



NATIONAL  
GALLERIES OF  
SCOTLAND



Hiroshi Sugimoto, *Lightning Fields 168*, © The artist

## HIROSHI SUGIMOTO

Presented by the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art and the Edinburgh International Festival

4 August – 25 September 2011

Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, 73 Belford Road, Edinburgh, EH4 3DR

Admission £7/£5 (concessions)

Telephone 0131 624 6200

[www.nationalgalleries.org](http://www.nationalgalleries.org)

Hub Tickets: 0131 473 2000

[www.eif.co.uk/sugimoto](http://www.eif.co.uk/sugimoto)

**PRESS VIEW: WEDNESDAY, 3<sup>rd</sup> AUGUST, 11.30AM – 1PM**

The Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art and the Edinburgh International Festival are delighted to announce a major new exhibition of one of the world's leading artists, the renowned Japanese photographer Hiroshi Sugimoto. Consisting entirely of works which are being shown in Europe for the first time, this exhibition will feature 26 large-scale works from two of Sugimoto's most recent, and visually poetic series, *Lightning Fields* and *Photogenic Drawings*. This revelatory exhibition will allow audiences to experience first hand Sugimoto's exploration of the very nature of photography. The show has been extended by one week and will now run until 25 September instead of the 18 September as previously published.

Simon Groom, Director of Modern and Contemporary Art, National Galleries of Scotland said: "Sugimoto has developed an international reputation for the sheer beauty of his images, which are as thought-provoking as they are technically stunning. We are thrilled to be premiering work from his newest series in Europe, which demonstrates a master at the very top of his game, and are delighted to be working again in partnership with Edinburgh International Festival to bring the very best of contemporary visual art to Scotland."

Jonathan Mills, Edinburgh International Festival Director added: "Hiroshi Sugimoto's extraordinary work presented at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art is an exciting part of Festival 2011's exploration of contemporary and classical Asian artists and their long influence on artists in the West. These are stunning images created in fascinating ways and I urge people to engage with this exhibition as part of their Festival experience.'

Hiroshi Sugimoto was born in Tokyo in 1948 and now divides his time between Japan and his studio in New York. He has exhibited extensively in major museums and galleries throughout the world, including the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles; the Museum of Modern Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin; the Serpentine Gallery, London; and the Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain, Paris. In 2009 he was awarded the Praemium Imperiale, an arts prize awarded by the imperial family of Japan on behalf of the Japan Art Association. His image, *Boden Sea, Uttwil* (1993) featured on the cover of *No Line on the Horizon*, the 2009 album by Irish rock band U2.

The *Photogenic Drawings* series was inspired by the innovative techniques of the 19th century photographer, Henry Fox Talbot. This pioneering artist invented 'photogenic drawings' by using light-sensitive paper to produce a negative in the early experimental days of photography. This process was especially influential in Scotland shaping the careers of Robert Adamson and David Octavius Hill, who went on to become one of the most famous collaborations in photographic history. Sugimoto has spent several years locating and acquiring Fox Talbot's rare and vulnerable negatives from which to make his own photographs. The small scale of Fox Talbot's work has been greatly enlarged by Sugimoto to reveal images that are haunting, almost painterly in their evocative power.

*Lightning Fields* is a series of dramatic and spectacular photographs produced through the play of violent electrical discharges on photographic film. Sugimoto moved his studio six times in an attempt to overcome a problem of static electricity which would often ruin his photographs with their tell-tale white flashes on the finished image. He decided to investigate further the phenomenon and to make 'an ally of my nemesis'. Eventually, rather than try to suppress the random acts of nature, Sugimoto found ways to generate them by using a Van de Graaf Generator to induce electrical charges on the film. His large photographs expose in minute detail the remarkable effects of light particles not visible to the human eye. The results offer a

fascinating range of interpretations, from powerful lightning strikes to images of weird and wonderful life forms.

This exhibition will be complemented by *Towards the Light*, a free display of prints from the National Galleries of Scotland collection that will examine the influence of 19th century Japanese colour woodcuts on artists working in Britain and Japan during the first decades of the 20th century. 19th century Japanese prints will feature as well as prints by artists using traditional colour woodcut techniques in the 1920s and 30s.

Edinburgh International Festival 2011 will run from Friday 12 August to Sunday 4 September, bringing artists from India, China, Korea, Indonesia, Japan and Vietnam to the Scottish capital. It will create an exciting opportunity for audiences to explore work by contemporary Asian artists, traditional stories from Asian regions, and the work of western artists inspired by the east.

**For further information and images, please contact:**

**National Galleries of Scotland Press Office on 0131 624 6247/ 325/ 332/ 314 or [pressinfo@nationalgalleries.org](mailto:pressinfo@nationalgalleries.org)**

**Edinburgh International Festival Press Office on 0131 473 2020 or [press@eif.co.uk](mailto:press@eif.co.uk)**

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#### **Notes to editors**

- Opening Hours

**4 -31 August** Open Daily 10am – 6pm

**1- 25 September** Open Daily 10am – 5pm

- A work by Hiroshi Sugimoto will also feature in The Queen: Art and Image, National Gallery Complex, Edinburgh 25 June–18 Sept 2011. Please contact the National Galleries of Scotland Press Office for more details [pressinfo@nationalgalleries.org](mailto:pressinfo@nationalgalleries.org).