
Photographer　Masahiro Hiroike



Masahiro Hiroike
廣池昌弘
Photographer

Born 1962, Tottori Prefecture
Resides in Nanbu Town, Tottori Prefecture

Website: www.masahirohiroike.com

Instagram: www.instagram.com/masahirohiroike/

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E-Mail: hiroike@masahirohiroike.com

Education

1985 Hiroshima University, Faculty of Engineering — Naval Architecture & Ocean Engineering (Graduated)

Work History

1991–2021 Independent Systems Engineer & Web Systems Developer

1985–1991 Shin Caterpillar Mitsubishi Ltd. — CAD & Industrial Robotics Development

Engineering Certifications

1988 Special Information Processing Engineer (National Certification)

1986 Class 1 Information Processing Engineer (National Certification)

Awards

2026 HIPA Photo of the Day: 01.02.26

2025 SMITHSONIAN MAGAZINE PHOTO CONTEST NATURE Finalist
HIPA Portfolio Of The Week 12.25.24

2024 Trieste Photo Days 2024 festival open call selected 1 photos

2023 LensCulture Critics' Choice 2023 winner (Selected by Christie's Darius Himes)

2022 Nature Conservancy's 2022 Global Photo Contest Wildlife Honorable Mention

2021 SMITHSONIAN MAGAZINE PHOTO CONTEST Photo of the Day: 01.29.21
TIFA (Tokyo International Foto Awards) Silver x 1, Bronze x 2
BNW Minimalist Photography Prize 2020-2021 BEST 50 Photographers
Trieste Photo Days 2022 festival open call selected 8 photos
ONE EYELAND WORLD'S TOP 10 LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHERS JAPAN'S RANK #1

2020 Sony World Photography Awards 2020
Professional "Natural World and Wildlife" 2nd place
5th 35AWARDS "Motion" 3rd
IPA (International Photo Awards) Professional Nature-Astrophotography 2nd place
6TH Fine Art Photography Awards NOMINEE x 3
SMITHSONIAN MAGAZINE PHOTO CONTEST Photo of the Day: 12.04.20

2019 National Geographic Photo Of The Day,APRIL 5, 2019

2017 Nikkor Photo Contest, Special Selection (4th place in category)
National Geographic Photo Of The Day, AUGUST 30, 2017 & Best of August 2017

2015 Olympus Open Photo Contest, Grand Prix
Nikkor Photo Contest, Special Selection (4th place in category)
Fujifilm Photo Contest, Excellence Award

1999 CATV Internet Website Contest, Excellence Award (2nd place)

Solo Exhibitions

2024 “Untold Beauty of Japan” Nichinan Town Museum of Art, Tottori

2023 “Japonia” Jelenia Góra Sieplice Natural History Museum, Poland

“ Fantazja” DSAFiTA Gallery in Wrocław, Poland

2022 “QUEST” Pictorico Gallery (Tokyo)

“QUEST” Everland Okudaisen, Kofu Town, Tottori

2021 “QUEST” Nichinan Town Museum of Art, Tottori

“QUEST” Yusei Deai-no-Yakata, Nanbu Town, Tottori

“QUEST” Yonago City Museum of Art, Tottori

(Tottori Prefecture Cultural Promotion Grant)

Group Exhibitions

2020 “Sony World Photography Awards 2020 — Winners Exhibition ”

Sony Imaging Gallery Ginza

Juror

2025 PSA (Photographic Society of America) PID Landscape Competition

2022 7th 35AWARDS (one juror per country, 50 countries)

Publications

2026 Yama-Kei Calendar 2027 “Untold Beauty of Japan”, Yama-Kei Publishers

Morocco NOOR ART MAGAZINE No.10 “Himebotaru”

Morocco NOOR ART MAGAZINE No.8 “City Scape”

Morocco NOOR ART MAGAZINE "Spring Collection"

