

Play of light & lens

Japanese photographers introduce light as a concept of science & metaphor in photography

Hina Nainani

An exhibition of contemporary photography from Japan which explores the notions of 'Hikari' is open at National Institute of Design from February 6-14.

Hikari is the Japanese word for light and puts forward the idea that light can be used as both a tool of illumination revealing something we might not normally see, or conversely, as a cloak covering something up. Within the photographs on display lie deceptions, interventions and the constructions of a culture, for which the concept of light is both a science and a metaphor.

In the photographs of Yuji Obata light reveals a moment - ephemeral, melting, passing and gone. His work is on the history of photography, and the aesthetics and landscape of Japan. For Tokihiro Sato light is a deed, an action and an intervention. The photographer himself enters the frame as a presence shown only by light. He uses light to create playfully imaginative images.

"I admire Sato's work and the way he rightfully plays with light. During the day he plays with a mirror to reflect the sunlight towards the camera while at night his tool is a flashlight to project points of light on the image," explained Vijith, a student of photography.

In Shiho Kito's photographs we see light as navigation, as embellishment and as a guide through the city - meta-

phoric and historical, public and private. Kimiko Yoshida's self portraits are bathed in a blinding light, yet they conceal a truth.

The bright studio light disguises the sitter whilst her own identity disappears into the guise of another. Finally, Ken Kitano's work explores a more tactile relationship, between the photographer and light, which he uses to draw on the surface of the



Photos: Piyush Patel, DNA

photographic paper.

Professor Deepak John Matthew who is the curator of the show in Ahmedabad said, "As a premium institute of design, we try to bring the best of works from the artists around the world. With this exhibition, we have attempted to try and see if new and interesting readings of the photographs can emerge when seen in the context of a theme and secondly to investigate the ways in which this theme might be

unique to the country in question."

Shiho Kito, who is the original curator of the exhibition, has been an exchange student at NID. Her idea to present the exhibition is to portray how photographers in this show have become active participants in their art work rather than using photography to simply document their surroundings. They disrupt the normal notions of photographic time by incorporating elements of layering, performance and manipulation.