



January 30(Tue) – March 3 (Sun), 2024
Weekdays: 11:00–19:00 Sundays and holidays: 11:00–18:00
Closed Mondays
(including national holidays falling on Monday)
Organized by Shiseido Company, Limited

Water & Mountains:

A Wonder-Land on Ecology and Society

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Maki Hayashida

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1984 Born in Osaka

2007 BA Policy Studies, Kansei Gakuin University

2023 MA Photography, London College of Communication, University of the Arts London

Based in Tokyo

Career highlights to date

2023 LUMA Rencontres Dummy Book Award, Les Rencontres d'Arles, shortlist, France

2021 Exhibition “KG+SELECT” KYOTOGRAPHIE International PhotographyFestival, Kyoto, Japan

Artist HP: <https://www.makihayashida.com/>



Maki Hayashida is continuing her research-based project with photography to address the realities of the consumer society that surrounds us today. Conscious of the seemingly contradictory boundaries between "documentary" and "expressive" photographic media, she explores the deeper issues that lie within the realities of consumer society.

In recent years, she has chosen as research subjects historic coastal landfill sites in the United Kingdom and illegal dumping in Japan, and has developed projects titled *Water Wonderland* (2022-2023) and *Beyond the Mountains* (2019-). The common subject of both projects is to examine the law of "unintended consequences," a social science term, within the context of a consumer society. The term describes that the consequences of deliberate actions are often unforeseen and might ultimately make a situation worse.

This exhibition, *Water & Mountains: A Wonder-Land on Ecology and Society*, which shows parts of the projects, gathers fragments of reality in which these "unintended consequences" are revealed, and comprises an installation with photographic media. In this way, the exhibition attempts to bring a "wonder-land" to viewers allowing them to direct their consciousness toward the social realities of the world. At the same time, it is a challenge to examine the power of photography in the digital age of information overload. For Hayashida, photography is a sincere practice to confront everyday issues that exist everywhere today.

I studied MA Photography at University of the Arts London from October 2022 to December 2023. *Water Wonderland* (2022-2023) is my MA project, on which I spent the entire period of approximately 15 months. I arrived at this project because I was originally working on *Beyond the Mountains* (2019-ongoing), a project about illegal dumping in Japan. Both share similarities in that the unintended consequences of waste management have largely impacted on nature.

While developing my own projects in London, I was constantly forced to consider the questions 'what is art' and 'what is an artist' in contemporary society. There is no fixed answer to these questions. There is no single answer either. It is important to have our own answers to these questions. In my case, as someone who works in the medium of photography, I then faced another question: 'What is contemporary photography as art?' As I spent time in Europe being exposed to diverse arts, my own answers to them gradually became clearer. At the very least, I can say that this exhibition reflects all the answers I now have.

When it came to establishing my artistic practice, I first and foremost questioned representation in photographs. No photograph can represent the real world as it is. Various technologies in recent years have made it easier for us to 'make' photographs digitally, and its representation has become a more immediate question in terms of whether a photograph is realistic or not. However, I would say that photographs have always been something we ‘make’ from the beginning of its emergence. This is because we as photographers always observe our subject matters with a conscious or unconscious bias. We always capture them with some kind of intention. However, we as viewers tend to regard photographs as reproductions of reality, particularly when looking at them without much thought. With those in mind, I decided to develop my projects in such a way that the subject matter of the image is not the subject of the work. This requires not only me to think but also the viewer to think.

In *Water Wonderland*, I undertook archaeological excavation of historic coastal landfill sites in the UK, using a range of photographic methods and photographic printing techniques. This includes cataloguing the sites, with a consideration of how each method of photographic classification unearths new material connotations about the landfill. All images are therefore visual interpretations of my research into the subjects and the subject matters, rather than straightforward records. Additionally, early on in its research process, I also realised that this physical landfill of waste and the current situation where massive amounts of digital photographs are being generated and stored one after the other are very close to each other. As such, my work is simultaneously intended to question the materiality and reproducibility of photography. Following the same approach, I then reexamined the series *Beyond the Mountains* and completed *The Stacks* (2023), for this exhibition.

