

All About Photo Announces the Winner of October 2020 Solo Exhibition**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE : SAN DIEGO OCTOBER 1, 2020**

ZAIDO

YUKARI CHIKURA

All About Photo is thrilled to present Zaido by the Japanese photographer Yukari Chikura.

Part of the exclusive online showroom developed by All About Photo, this exhibition is on view for the entire month of October 2020 and includes twenty photographs from the project published this year by Steidl.

This project is Yukari Chikura's preservation of the 1300-year-old Japanese ritual festivity "Zaido." Following a series of tragedies, including her father's sudden death, her own critical accident, and the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami, Chikura recalls how her father came to her in a dream with the words: "Go to the village hidden deep in the snow where I lived a long time ago." And so with a camera in hand, she set off on a restorative pilgrimage to northeast Japan (the first of numerous journeys), which resulted in the creation of her book.



© Yukari Chikura

Silent, Snowy World - On the morning of the festival, the moon was still in the sky, looking down on the land. The snow had completely covered the lush summer fields with a blanket of snow. Winter can be very cold, sometimes as high as -20 degrees Celsius, and it can be very harsh. Located on the border of Aomori, Iwate and Akita prefectures, Kazuno City in Akita Prefecture is a heavy snowfall area where it starts to snow in late November and continues until late March.

Chikura arrived at the village, surreally silver in the snow and mist, and there discovered Zaido, where inhabitants from different villages gather on the second day of each new year and conduct a ritual dance to induce good fortune. The performers dedicate their sacred dance to the gods and undergo severe purifications. Combining photographs of snowscapes that border on abstraction with images of the intricate masks and costumes of Zaido, Chikura depicts the cultural diversity of the participants as well as their common bond in creating collective memory and ensuring the survival of this ritual.

In this moment of great uncertainty and turmoil, these online Solo Exhibitions aim to continue to connect audiences and artists, building on our beliefs that access to art and culture is a right and not a privilege and that artists' voices should be heard. It is a platform to help photographers pursue their visions, their dreams and their projects.

With our new online showroom space, we've placed All About Photo's role as a supporter and amplifier of creative ideas.



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Three Men Walking On A Snowy Road - The performers walk through the snow to the shrine. In a place where the temperature difference between summer and winter is so great that the maximum temperature on a winter day can be as low as -20 degrees Celsius, this practice can be very demanding for the young participants. We tried to capture this in a fantastic atmosphere where reality and fantasy intersect.



© Yukari Chikura

Bird dance children walking on snowy road - The bird dance is said to be the dance of the birds kept by the Danburi Chouja in the legend of "Danburi Chouja". There are three dancers, each of whom wears a male, female and chick crown on their heads as they dance the dance.



© Yukari Chikura

Morning Ceremony - At "Nishi-no-Kakuchi" behind the shrine, Noh players from the two villages gather to perform the Gongen Mai and the Craftsman Mai.



© Yukari Chikura



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Torimai Boy is Drinking Water from a Chouzuya - A child of the bird dance drinking water at the Chouzuya, Chouzuya, and Temizuya, or hand water house. Some years ago, he was buried in the snow that fell from the roof of the shrine and his life was in danger. His mothers rescued him and he survived.



© Yukari Chikura

The morning of the festival, the shrine lays under a blanketed of pure white snow.



© Yukari Chikura

Ancestors portrait in a 130-year-old liquor store - Old pictures, hanging in an liquor store which has been open since 1856.



© Yukari Chikura

Old Telescope in the Attic - An astronomical telescope placed in the attic of an old house. This area has a very heavy snowfall, so it has a sloping roof to keep the snow off.



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Ema - Ema (picture-horse; a name, originating from the tradition of donating horses to shrines)-little wooden slabs with wishes or prayers on them, left at the shrine by the worshipers for the kami (Shinto gods). Often depicting animals and bearing the word gan'i (wish), they can be found at any shrine, the shrinegoers' hopes for good health, marital happiness, successful exams, etc. written on them.



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Song of Birds - The mythical Yatagarasu (Yatagarasu) has three legs and is worshipped in Japan as the God of Guidance and the Incarnation of the Sun. There are many theories as to what the three legs of Yatagarasu mean. In Kumano Main Shrine, the three legs of Yatagarasu represent heaven (Tenjinji), earth and man respectively, indicating that God, nature and man are brothers born from the same sun. The Nihon Shoki tells us that he was sent by Amaterasu, and the shrine where ZAIDO is performed is a shrine dedicated to Amaterasu.



© Yukari Chikura

Shrine in the Snow - A shrine dedicated to the Sun Goddess Amaterasu Omikami. This area of heavy snowfall is located at the border of Aomori, Iwate and Akita prefectures.



© Yukari Chikura

Mizugori (Cold Water Ablutions) - A noshu performing mizugori (cold water ablutions) at Makanaiyado -a ritual that is currently only performed at one of the four original localities. On this day, the lake in front of the house had frozen, making the task even harder.



© Yukari Chikura

Depending on the character of the noshu, the duration differs-it can be up to 48 days long-but all must partake in a thorough cleansing, avoiding birth in their home, visiting the houses of recently deceased, and eating the meat of all 4-legged animals; something, which is tremendously hard in our modern day society.

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