

PACE LONDON

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Hiroshi Sugimoto

Still Life

21 November 2014 – 24 January 2015
6 Burlington Gardens, London, W1S 3ET

Private view: Thursday 20 November 2014, 6.30–8.30 p.m.



London—Pace London is pleased to present *Hiroshi Sugimoto: Still Life*, an exhibition of thirteen large-format photographs from the artist's ongoing Diorama series executed between 1976 and 2012. The exhibition will be on view at 6 Burlington Gardens from 21 November 2014 to 24 January 2015.

Capturing large-scale dioramas inside natural history museums, Sugimoto's photographs initially seem to be documents of the natural world, featuring far-flung landscapes and wildlife. Sugimoto, however, dwells in the artifice of the images. Composed in crisp black and white and sharp tones, the pristine quality and stillness of these large-scale pieces reveal the inherent artificiality of the constructed worlds contained within their frames.

Surveying his Diorama series, the exhibition highlights recurring themes and images that have sustained Sugimoto's interest and work for almost four decades. Some of the works on view from 1980 were recently printed for the first time, and some images from 1974 and 1994 are exhibited in larger sizes than their initial printings.

The earliest works on view in the exhibition are dated to 1976, when Sugimoto first moved to New York and visited the American Museum of Natural History. "The first time I saw a diorama I was overwhelmed by the fragility of existence that it captured. Being models of nature, dioramas include many of the world's constituent parts," Sugimoto wrote. "The only thing absent is life itself. Time comes to a halt and never-ending stillness reigns." The works both breathe new life into the natural scenes, conjuring a false sense of reality, while highlighting their lifelessness.

Essential to Sugimoto's oeuvre are the concepts of memory and preservation, evident here in his exploration of nature as mediated through the museum. Since beginning this series, the notion of fossilization has become an important concept for Sugimoto and permeates his work. Exploring it as a historical fact and photographic conceit, the fossil serves as a living record and point of departure into history, crystalizing a moment in time into a singular object. Sugimoto's process echoes this

notion, capturing these frozen scenes on his large-format camera with specific lighting and extended exposures, lasting as long as twenty minutes.

The exhibition documents the evolution of themes, beginning with *Polar Bear* (1976), his first photograph from the series. Returning to the American Museum of Natural History in New York where the project began, his work from 2012 reveals a heightened influence in landscape, envisioning the world as it was before and will be after animal life has gone extinct. These pieces synthesize his lifelong interest in the forces of history with the changes of the natural world and central questions of photography. "All over the planet, nature is being transformed into un-nature at breakneck speed," Sugimoto wrote. "My life is part of natural history. I long to know where that history came from and where it is going."

NOTES TO EDITORS

Hiroshi Sugimoto (born 1948, Tokyo) studied at St. Paul's University, Tokyo, and Art Center College of Design, Pasadena, CA. He has lived and worked in New York since 1974.

A conceptual artist who works in many media, Sugimoto was influenced by Minimalism and Conceptual art and has a lifelong connection to the work and philosophy of Marcel Duchamp. Central to Sugimoto's work with a camera is the idea that photography is a time machine, a method of preserving and picturing memory and time. This theme provides the defining principle for many of his ongoing series, including Dioramas (1976–present), Theaters (1978–present) and Seascapes (1980–present). He places extraordinary value on the technical aspects of making art. In his photography, Sugimoto prints his work with meticulous attention and a keen understanding of the nuances of silver-print making and its potential for tonal richness in his seemingly infinite palette of blacks, whites, and grays.

On 7 February 2015, The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC, will present *Hiroshi Sugimoto: Conceptual Forms*, an exhibition considering the artist's engagement of mathematical formulas and interest in historical figures such as Man Ray and Duchamp. Hatje Cantz will publish a new catalogue to accompany the exhibition.

In June 2014 at the Venice Architecture Biennale, Sugimoto unveiled Glass Tea House Mondrian for Architecture, his first architectural project with the design office New Material Research Laboratory, which he founded in 2008. Sugimoto has also recently led the direction of Ningyo Joruri Bunraku's (Japanese puppet theatre) production of *Sugimoto Bunraku Sonezaki Shinju: The Love Suicides at Sonezaki*, which was performed in Madrid, Rome and Paris in fall 2013 and again in Tokyo and Osaka in March 2014.

In April, Le Palais de Tokyo, Paris, presented *Aujourd'hui, le monde est mort (Lost Human Genetic Archive)*, juxtaposing the artist's diverse collection of objects with his photography. The exhibition echoes *Hiroshi Sugimoto: History of History*, organized by the Japan Society, New York, and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington, DC, and curated by Sugimoto, juxtaposing his personal collection of antiquities with his photographs. Also in 2005, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC, and the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, jointly organized a retrospective of Sugimoto's work that toured the Europe, Japan, and the United States. Other recent solo exhibitions include *Hiroshi Sugimoto: Past Tense*, The Getty Center, Los Angeles (2014); *Hiroshi Sugimoto*, Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul (2013-2014); *Hiroshi Sugimoto: Revolution*, Brandhorst Museum, Munich (2012-2013 and traveled to Les Rencontres d'Arles Photographie, Espace Van Gogh, Arles, France); *Hiroshi Sugimoto: From Naked to Clothed*, Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo (2012).

Sugimoto has had solo exhibitions at Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, among others. He was the subject of a year-long exhibition at Japan's Marugame Museum, as well as a major exhibition of new work at the National Gallery of Scotland in 2011.

Sugimoto has received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. He is the recipient of honorary doctorates and awards including the 21st Praemium

Imperiale in 2009, Medal of Honor with Purple Ribbon by Japanese Government in 2010, as well as the Officier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (The Order of Arts and Letters) by French Government in 2013.

His work is in numerous public collections including the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; the National Gallery, London; the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo; and the Tate Gallery, London.

This is the artist's second exhibition at Pace London following *Rothko/Sugimoto: Dark Paintings and Seascapes*, which inaugurated Pace London in 2012, and his sixth solo exhibition at Pace since he joined the gallery in 2010.

PACE

Pace is a leading contemporary art gallery representing many of the most significant international artists and estates of the 20th and 21st centuries. Founded by Arne Glimcher in Boston in 1960 and led by Marc Glimcher, Pace has been a constant, vital force in the art world and has introduced many renowned artists' work to the public for the first time. Pace has mounted more than 800 exhibitions, including scholarly exhibitions that have subsequently travelled to museums, and published nearly 450 exhibition catalogues. Today Pace has ten locations worldwide: four in New York; two in London; one in Beijing, one in Hong Kong and temporary spaces in Menlo Park, California and Zuoz, Switzerland.

Pace London at 6 Burlington Gardens is open to the public Tuesday to Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. www.pacegallery.com/

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For press inquiries, please contact Nicolas Smirnoff, nicolas@pacegallery.com / +44 203 206 7613

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Image: Hiroshi Sugimoto, Olympic Rain Forest, 2012, gelatin silver print, 185.4 cm x 477.5 cm (73" x 188"), Edition of 5, © Hiroshi Sugimoto.