The subject matters of the photographs presented here from the two series are the historic coastal landfill sites in the UK and the waste management facilities in Japan respectively, but the subjects of the works are all ‘the unintended consequences’. In the gallery space, each body of work constitutes an installation, aiming to provide a sense of wonderland and a place for deep thought, ‘wonder-land’, at the same time. Yet, their interpretation is open to the viewer. This is what I consider as art.

Maki Hayashida, January 2024

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- ① 《*Water Wonderland*》 2022-2023
- Inkjet print (as a set of 3), single channel video with sound
- 1,875 x 1,500 mm (each)
- From the series “Water Wonderland,” 2022-2023

Water Wonderland

A black-and-white photograph taken at a historic coastal landfill site in the UK is hand-coloured to add a layer of fiction, in a way obscuring the specificity and temporality of the site. This ambiguity is further emphasised by projection of a moving image piece from various landfill sites.

The audio, recorded at another site, includes the calling of crows along with ducks and other waterbirds. The Japanese associate crows with the beauty of the sunset but also with garbage. Neither is the case for the British. Such minor discrepancy in latent perceptions is said to be one factor of the unintended consequences.

A historic landfill is a site where there is no environmental permit in force. Due to a lack of reliable records, the contents of most such landfills are not clearly known. More than 1,000 of them are defined as historic coastal landfills, many of which are now nature reserves or parks at high risk of flooding and erosion. As such, they have the potential to cause diffuse pollution, with climate change further increasing this risk.

Just as there are no records of historic landfill sites, hand-colourists in early photography were rarely credited for their works. Many of them are said to have been women.

The title is a reference to Winter Wonderland in London as representative of consumerism in the UK. It is also a reference to Lewis Carol's Alice's *Adventures in Wonderland*.

- ② 《*The Stacks*》 2023
- 21 steel plates, ink mixed with ash on paper
- 420 x 297 mm (each plate), 75 x 200 mm (each text work)
- From the series “Beyond the Mountains,” 2019-ongoing

The Stacks

The chimneys of all 21 incineration plants jointly operated by the 23 Cities of Tokyo Metropolis are depicted on steel plates for photoetching. The title of each image is etched on the reverse side of the plate, indicating the name of the plant and the height of the chimney. The heights range from a minimum of 41 m to a maximum of 210 m, depending on the surrounding environment, such as airports, high-rise buildings, highways, and residences; there is also a wide variety of designs to take into account the impact on the landscape and surrounding residents. The service life of the plants is around 25-30 years, and they are being reconstructed in turn.

My initial idea was to print those 21 photographs with ink mixed with ashes from burning waste. However, it turned out that waste ashes are very dangerous and can only be handled by authorised organisations and people. This means that waste management is very well controlled. I therefore decided to emphasise the absence of incinerator ash by showing plates on which the ink was to be placed, rather than printed material. Also, by leaving

the stains and rust on the plates, which were unintentionally created during the production process, I am questioning whether humans can really control everything perfectly.

The Japanese associate waste with incineration. Annual statistics by the Ministry of the Environment Government of Japan show that about 80% of waste is directly incinerated. However, this is limited to municipal waste. In the past, all waste in Japan was disposed of by local authorities. Due to the massive increase in waste resulting from rapid economic growth, the law was amended in 1970 to classify waste into ‘municipal waste’ and ‘industrial waste’. The former is still the responsibility of each local authority and is handled in well-controlled incineration plants within the discharge area, as symbolised by the 21 waste incineration plants in the 23 Cities of Tokyo. The latter, on the other hand, is the responsibility of emitters and wide-area treatment by intermediate companies has been permitted. This at one point led to uncontrolled private business and massive amounts of industrial waste being dumped illegally.

