

---

### English Commentary on Selected Works

---

#### **I** 011 Monkey Trainer

This work became the outbreak of Yasui Nakaji's career. Although it is reproduced in 2023, it faithfully express the softness of the soft-focus lenses of the time. Here, Yasui shows interest in the gaze between the performing monkey, the trainer, and the crowd that does not meet at all. They seem to share the same reality, yet each are closed to subjectivity in solitude, which Yasui finds the realness of the modern life.

#### **II** 046 May Day Scene, 047 Flags, 048 Song, 049 Arrest, 050 (Staring), 051 (Wave and Crowd)

Yasui shot the May Day held in Osaka Nakanoshima Park in 1931. Although the result varies, these works were produced from some 40 negatives of the same event. Yasui tried various techniques such as adjusting the angle to express the dynamism of the clashes between protesters and police forces, bromoil print and bold trimming to emphasize the tactile texture, and multiple exposure and montages for metaphorical expressions.

#### **III** 101 Order, 103 Park, 105 Hat

Yasui talked about what he is working on at that time using a self-made term "semi-still-life" at the Naniwa Photography Club's meeting in June 1932. Yasui described his method of combining still life subjects in an improvised manner at his shooting locations as "semi-still-life." Yasui continuously worked on this so-called "montage at the actual scene", the concept that includes not only the matter of composition, but the congruence and incongruence, and the relationship between artifice and nature.

#### **IV** 120 (Composition: Pendulum)~130 Butterfly 2

Yasui and the other Tampei Photography Club members held a photo shooting event at the Kitano Middle School in 1938 spring. Yasui made an incredible world with setting the specimens, laboratory equipments and materials at various places in the school and. Ordinary things are made into a fantastic photography by the photographer's ways of composition and the view towards the world. Yasui enjoyed the ways of production which is like re-encountering the world.

#### 158 (Magnetic Field)~162 Magnetic Field

These are the series of photographs of the patterns made by iron powder and magnets. Yasui sprinkled iron powder on a dry plate, and made various expressions by using magnet under the plate. The photography image made of objects directly put on a dry plate without using negative or a camera is called photogram.

#### **V** 172 Shade Place~174 Soldier in White

During wartime regime, Yasui and the other members of the Tampei Photography Club made a voluntary recuperative visit to the army hospital in Wakayama prefecture for the injured soldiers. Over 200 photographs taken at this event were donated to the army. A group of photographs featuring the injured soldiers were also published as the joint production of the Tampei Photography Club in the July 1941 issue of the photo magazine *Shashin Bunka*.

#### 175 (Horse and Girls)~179 (Circus Woman)

Yasui and his children visited Yamane Circus' show around 1940. Five original prints and five negative film rolls survives featuring the circus. The publication dates of the series are unknown, but the substantial content eloquently tells Yasui's excellent insights and his photographic skills.

#### 180 Displaced Jews: Mother~190 Displaced Jews: Window

These are the series of photographs of Jewish fled from persecution in Europe to Kobe during the World War II. With his beloved Leica in hand, Yasui and the five members of the Tampei Photography Club took photographs of the Jewish refugees arriving the port. Beyond reportage, the dramatic shading and composition leave a deep impression on the viewer.

#### 196 Moon~200 At Kamigamo 2: Wall

These works which Yasui produced in his last years departs from his earlier photographs. It seems as if it is simply praising nature, but they are anti-thesis towards the tendency of the time that demands social function or a cause in arts. For Yasui, art is confrontation of the world through photography based on intrinsic motivation. Yasui describes art's true nature as to touch the reality of every matter and existence and to be genuinely touched by its profound mystery. Yasui's emphasis was placed on the universal mindset.