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Takahiro Kaneyama's Photographic Autobiography

• Art

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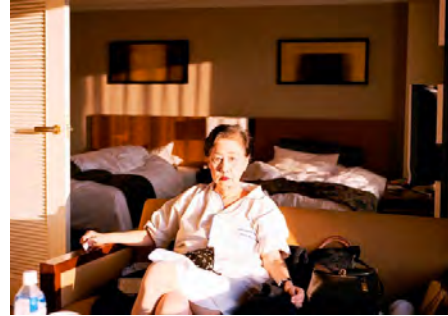
BY: MICHAEL JOERRES | ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF TAKAHIRO KANEYAMA

Photographer Takahiro Kameyama's exhibition, up now at New York's Miyako Yoshinaga, makes us wonder why it took so long for the medium to be accepted by the fine art world. Takahiro's unassuming snapshots are as deeply personal, honest, and fearless as any canonical painter or sculptor that came before him. *While Leaves Are Falling...* tells the story of the New York-based artist's trips home to his family in Japan from 1999 until now. As the title of the exhibition suggests, the photographs evoke the passage of time, the changing of seasons, and the cycle of life and death. In 1998, Takahiro's grandmother, who helped his schizophrenic mother raise him along with his aunts, passed away. Thus began a series of trips home to visit his ailing mother and her two sisters. Behind his lens, Takahiro produced humble portraits and stunning landscapes that characterize the relationship between himself and his family members who live thousands of miles away. In many of the more staged portraits, the three sisters stare unflinchingly into Takahiro's camera, allowing for an almost disturbingly direct emotional connection to which the viewer of his photographs becomes privy.

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Each one of us can sympathize with the longing and pain of being so far from home where family life continues on without you. Takahiro's own familial microcosm, with its particular set of difficult emotional circumstances, is presented to us in the form of both portraiture and landscape. Bright florals and fluffy clouds, along with harsher environs, are the backdrop to the psychological narrative that unfolds in the collection. The importance of the female figures in his life and the preciousness of the limited time that he has to spend with them is evident. Seasons change and faces grow more wrinkled and gaunt. Quiet moments at home behind closed doors are captured, as well as trips to the hospital and tourist spots alike. The tone of *While Leaves Are Falling...* can feel dark and daunting at times, but the love exuded is what overshadows it all.

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