2025 Yama-Kei Calendar 2026 “Untold Beauty of Japan”, Yama-Kei Publishers

2024 Yama-Kei Calendar 2025 “Untold Beauty of Japan”, Yama-Kei Publishers

2020 Photobook “HIMEBOTARU”, Chiisana Imai

2019 Photobook “QUEST Vol. 1”, Imai Publishing

Press

2025 WILL Magazine, December issue “Contemporary Photographer Series: Masahiro Hiroike, The Flowing Time of Autumn”

2024 Katei Gaho Magazine, September issue 6-page frontispiece feature

Broadcast

2022-23 Chukai-TV “San'in Graphy”, featured host, all 11 episodes

Affiliation

2025 Atelier Quindici (International Contemporary Art Project)

Bio

From 30 Years as a Systems Engineer to Life as a Photographer

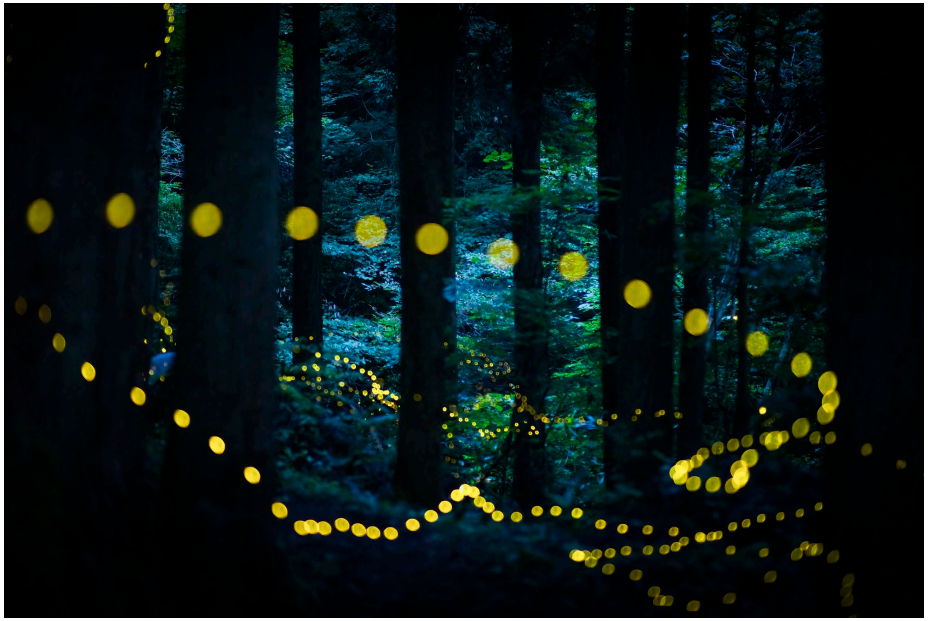
Masahiro Hiroike is a Japanese photographer born in 1962 in Tottori Prefecture. He encountered computers in their early days while studying at the Faculty of Engineering, Hiroshima University, and spent over 30 years as a systems engineer developing industrial robotics, CAD, and web systems — earning Japan's highest national IT certification along the way. In 2005, developing a Flash-based photo display program sparked his serious pursuit of photography.

Reference: photo viewer "Photobook"

In 2020, being named a finalist in the Professional category of the Sony World Photography Awards launched his career as a professional photographer. He has since won awards consistently at international competitions including IPA, 35AWARDS, LensCulture Critics' Choice, and the Smithsonian Magazine Photo Contest, and now also serves as a juror for international competitions.

He has held museum-organized solo exhibitions in Japan and Poland, and in 2024 was selected as a featured photographer for the 90-year-old "Yama-Kei Calendar". Grounded in a reverence for nature and in Japanese aesthetic sensibilities — "utsuroi" (transience) and "wabi-sabi" — that echo traditional Japanese ink painting, his work captures the natural landscapes unique to Japan. As an engineer, he also insists on personally handling every stage of production in his home studio, from shooting to high-resolution printing and framing.

In 2025, he published two essays on his own website — "Digital Photography Surrealism" and "Action Photography". They caught the attention of Italy's Andrea Benetti, who conceived and curated "Atelier Quindici", a Venice-based contemporary art project, and Hiroike joined as a founding member.



Sony World Photography Awards 2020　Professional “Natural World and Wildlife” 2nd

Artist Statement

Solving the equation of subject and light to explore "beauty."

Hiroike makes photographs around one consistent theme: the search for beauty. To this end, he works at two extremes — landscape photography built through logical composition, and abstract photography that seeks to give form to the unconscious.

Since childhood, spending time in the mountains and rivers of his home, he has held a deep reverence for nature. This sensibility is rooted in a Japanese aesthetic consciousness — "utsuroi" (transience) and "wabi-sabi" — that also runs through traditional Japanese ink painting.

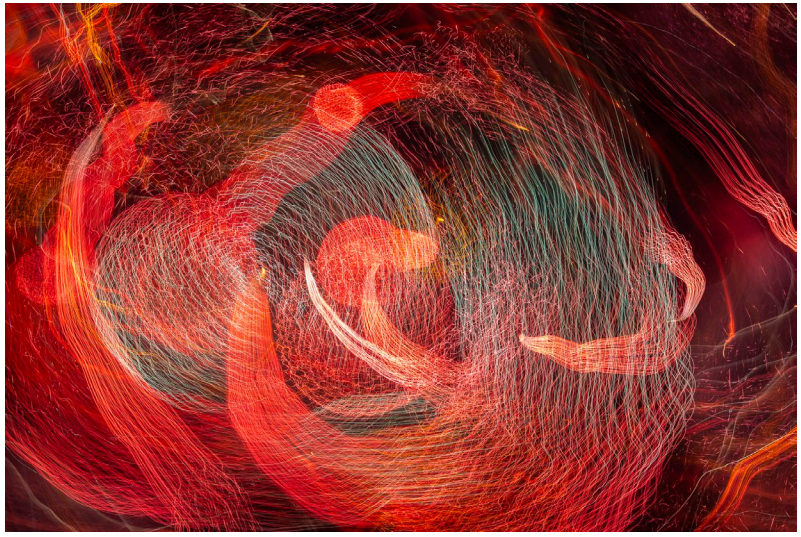
Drawing on more than 30 years as a systems engineer, he continues to ask, scientifically and philosophically, what a photograph is and what beauty is. Through more than a decade photographing the Himebotaru firefly, he has redefined photography — not as a record of an instant, but as a device converting four-dimensional space (three dimensions plus time) into two dimensions — expanding photographic expression by manipulating "time" itself. This fusion of science and art is his own approach as an engineer.

Within this framework, he connects the chance effects of living creatures' movement and of ICM (Intentional Camera Movement) with "Surrealism", the early-20th-century art movement, reconstructing it as "Digital Photography Surrealism". He finds a contemporary expression of the unconscious both in intuitively choosing one frame out of thousands, and in deliberately reconstructing a chance image.

He has also proposed "Action Photography", built around ICM (Intentional Camera Movement), as a photographic response to painter Jackson Pollock's "Action Painting".

He is equally committed to "the photograph as an object": beyond shooting, he personally handles high-resolution large-format printing, panel mounting, and framing in his own home studio. This thorough process — from capture to framing — grounded in respect for craftsmanship and engineering experience, forms the core of his photographic practice.





