential function of the proper nouns in question fails, they also relate to memory loss. As with the other subjects, the style of the character series is absorptive. In other words, the significance of the absorption in Nakahira’s photographs lies in its filling of the names that have become empty due to his memory loss. “My photography is an absolute necessity for me, having forgotten everything.” (epigraph, A New Gaze).



Left: "Shikoku Sanuki udon" (2005).

Right: "Hokkaido ramen" (2008).

To lose one’s memory is to lose the existence that once filled one’s name. In Nakahira’s case, the

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identity “I am Takuma Nakahira” has disappeared, and he is informed that the name “Takuma Nakahira,” of which he has no recollection, represents who he is. In order to live as the person with the name “Takuma Nakahira,” he must everyday fill that empty name. Since the knowledge that “I photograph” was completely forgotten along with the rest of his memory, all that remained was the knowledge that “It photographs.” Just as light from the outside world enters and fills the camera, giving rise to a single photograph, the world is absorbed into and fills the empty name “Takuma Nakahira,” restoring the owner’s lost existence. Not “I am Takuma Nakahira,” but “Takuma Nakahira is this.” Not an identifying photograph such as “This is a cat,” but a photograph of “this.” These daily photographs of “this” fill these days, this self, with this brilliant life. Nakahira’s photographs are the daily repetition of the absorption of the form “It photographs me.”



**Left to right:** Images of “a single eye” (2007), (2009), (2007).

Having awakened to this form, the photographer was able to maintain a critical distance from his own photographs by combining two photographs. The presentation of two photographs together places the viewer in the mode of automatically comparing the two, and so has the theatrical effect of interrupting absorption. As far as I can tell from looking at Nakahira’s photobooks and exhibition catalogs, the thing he was concerned with when combining the two photographs that make up each pair was the direction of each subject’s gaze (including not only the gaze of humans, but the gaze of birds, animals, stone-carved guardians and other objects). Most pairs are made up of “a thing without a gaze” and “a thing with a gaze.” Very few are made up of two things that both have gazes, while none feature people. In other words, by combining something that has a gaze (something waiting to be filled, ie, me) and something defenseless in the face of this gaze (something that fills an empty name, ie, it) these pairs of photographs

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demonstrated the very absorption implied by “It photographs me.”



**Left to right:** Photographs with “landscape falling off the edge of the frame” (2004), (2005), (2008).

Nakahira’s latest solo exhibitions at BLD Gallery and ShugoArts consisted of photographs taken between 2002 and 2010, and the biggest change over this period is the disappearance of the presentation method of showing photographs in pairs. As a result, the absorptive mode of Nakahira’s work has taken over, and the craziness of the photographs is even more exposed. With this style as the constant and two compulsive images of “a tactile surface layer” and “a single eye (a shot of a single subject captured center frame, open to interpretation as a metaphor for the ‘camera’s eye’)” as the variable (on this occasion), the sensibility of Takuma Nakahira the individual is doing nothing more than relating to the photograph. As if the artist himself is on the verge of being sporadically swallowed up by pure photographs (the equivalence of “this”) that have lost all sense of distance and become more and more intense. Only the “name” series is tenuously connected to the artist’s biographical life, while the small number of “photographs with landscape falling off the edge of the frame (to the extent that the landscape in the background that is visible beside the central ‘this’ is also captured, these are photographs not of ‘this’ but of ‘this also’)” narrowly escape the crazy power of Nakahira’s photographs. These solo shows were a terrifying tug of war.