

For Immediate Release

Hitoshi Fugo: *Watchers*

November 2 — December 17, 2022

MIYAKO YOSHINAGA is pleased to present a solo exhibition *Watchers* by Hitoshi Fugo on view from November 2 to December 17, 2022.

Hitoshi Fugo's photography not only captures his subjects with surrounding realities but also inspires a new set of perspectives through his conceptual approach. This exhibition features the artist's lesser-known color series entitled *Watchers* consisting of a series of head-and-shoulder portraits of an anonymous person watching a scenic view from a distance. Viewed from behind, Fugo's camera focuses on the person's back, leaving the scenery blurry and abstract.

Between 1994 and 2008, Fugo photographed these portraits in universally attractive sceneries such as a waterfall and a cityscape. The former were shot in Kegon Falls in Japan and Niagara Falls in Canada in the same year (1994) and the latter at the Empire State Building in New York City (2004) and the Tokyo Tower (2008) in Tokyo. These portraits are presented in pairs in single frames: Kegon vis a vis Niagara; Tokyo Tower vis a vis the Empire State Building). These pairs seem to be random combinations but similar in gender and age. These contrasts, apparent or nuanced, urge the viewer to further engage in comparisons and the rear-view portraits allow the viewer to enter into the spiritual realms surrounded by the spectacle.

Originally, Fugo's *Watchers* project was inspired by the sacredness of the waterfall in Japanese culture (Kegon Falls was named after a Buddhist sutra). Cultural and religious backgrounds filtering the watcher's experiences, Fugo expanded the project to Niagara Falls as a departure from a singular cultural context. A decade later, he added another dimension to the series by exploring the fragile and impermanent nature of the city revealed in the September 11 terrorist attacks. Fugo's interest in one of the fundamental human behaviors – the act of watching (scenery) – ultimately shaped the rigid form in which not only the photographer, but also the scenery, the watcher, and the viewer are all united by the same line of sight.

Born in 1947 in Kanagawa, Japan, Hitoshi Fugo studied photography at Nihon University in Tokyo. During the 1970s and 1980s, he traveled extensively in Japan, India, and the United States, creating a psychologically charged series *BLACKOUT*, which he first exhibited in Tokyo in 1982, and in New York at MIYAKO YOSHINAGA in 2017. His other work includes *Flying Frying Pan* (1974-1994), a series exploring the micro and macro cosmos of what is otherwise an ordinary household object, *Game Over* (1980-1991), a series inspired by the West Edmonton Mall in Canada, and *On the Circle* (2003-2011). Fugo's work has had international exposure in exhibitions such as Japanese Photography Today (Spain, 1986) and Japanese Contemporary Photography (Germany, 2000). In 2010 Fugo was awarded the Ina Nobuo Photography Award.

For more information and/or image request, please contact info@miyakoyoshinaga.com, + 1 212 268 7132.