





**Yamamoto Masao**  
*"Small things in silence"*

by Giorgia Mauri



Yamamoto Masao

Yamamoto Masao is one of the most important Japanese photographers. Born in Aichi Prefecture, Japan in 1957. Studied painting before he chose **gelatin silver prints** as his artistic medium. The first gallery show in 1994 at Shapiro Gallery, San Francisco and a solo exhibition at Yancey Richardson Gallery, New York in 1996 led to many other gallery shows in the U.S. Since 2006, he has been actively showing at galleries and museums in Europe, Japan, Russia, and Brazil. Media coverage includes NY Times and other major art magazines. Yamamoto lives in Yatsugatake Nanroku, Yamanashi Prefecture where he enjoys creating his work while being **close to nature**.

<http://www.yamamotomasao.jp/>

## “Small Things in Silence”

I have been expressing myself through art for the past 40 years.

During these years I constantly asked myself:

What did I see? What did I not see?

What did I say? What did I not say?

**My quest for answers to these questions led to my creations.**

I was unsure about my niche in this universe, my “place” in this existence; and I needed to believe in art in order to keep on living.

On my journey of self-discovery, I stopped often and made many detours. The works I “dropped” along the way mark my footsteps - chaotic and inconsistent as they might be.

When I look back upon my path, I realize that the one consistent motif in my work was my obsession for small things. **I feel joy** when I discover seemingly insignificant things that may be easily overlooked. I am interested in those awkward feelings – such as when you miss a button hole or are stalled and lost in a disorienting fog. I prefer whispering my messages in a soft voice instead of speaking them out loud. My messages may be so soft as to be mistaken for illusions.

I know I will carry these feelings with me for a long time.

I hope that the faint waves that my work emits, grow into quiet, yet eloquent messages that will be reaching you.

Yamamoto Masao



Nakazora, #1073

LLL



KAWA=FLOW, #1591



KAWA=FLOW, #1613

LLL



Nakazora, #811



A box of Ku, #13



LLL



KAWA=FLOW, #1508



KAWA=FLOW, #1620

LLL



KAWA=FLOW, #1576



LLL



KAWA=FLOW, #1595

# "KAWA=Flow"

I enjoy watching transitions in nature.

Clouds in the sky are all different from each other. While watching the clouds, I realize I am seeing beyond the clouds. I may be focusing on the clouds, but my mind is immersed in something else.

There is a Haiku poem Ryokan (1758-1831), a Zen monk, wrote. It goes like this:

**A Japanese maple leaf**

**It turns to show its back**

**It turns to show its front**

**Before it is time to fall**

This Haiku has made a great impact on me.

I believe Ryokan wrote about life through using the metaphor of falling leaves.

Life is an accumulation of moments. There are moments when leaves show the sunny front, and there are moments when they show the dark backside. But at the end, all leaves fall and decayed.

Ryokan's attention to the sound of the nature, and realization of **how humans are** but a part of nature, made it possible for him to write this poem. I imagine how Ryokan led his life enriching, soothing, and purifying people's mind.

"Active passiveness," a teaching of Zen, influenced me, too. It is necessary to acquire the sense of active passiveness to reach a steady mind and body. When you achieve a calm feeling by finding yourself integrated into nature, you will develop a respect and humbleness towards the whole universe. You will be enveloped in a **deep sensibility of the universe**, and the earth you are placed on.

This thinking is widely known in Budo (martial arts.) I try to sharpen my sensibility to reach this state of mind when I photograph.

Yamamoto Masao

Recent major exhibitions:

2014 "Shizuka=Cleanse", Craig Krull Gallery, L.A.

2013 "Narrow Road to the interior" contemporary Japanese artists, SMOCA, Scottsdale (U.S.)

"KAWA=FLOW" Städt. Galerie im Schloss, Isny Allgäu (Germany)

2012 "Shizuka=Cleanse", Galeria Massimo Minini, Brescia (Italy)

"YAMAMOTO MASAO", VALID FOTO GALLERY, Barcelona

2011 "YAMAMOTO MASAO", GALERIA MARCELO GUANIERI, Sao Paulo

"KAWA=FLOW", MIZUMA & ONE GALLERY (CAOCHANGDI PHOTOSPRING 2011), Beijing

2010 "KAWA=FLOW part ", Semina rerum, Zurich

"KAWA", GALERIE CAMERA OBSCURA, Paris

"YAMAMOTO MASAO", Robert Koch Gallery, San Francisco

2009 "KAWA=FLOW", Photomonth in Krakow 2009, Krakow (Poland)

"KAWA=FLOW", FORUM FOTOGRAFIE, Köln (Germany)

"KAWA=FLOW", POBEDA GALLERY, Moscow (Russia)