

EXHIBITION REVIEW: EMI ANRAKUJI: EHAGAKI - PICTURE POSTCARD

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The Picture Postcard photo exhibit that was taken by Japanese photographer Emi Anrakuji is a touching exhibit featuring postcards that her grandfather collected during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Anrakuji felt she had a strong connection when she heard of her grandfather being a wine importer in Tokyo that traveled often through Europe collecting postcards from the places he visited.

Unfortunately, Anrakuji never got to meet her grandfather due to him dying before she was born. Her exhibit shows how a person, despite not ever meeting someone, creates a strong bond through the knowing of having shared ancestry. It shows the importance of knowing the origins from which you came. As well as having material items that are left behind by your family members so that you can learn about the intimate details that reside within the people who helped bring you into this world.

Due to the strong connection she felt with her grandfather and the postcards that she found, she decided to bring this connection to life by printing her self-portraits over these postcards. Not only is Anrakuji showing the connection she shared with her late grandfather but she is honoring her grandfather and the life that he lived by making his postcards the main factor that this exhibit revolves around.

The photos show obscure close-up images of Anrakuji. Close-up images of legs, feet, hands, nails, lips, tongues, or teeth loom over historical buildings, written letters, traditional Japanese art, scenery, etc. Vintage meets modern is what I first thought when looking at the 24 images in this exhibit. The postcards bring an ancient feel to the exhibit while Anrakuji's self-portraits bring about a non-traditional perspective. Combining these two completely different forms of art makes for an interesting exhibit. The two art forms tie in together seamlessly because the self-portraits do not entirely wash over the postcards. We get a nice balance of seeing the images within the postcards and seeing Anrakuji's self-portraits all in one. Each tells its own story while also having one important thing in common, Anrakuji's grandfather.