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99 photographs on alpolic board

18.7 x 28.0 cm, 42.0 x 28.0 cm

booklet with text

Tokyo: Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery 2008



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Sydney: Performance Space 2009



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"Trace Elements: *spirit and memory in Japanese and Australian photomedia*"

Exhibition: Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery (2008) and Performance Space, Sydney (2009)

Interview with Seiichi FURUYA

Interviewer: Shihoko Iida (curator of Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery)

Tokyo 2008

In your works it is possible to discern an interest in the borderlines between politics, society and the human psyche. I'd like to ask your thoughts about publicly showing things relating to the history of you and your family. How do you approach the borderline between private and public?

Looking back on it now, I think an interest in borders was present from the time I first stumbled into photography. That's not to say I was necessarily conscious of it at the time; it is something I realized after time passed and I was reviewing my old photographs and photo books. In other words, I think from long before I took up photography as a means of personal expression there had germinated in me a world view that involved an awareness of borders. It was a kind of sadness — a knowledge that I would have to live in a world where there are restrictions and limits, insurmountable walls both tangible and intangible. After Christine's suicide I used the medium of photography as an axis around which to reconstruct the seven and a half years of life we spent together. You could say that it was a kind of response to the attacks of my memory — which would throw up periodical and fragmentary doubts and questions. I imposed on that memory a kind of order and tried to ascertain the truth, or at least the full picture of what exactly happened.

Instead of reaching a state of forgetfulness with the passing of time, many things started coming back to me for the first time precisely because a lot of time had passed, and they had made the transformation to memories. But these memories are not distinct; the flow of time has confused them, and I don't know which ones are true. Actually, I no longer know what the truth was. By piecing together my memories and making my own version of the truth I was able to approach the core of the problem. But it did not take long for me to realize that there was no end to this work. Even in the events that I thought I had established as fact, borders, insurmountable walls would appear, cutting off access to the other side. I think I got to a place where I was made aware of the existence of the "other

side," where all the "somethings" I had pursued remained. I think I am trying to express those unreachable "somethings" with the photographs.

Regarding the act of exhibiting photographs and the border between public and private" in order to investigate the connection between my wife's suicide and myself-this private world - I think it was necessary to enter the public realm of human existence. During the twenty years since she died, I have repeated the same work of reviewing the photographs countless times. At first of course I was adamant that this was a personal matter, and there were lots of photos I couldn't show in public. You could say there was a border separating me from the realm of public display. However, as time passed, my work became gradually isolated from the private world of husband and wife. I got over the need for self- therapy and trying to deal with my feelings of self- reproach or resurrect my capacity for compassion. Instead, I had no choice but to confront the reality of a world where existence itself can be a contradiction, an absurdity. You could say that even the most private affairs are a part of the human world. In the process of arriving at that understanding my desire to be conscious of the border between public and private was weakened.

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