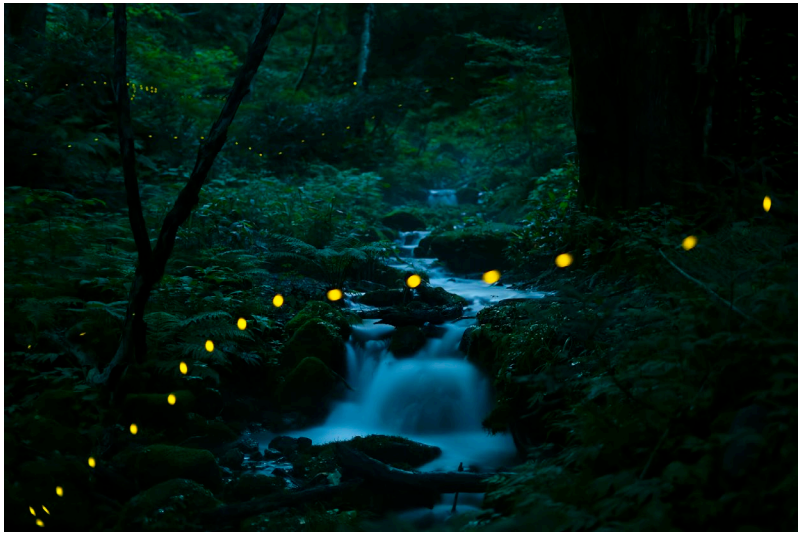
Essay — Digital Photography Surrealism

Digital Photography Surrealism, 2025

Photographing the Himebotaru firefly led Hiroike to two concepts central to photography: "time" and "chance". Himebotaru flash instantaneously at regular intervals; exposure time affects the background's brightness but not the fireflies' own brightness — instead it changes the number of points and bokeh orbs in the frame. In other words, exposure time carries a different meaning for the background than for the firefly's trail of light. This led him to redefine photography not as a device recording an instant, but as one converting the four-dimensional (space plus time) into two dimensions. The firefly's flight is also full of unpredictable chance, and when placed at the core of a photograph, an image emerges that exceeds the photographer's own intention.



"Surrealism", proposed by André Breton in 1924, was an art movement seeking to liberate the unconscious beyond reason and depict a "surreality"; some of its painting also placed chance at its core. Hiroike connects this with two traits unique to digital cameras — shooting enormous numbers of frames, and checking and reshooting on the spot — redefining it as "Digital Photography Surrealism".



There are two methods. The first is to intuitively choose, from among thousands of frames shot with an element of chance, the single image that resonates with an unconscious sense of beauty. The second is to deliberately reconstruct, while checking results on the spot, a chance image born of ICM (Intentional Camera Movement). "feeling" and "choosing" a photograph born of chance can instead activate an unconscious sense of beauty.

This is not simply a record of reality, but a contemporary exploration of "surreality" arising from a dialogue between chance and necessity, reason and the unconscious beyond it. In this sense, Surrealism today is not merely an artistic style, but the ongoing act of exploring — philosophically, logically, scientifically — art's fundamental question: what is beauty?

Essay — Action Photography

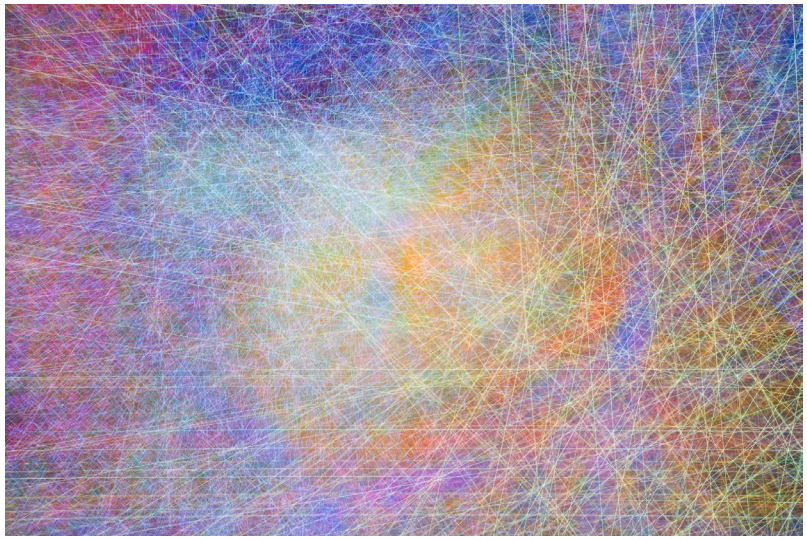
Action Photography, 2025

Painter Jackson Pollock established “Action Painting” as an extension of Surrealism, fixing the physical properties of paint and the chance of bodily movement onto the canvas. As an extension of “Digital Photography Surrealism”, Hiroike proposes “Action Photography”, built around ICM (Intentional Camera Movement).

When strong light sources such as Christmas lights or fireworks are photographed with ICM, the changing light is stretched along the time axis and recorded as a continuous trail. Moving the camera rhythmically, almost as if dancing, actively draws physicality and chance into the image, fixing them onto the photograph as a “trace of an action”.

When Christmas lights are the subject, the result is a strongly physical “drawn photograph” — a geometric, almost CG-like image. When fireworks are the subject, the combination of the camera's movement and the fireworks' explosive energy — chance multiplied by chance — becomes something like an “origin of life”, giving rise to beast-like forms reminiscent of animals or birds.

By repeating the process of “shoot freely → feel it intuitively → shoot again with adjustment”, he receives images born of chance through an unconscious sense of beauty, then reconstructs them according to his own intention. This is Surrealist art aimed at expressing the unconscious, and an attempt to open up a mode of expression possible only with a digital camera — repositioning photography from “a record of an event” to “a trace of an action”.





Atelier Quindici(15)

As a Contemporary Artist

“Atelier Quindici (15)” is an international project dedicated to contemporary art, fully funded by an Italian association for the promotion of the arts, conceived and curated by one of the association's founding members, Andrea Benetti, and based at Palazzo Zaguri in Venice.

