

いとなみを照らし出す

作家の言葉

本展では、88枚の写真によるインスタレーションと、その撮影の過程で生まれた写真を大判プリントとして展示しています。私にとって写真を撮ること、編集することは単なる表現行為ではなく「修行」のようなものです。学び、考え、見つめ直す時間そのものが遍路の歩みに重なり、目に見える像となって現れてきます。四国八十八ヶ所の巡礼になぞらえて、私は88という数字に宿る「区切り」や「循環」の象徴性に着目し、一枚の写真を積み重ねるごとに徳を積み上げるような行為として位置付け、このプロジェクトを構想しました。

お遍路における「88箇所を巡ることで徳を積む」という思想は、信仰を持たない私にとっても深い問いを投げかけました。私は昨年までの約三年半を台湾で過ごし、その土地で「8」という数字に込められた文化的意味に触れました。中国語において「8」は「発(繁栄)」に通じ、台湾ではとりわけ縁起の良い数とされています。日本においても「八」は末広がりを示し、米寿を祝う「88」という形で人生の円環に光を当てます。異なる文化を横断する「8」の象徴性は、宗教や国境を越えて「豊かさ」や「循環」を暗示し、遍路の「88」と結びつき、作品の根幹を形づくっていきました。さらに「つなぎ遍路」や「オンライン遍路」といった現代の巡礼形態を知ったとき、私は「誰もが無理なく続けられる遍路」という概念に惹かれました。歩みを止めることなく、それぞれの方法で「続ける」こと自体が修行であり、祈りであるのだと思います。

今回の「写真遍路プロジェクト」は、私自身の個人史をたどる旅から始まりました。生まれた病院は今まさに工事が進められ、取り壊しを控えています。そこに立つと、失われゆく記憶の場に立ち会っていることを強く感じました。幼少期に住んでいた家はすでに姿を消し、住所さえ変わってしまった場所も多くありました。記憶の断片を母と共にたぐり寄せながら撮影場所の調査を進めるうちに、母もまた「一緒に巡りたい」と願い、私と共に歩むことになりました。かつて遊んだ天神の街並みも大きく姿を変えており、そこは、福岡に暮らすニュージーランド出身の友人と歩きながら撮影を重ねました。彼女とは十五年以上前に出会い、今では私の家族のような存在となっています。

個人的な記憶を辿る旅は、やがて他者と共に歩む巡礼へと変化していきました。

やがて私は気づきました。私にとって大切なのは「場所」そのものではなく、そこで思い出を共有し、忘れていた記憶を呼び起こす行為そのものであると。歩くことによって、田舎で交わす挨拶の習慣や、通学路のわずかな坂道を前に自然と足を緩める感覚。匂い、光、音から呼び起こされた私の身体の記憶が、時を超えて過去と現在を結び直す。歩行は単なる移動ではなく、記憶を呼び覚ます行為であり、過去と現在をつなぎ直す儀式のようにも感じられました。

88枚の写真を重ねた先に現れた像を、どのようにご鑑賞いただけるのか、私自身にもまだ想像がつきません。けれども、私の個人的な記憶を基にしたこの作品が媒介となり、誰もが心の奥に持つ原風景を呼び起こし、みなさまの記憶と交わることで、やがて新たな風景が立ち上がっていくことを願っています。

馬場さおり

ILLUMINATE OUR LIFE

Artist Statement

In this exhibition, I am displaying an installation piece comprised of 88 photographs, along with other large-sized photographs produced during the shooting of the former. Shooting and editing the photographs, for me, are not merely the acts of expression, but rather, something similar to "training." The time spent on learning, contemplation, and reflection overlaps with the footsteps of a pilgrimage and emerges as a visible figure. By imitating my project with the *Shikoku Pilgrimage*, I focused on the symbolic meanings, such as "boundary" and "circulation," embodied in the number 88. The process of layering each photograph on one another is regarded as an act of accumulating virtue, and that is how this project began to develop.

The idea of "accumulating good deeds through traveling 88 places" in *Ohenro* (Buddhist pilgrimage) invited me to deeper consideration, as someone who doesn't belong to any particular religion. Until last year, I had spent almost three and a half years in Taiwan. During my stay there, I learned about the cultural significance of the number eight. In Mandarin Chinese, number eight (*bā*) is associated with prosperity (*fā*/發), and in Taiwan, it is considered a very auspicious number. Similarly, in Japan, number eight (*hachi*/八) indicates expanding fortune in relation to the shape of its Chinese character. It also refers to *beiju* (米寿), the celebration for someone who turns 88, as the number symbolizes a long-lasting life, like a golden ring that honors the person. The symbolic meaning of the number eight, found across different cultures, transcends religion and national borders. It implies prosperity and recurrence, connected with the number 88, as mentioned in Buddhist pilgrimage. As a result, it became a foundational element of my work. Moreover, when I discovered "*tsunagi-henro*" and "*online-henro*," both of which are contemporary forms of pilgrimage, I was intrigued by their concept of pilgrimage that "allows anyone to continue their journey without being pressured." To "continue" one's pilgrimage and keep their steps going – in one's own way – is a form of training and a prayer.

This "Photo HENRO Project" started from my own journey of tracing my personal history. The hospital where I was born is under demolition work and it is to disappear in the near future. When I stood in that place, I had a strong sense of witnessing the site where memories are about to fade. The house where I used to live during my early childhood is already gone, and many of the places nearby now have different addresses. As I developed research on my shooting locations while recollecting fragments of memories with my mother, she also hoped to "travel together" with me, and I eventually decided to move forward with my mother. Tenjin, the crowded urban area in Fukuoka City where I used to hang out, has undergone a drastic change in its landscape. It was where I took several photographs while walking with a friend from New Zealand, who now lives in Fukuoka. I met her more than fifteen years ago, and now she feels like a family member to me.

The journey of looking back on my personal memories later transformed into a pilgrimage where I took steps with other people.

After some time, I realized that what is important to me is not the "place" itself, but the act of sharing past moments in life and evoking forgotten memories. I think about a custom in the countryside where I exchanged greetings with local people. I also remember seeing a slight slope in front of me on my way to school, which naturally made me slow down. The smell, light, and sound remind me of memories inscribed in my body, and through walking, such memories reconnect the past and present as they transcend time. Walking is not just a way to move from one place to another, but an act of evoking memories that feel like a ritual to retie then and now.

I cannot imagine how visitors would encounter the image that emerges ahead of the 88 photographs displayed in layers. However, I wish that the work produced based on my personal memories becomes a medium to evoke the inner, primary landscape that lies in each of us, and interlaces with everyone's memory to form a new landscape.

Baba Saori

Photo HENRO Project – The Eternal Return of Memory 2025 / inkjet print on clear film, 86×111.8 cm (88 photos) / 2025

Photo HENRO Project – The Eternal Return of Memory 2025 – on the way / inkjet print, 150×414.1 cm / 2025