- ③ 《*Re-collectionI*》 2023
- Inkjet print on lightbox
- 1,200 x 1,200 x 100mm
- From the series “Water Wonderland,” 2022-2023
- ④ 《*Re-collectionII* #1-5》 2023
- C-print on expired Kodak photographic paper
- Unique piece
- 20 x 16 inch (each)
- From the series “Water Wonderland,” 2022-2023
- ⑤ 《*Re-collectionIII* #5, #3, #4, #1, #2》 (from left) 2023
- Inkjet print in vintage frame
- 210 x 210 mm (each)
- From the series “Water Wonderland,” 2022-2023

- ⑥ 《*Re-collectionIV* #1-6》 (from left) 2023
- Inkjet print on acrylic, biodegradable
- 105 x 105 x 20 mm (each)
- From the series “Water Wonderland,” 2022-2023

- ⑦ 《*Re-collectionV* #1-7》 (from left) 2023
- Polaroid Blue 600 Film reworked digital on polyester
- 2,000 x 1,000 mm (each)
- From the series “Water Wonderland,” 2022-2023

Re-collection

I depicted fragments of glass bottles found in a historic coastal landfill site, using the power of photography which allows us to see what is invisible to the naked eye. The glass fragments are represented as fragments of waste from an older time. The development of the modern landfill in the UK is said to have been led by the Public Health Act 1875, when most of the waste was natural materials such as glass. Although glass bottles themselves

are not harmful to the earth, the organic matter remained in them may cause a chemical reaction and become toxic. Furthermore, by continuing such dumping for years and changing the contents of the waste, it is also exposing us to toxic chemicals.

The production process of Polaroid Blue 600 Film was accidentally created by mixing a colour film system with a black-and-white developer, which should not have happened. The mixture of chemicals which should not be together could be unexpectedly dangerous. This is just like why landfill waste without reliable records can be problematic, as it is harmless on its own, but unexpectedly toxic when mixed with various wastes and other substances.

Kodak's colour photographic paper represents photography that in the past was mass-marketed as commodity for consumption. In response to changes in the market, the company no longer produces any darkroom photographic paper. As times change, technology changes and so does waste. Acrylic and polyester used in the installation also represent this. Both are plastic materials, which did not exist in the older time.

In Japan, since glass bottles became common around 1900, they have almost never been transported directly to landfills as such. Thus, the Japanese rarely associate them with objects from landfills, but rather subconsciously regard them as something valuable that should not be landfilled. This is why I photographed the fragments of glass bottles as jewels.

- ⑧ 《*LOOKOUT* #1》 2023
- Inkjet printing on wallpaper
- 1,300 x 1,000 mm
- From the series “Water Wonderland,” 2022-2023

- ⑨ 《*LOOKOUT* #2-4》 (from left) 2023
- Hand-tinted gelatin silver print
- Unique piece
- 10 x 8 inch (each)
- From the series “Water Wonderland,” 2022-2023

LOOKOUT

A gaze of waterbird is depicted as an observer and the first victim-to-be of this human impact on nature, as well as a resident of ‘Wonderland’. Among waterbirds at the historic coastal landfill sites, I chose a swan as my sitter due to its connection with the British monarchy. By presenting it as a portrait photograph, the work attempts to reexamine the ‘gaze’ in photography from the perspectives of both a photographer behind the camera and a subject in front of the camera.

Most swans in the UK have orange beaks while most swans in Japan have yellow. They are different species of swans; accordingly, their facial structures are slightly different. To me, a beak of swan is yellow, so I painted it yellow. If ornithologists see this photo, they can easily tell this is fictitious. Again, such minor discrepancies in potential perceptions could contribute to the unintended consequences.

All four photographs are printed from a single negative. By presenting these photographs as a set, I am attempting to emphasise that images are always constructed; they are never an objective or transparent record of reality, even those captured by the lens of a camera.