It operates as an independent organization with the following two functions:

• A permanent digital space: documenting and presenting participating artists' work to the world
• A Venice headquarters: a physical base for international exhibitions, conferences, and other events

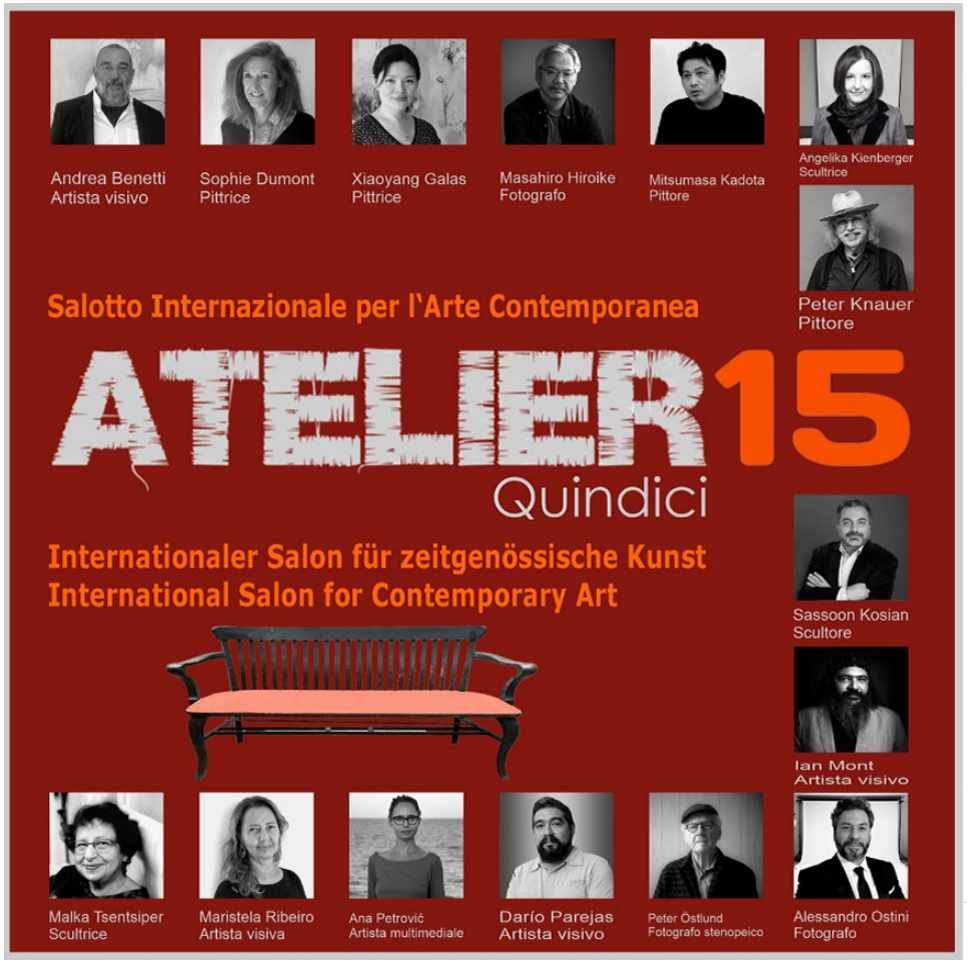
The project aims to create a stable environment for dialogue and collaboration among artists working in different regions and genres around the world, and to document, connect, and develop meaningful artistic experiences.

Members are selected by Benetti's direct invitation: a total of fifteen internationally active contemporary artists — painters, sculptors, visual artists, and photographers — from Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and the Americas, each accompanied by a critical essay contributed by an art historian or museum curator.

Hiroike's two essays, “Digital Photography Surrealism” and “Action Photography”, caught Benetti's attention, and he was selected as one of only two Japanese members and the project's sole photographer working with a digital camera. The accompanying critical essay was contributed by Shinichiro Osaki, Director of the Tottori Prefectural Museum of Art.

A first group exhibition is planned for winter 2026 in Milan, Italy.

Website: https://www.atelierquindici.eu/en/



Exhibition — Poland Jelenia Góra

“Japonia” Solo Exhibition, 2023

Venue: Municipal Natural History Museum of Sieplice, Jelenia Góra, Poland

Dates: May 2 – July 14, 2023

Organizer: Jelenia Góra Municipal Natural History Museum; Lower Silesian Association of Photographers and Audiovisual Artists





After winning at the Sony World Photography Awards in 2020, Hiroike received more than 10,000 friend requests from abroad on Facebook, and became friends with roughly 4,000 people across 109 countries. One of them, Zbigniew Stokłosa (“Zibi”), president of the Lower Silesian Association of Photographers and Audiovisual Artists in Poland, asked whether he would like to hold a photography exhibition in Poland. Hiroike accepted, but the show was postponed due to the pandemic and finally took place in May 2023.

Titled “Japonia” (Japan), the exhibition displayed 31 landscape photographs from around Japan.

Jelenia Góra, near the German border, is a summer resort town not unlike Japan's Karuizawa. About 150 people attended the vernissage (opening ceremony), including Nilo, a Japanese singer based in Munich whom Hiroike had met at the “Sea to Summit” event in Yonago City, who came and performed a song.

