CHAPTER 3

Photography as an Intermediary Art in Horie Toshiyuki

Neither an object for critical analysis nor reading, let alone something to possess, a photograph is a field in which one receives the emotion that the photographer captured in a moment, a medium that, while accepting the tremble of the photographer’s heart, casts one’s own dreams and fantasies in unimaginable directions. To engage with photography is to acknowledge the way of being in which to reach for and enter its interior is the only means to penetrate it and reach its exterior behind it.

HORIE TOSHIYUKI

Reflection on reflection and the infinite mirroring of the mise en abyme (in the large sense of the term: the metonymic representation of a representation), reflections on the phantasms of simulacra or the simulacra of phantasms (to cite or to sidetrack Plato)—the innumerable, playful ways in which photography, or else painting, is photographed.

JACQUES DERRIDA

A lens may be perfect as a tool, but with its optical perfection it is still insufficient to capture reality; [photography] is nothing more than a trace of an attempt by the person looking into the viewfinder to represent [something] with the uncontrollable play of light. Prévert’s magic with which he matches the [grammatical] “imperfect,” signifying an incomplete action in the past, with the photographic lens, which clips

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1 Horie, “Honshitsu o kumidasu izumi” (The Spring to Draw Essence From), in Horie Toshiyuki, Zō ga funde mo: Kaisō densha IV (Though an Elephant Might Step on It: Trains out of Service VI: Chūō kōron shinsha, 2011), 231.
time in a moment! It is true that every photograph by Doisneau is imperfect, [representing] “the present in the past.”

HORIE TOSHIYUKI

Considering Horie Toshiyuki’s sizable and still growing output of publications on photography, including volumes of the author’s own photographs, the intimacy with which image and text co-exist in his publications may only seem natural. He has reviewed and continues to review the work of photographers, provides photographs to accompany his writings and writes stories of photographers and photographs. His interest in photography is evidently neither arbitrary nor passing, but essential and sustained. He crosses the threshold to and fro between spectatorship and authorship and between image and text, in much the same manner as some of the artists his thoughts keep returning to, such as Hervé Guibert and Robert Doisneau.

Horie is not only an observer and practitioner of photography. He does not simply write about photography; rather, photography as he sees it shares a philosophical foundation with the mode of writing he employs. Both photography and narrative, in his terms, defy the myth of mechanical reproduction and distribution as well as the dominance of the sense of sight in the society of spectacle (if you will) that is the modern era. His narratives, in principle as well as in subject matter, privilege the participation of the non-visual senses and means beyond the eye with which to negotiate with others, human or material.

We might say that in the case of Horie Toshiyuki, the hands that handle the camera pen the text. In a world where text and image are often assumed to be transparent and immaterial vehicles, Horie works earnestly to restore in our mind the hands of their creators. Thus it is not only appropriate but also essential that we step into his work in our exploration of photographic narratives beyond representation.


4 His first book of photography (following the catalogue of his exhibition at Morioka Shoten in 2009), Mezame te udedokei o miru to (As I Awoke and Looked at My Watch; Tokyo: CULTuART by BEAMS, 2012), contains 186 black and white photographs and a seven-page essay of the same title in 208 pages.