

# The Material of the Photograph in a World of Flux of Images

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In recent years, the ubiquity of non-material images, the presence of screens and projected images that externalize the visual qualities of the photographic image, resulted also in the flux of artists and photographers interested in the possibility of looking into the questions concerning the material nature of the photograph, and the erasure of its mimetic aspect. These artists return to the printed photo, exploring the chemical process of developing, printing and fixating the images, or the modes of display (family albums, exhibition space, installations, etc.), with the intention to use these modes of display for the sake of researching the materiality of the photograph. The artists discussed in this presentation all refer to the material aspect of the photograph, looking at it as an image being produced in a tangible manner. The papery substance is, therefore, reclaimed and re-centred as the object of photography, and a potential possibility to create an alternative path to photography which reconsiders its materiality, to become a tangible object, that can be touched, set, installed and presented in space, beyond the now ubiquity of the projected and screened images. This approach brings about the corporeal and affective qualities of the medium, and its potential in transmitting emotions and grief.

Specifically, I shall look into the materiality of the photography through the work of a group of Japanese artists, among which I shall discuss:

**Chino Otsuka** (born in Tokyo, lives in London) produced a series of images that centres on the empty pages of a family photo album. Photograph were taken out, and the pages only carry the descriptions added in handwriting under the photographs themselves.

**Yokota Daisuke** (b. 1983, Saitama), uses chemical photography to print, and reprint his images, to a point that the original image is blurred through the repetitive process. Yokota's installations opened a whole new discourse on the material qualities of photography. His recent installation at the Aichi Triennale (2016) consisted of piles of burnt photographic papers set into space, as piles of rubbish, expressing the sorrow accompanying the loss of images.

**Takahashi Munemasa** (b. 1980, Tokyo) created an amazing wall installation made of photographs washed away, damaged and erased, then rescued cleaned and preserved, set to be returned to their original owners that never came back. Takahashi collected these lost images then set them over extensive walls, creating a moment of realization of the lost photographs as a metonymy for lost lives.

**Fujiwara Satoshi** (b. 1984, Kobe) use sheets of printed photography which he sets as an installation in space, pulling the images over walls and columns, creating a possibility to consider the photographic image as a three-dimensional objects in space. Choosing images on the printed material which are representing heavy-weight objects and people, make the photographic installations heavier than expected through the meeting of body and material.