Exhibition — Yonago City Museum of Art

"QUEST — In Search of Beauty" Solo Exhibition, 2021

Venue: Yonago City Museum of Art, Exhibition Room 2, Tottori

Dates: March 12 – 23, 2021

Organizer: Photographer Masahiro Hiroike (with a Tottori Prefecture Arts & Culture Activity Support Grant)

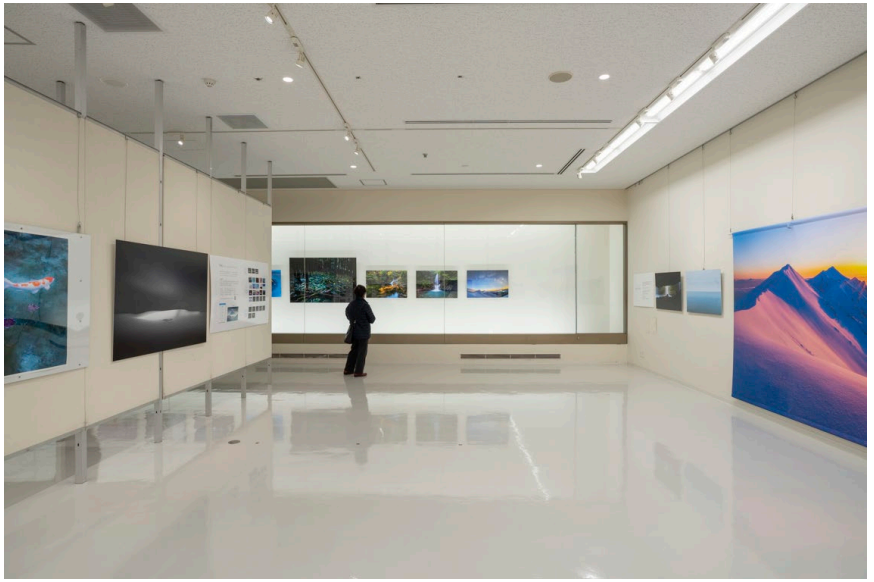
One of Hiroike's earliest large-scale solo exhibitions, held with the support of a Tottori Prefecture Arts & Culture Activity Support Grant.

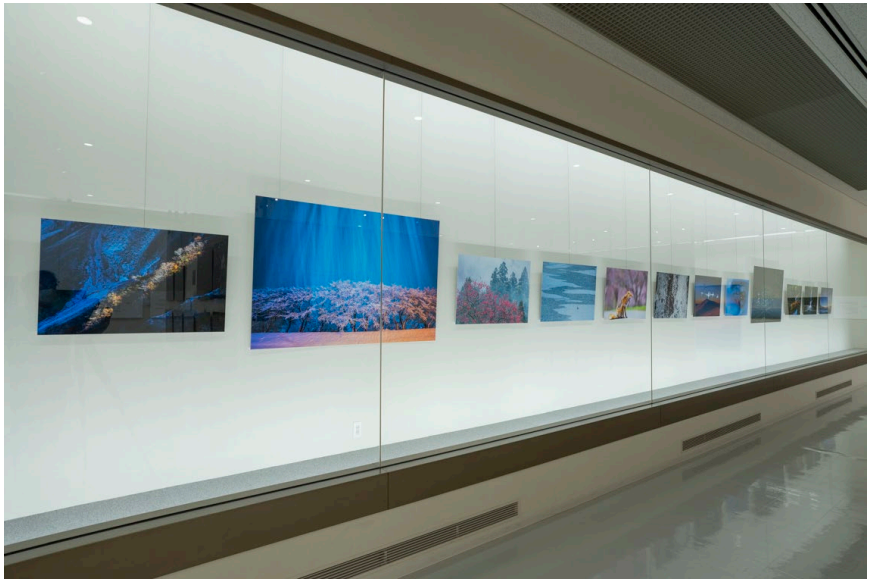
"QUEST — In Search of Beauty" takes its title from the photobook published by Imai Publishing in December 2019; works were selected from the photobook and from award-winning pieces including those from the Sony World Photography Awards.

A large-format printer and panel-mounting machine were installed, and every print and Alpolic-mounted piece was produced in Hiroike's home print studio, making possible this large-scale exhibition of 55 works.

Works exhibited
3m × 2m (tapestry) — 1 piece
B0 (1.5m × 1m, Alpolic-mounted) — 10 pieces
A1 (90cm × 60cm, Alpolic-mounted) — 44 pieces

Visitors: approx. 2,000





Award — Sony World Photography Awards 2020

[About the Sony World Photography Awards]

• Organized by the World Photography Organisation with sponsorship from Sony, it is widely regarded as the most prestigious photography competition in the world today; 2020 marked its 13th edition.
• It comprises four sections — Professional, Open, Youth, and Student — with the Professional section including 10 categories such as Architecture, Documentary, Landscape, and Natural World/Wildlife.

World Photography Organisation : https://www.worldphoto.org/
Japan press release: https://www.sony.co.jp/SonyInfo/News/Press/202006/20-047/



[Hiroike's Award Summary]
• 2nd place, Professional — Natural World & Wildlife category
• Approx. 135,000 total entries across the Professional section
• The London award ceremony and exhibitions in various countries were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic
• Winners' exhibition held June 12 – July 9, 2020 at Sony Imaging Gallery Ginza
*** One of the winning images was used as the banner image across the entire SWPA website for a full year**



[Submitted Work]
“Himebotaru” (a series of 9 photographs)
• Shot in 2019 in Nanbu, Nichinan, and Kofu towns, Tottori Prefecture
• Hiroike had been researching firefly habitats for 8 years at the time, and all shots were taken at habitats he identified himself
• Winning work: https://bit.ly/39BTzvp

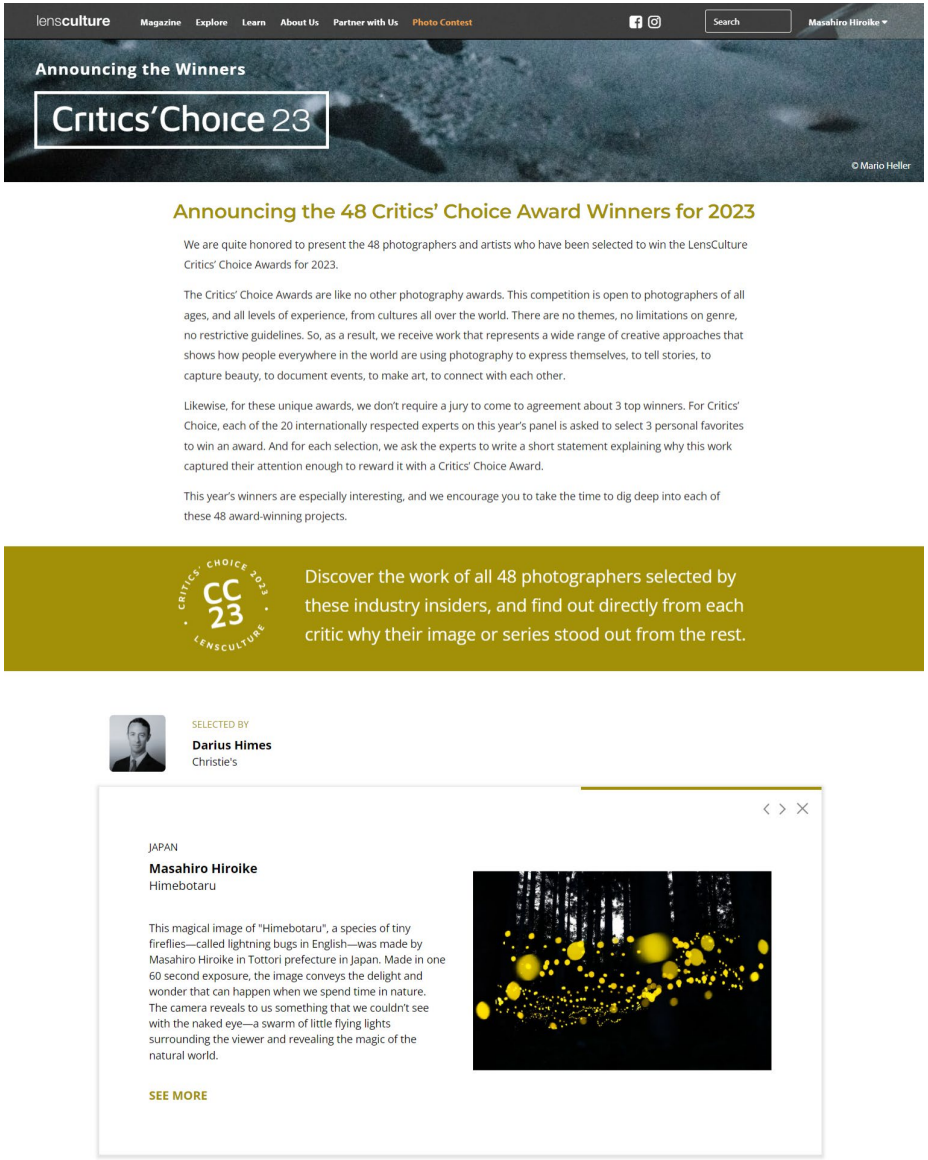
Award — LensCulture Critics’ Choice 2023

“LensCulture” is a contemporary photography network and magazine based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands; its “Critics’ Choice” is a competition in which 20 jurors each select 3 works.

https://www.lensculture.com/2023-lensculture-critics-choice-award-winners

[Hiroike's Award Summary]
In this competition, where 20 jurors each choose 3 works, Hiroike's photograph was selected by Darius Himes, International Head of Photographs at the auction house Christie's.

[Submitted Work]
“Himebotaru”, shot in 2022 in Nanbu Town, Tottori Prefecture



Print Lab

Making the Prints

Hiroike is equally committed to “the photograph as an object”: beyond the shoot itself, he personally handles high-resolution large-format printing and framing in his own home studio. This meticulous production process, grounded in respect for Japanese craftsmanship and years of engineering experience, forms the core of his photographic practice.



Equipment

Printer: Canon PRO-4100 (12-color, supports 1,118mm roll paper)
Laminator: GCL1600 (cold laminator, 1,600mm width)

Production Capacity

Printing: 1m × 5m
Alpolic mounting: 1m × 2m
Acrylic mounting: 1m × 70cm
Wood/aluminum framing: 1m × 2m



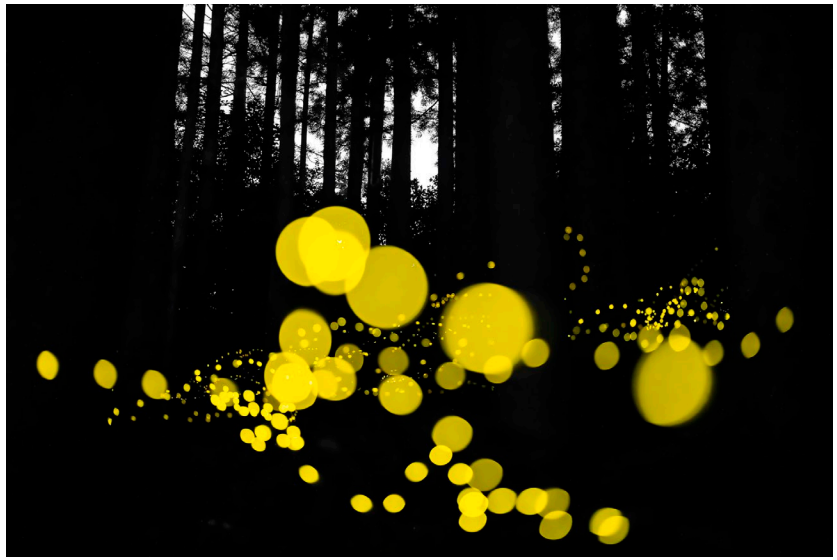




Works — Himebotaru (Digital Photography Surrealism)

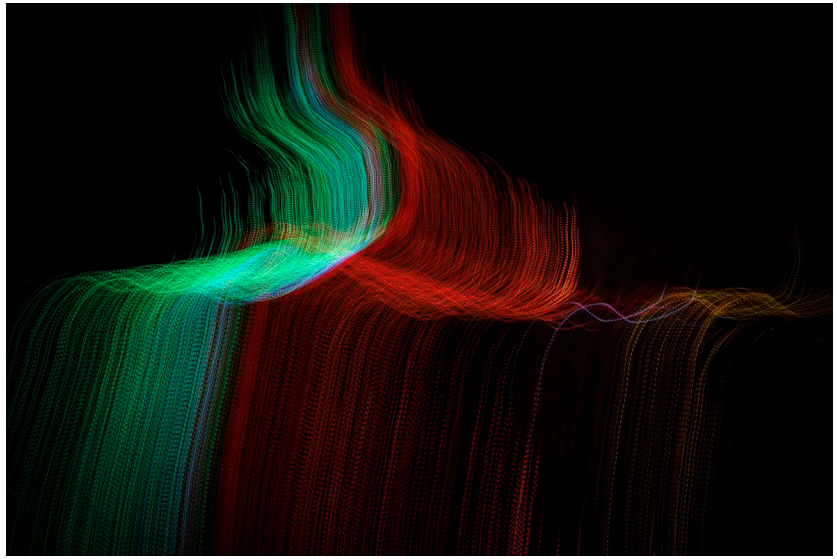


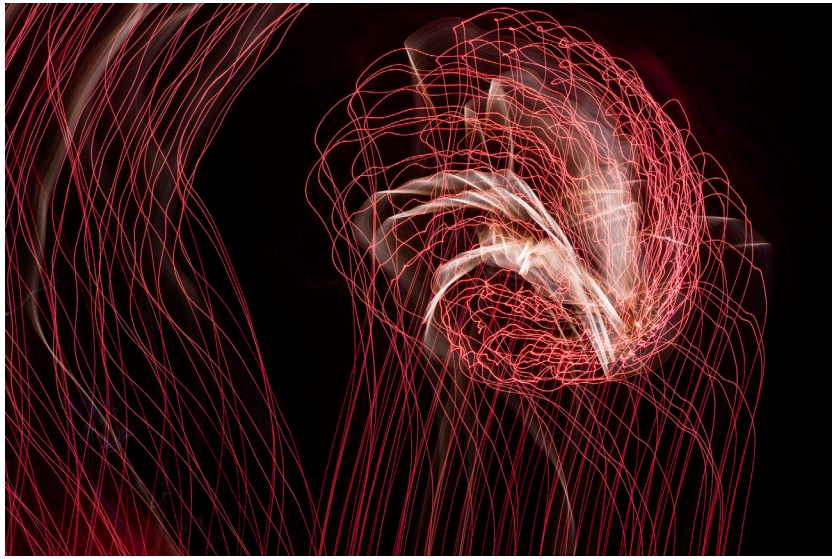


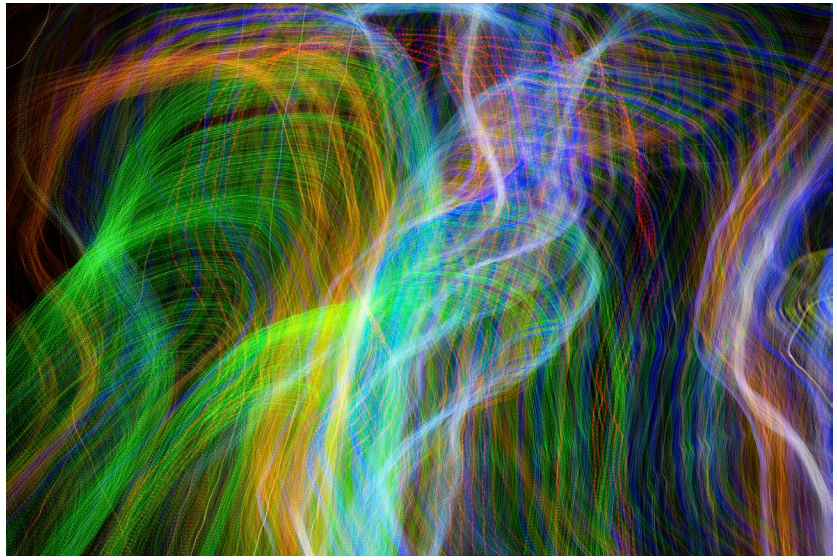


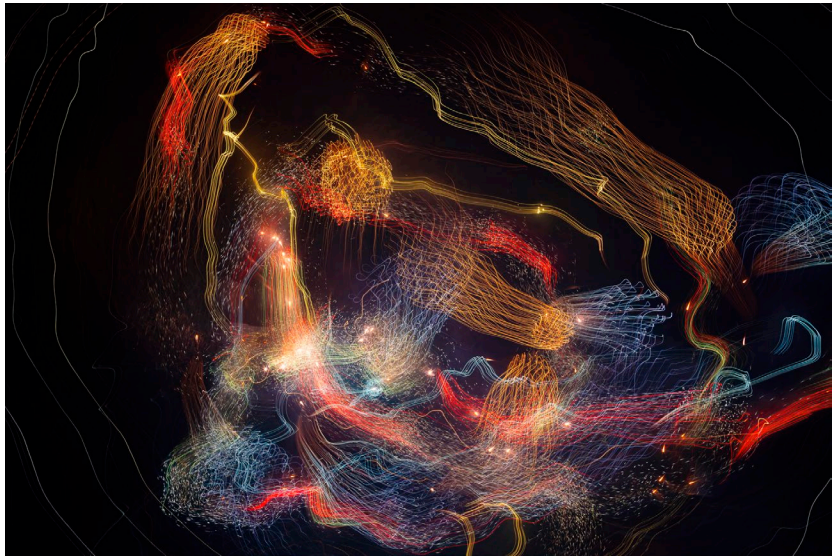


Works — Action Photography



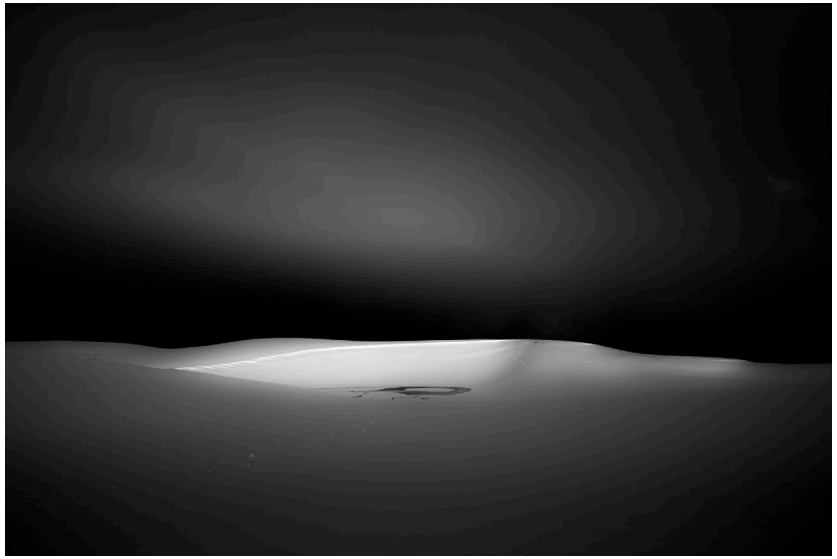




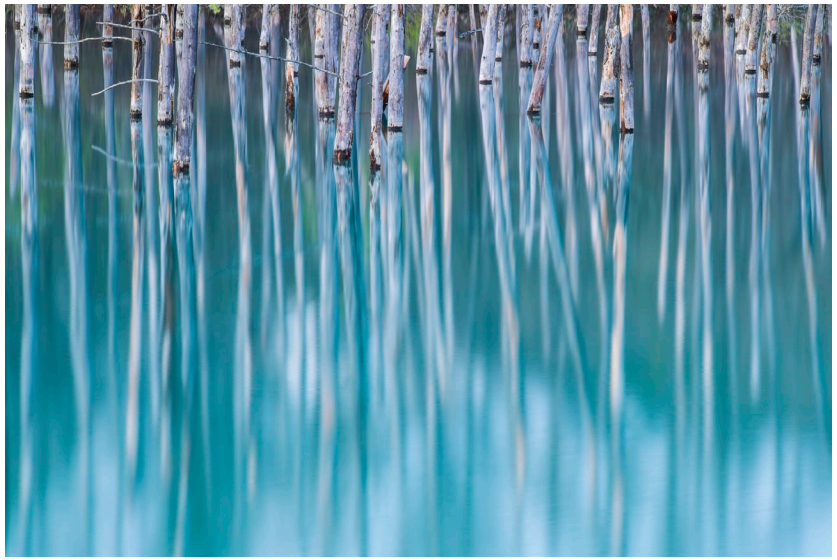


Works — Landscape





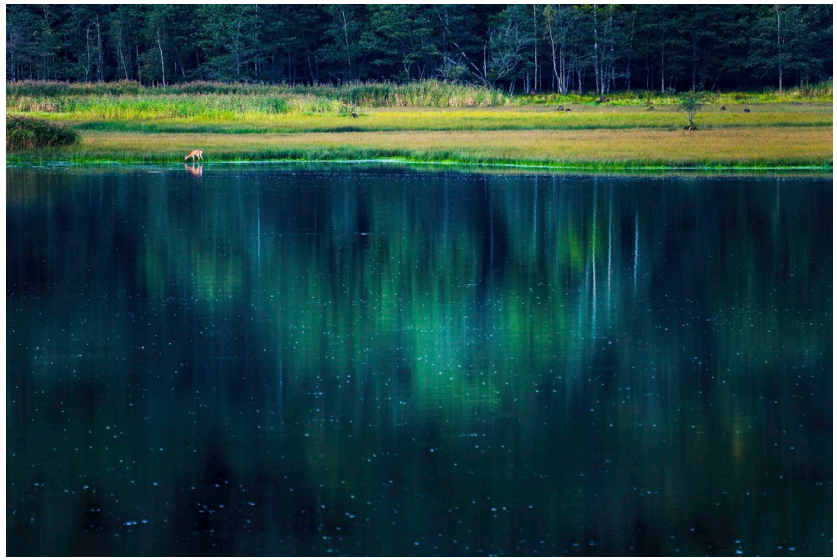




Works — Nature









Print Sales

Prints are currently available for purchase through the following online art marketplaces:

Japan: ArtGene
https://www.artgene.net/masahirohiroike/

Worldwide: ArtMajeur
https://www.artmajeur.com/masahiro-hiroike

Worldwide: FineArtAmerica
https://fineartamerica.com/profiles/masahiro-hiroike

North America: Pictorem
https://www.pictorem.com/gallery/Masahiro.Hiroike

NFT: Opensea
https://opensea.io/KAGEROFU

For works not listed on these sites, please get in touch directly.

CONTACT

Photographer • Contemporary Artist

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Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/masahiro.hiroike.photography/

Instagram: www.instagram.com/masahirohiroike/

X (NFT): https://x.com/KagerofuArt