



The Music Lesson

Hiroshi Sugimoto

Not on display

Title/Description: The Music Lesson

Artist/Maker: Hiroshi Sugimoto

Born: 2004

Object Type: Print

Materials: Ink, Paper

Technique: Colour inkjet print on Parilux gloss text paper

Measurements: Unframed: (h. 280 x w. 216 mm) Framed: (h. 312 x w. 293 x d. 32 mm)

Accession Number: 1284a

Historic Period: 21st century

Production Place: North America, The Americas, United States of America

Hiroshi Sugimoto (b.1948) is a multidisciplinary artist, who is best known for his photography and architecture. Sugimoto's photographic exhibitions double as art installations, and are described by the artist as 'space sculpture'. [1] Throughout his career, Sugimoto has used the camera to investigate the passage of time and to raise questions about the nature of perceived 'reality'. For Sugimoto, the camera is a time-recording device and 'photography functions as a fossilization of time'. [2]

This photograph, titled *The Music Lesson*, belongs to Hiroshi Sugimoto's *Portraits* series that was commissioned by the Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin in 1999 and reproduced for 'The Origins of Love' portfolio in 2004. This work reveals Sugimoto's interest in photographing dioramas, having discovered the camera's extraordinary capacity to enliven the three-dimensional models found in museum displays.

The Music Lesson is a photograph of a Madame Tussauds' waxwork recreation of Johannes Vermeer's (1632-1675) painting, *A Lady at the Virginal with a Gentleman* (1662-64). [3] When setting up the shot, Sugimoto used lighting to animate the life-size wax figures, and wittily substituted the reflection of the painter's easel (observed in Vermeer's painting) with a glimpse of the photographer's tripod. Sugimoto moves between two-dimensional and three-dimensional simulations of reality, using the medium of photography to investigate multiple layers of illusion and artifice.

Hiroshi Sugimoto was born in Tokyo and studied politics and sociology at Rikkyō University. He left Japan in 1972 in order to pursue a degree in Fine Arts at the Art Center College of Design in Los Angeles, CA. After graduation he settled in New York City, where he worked as a dealer in Japanese

antiquities. Sugimoto currently lives and works in New York and Tokyo.

Vanessa Tothill, January 2022

[1] <https://art21.org/watch/art-in-the-twenty-first-century/s3/hiroshi-sugimoto-in-memory-segment/>
[Accessed 5 January 2022]

[2] <https://art21.org/watch/art-in-the-twenty-first-century/s3/hiroshi-sugimoto-in-memory-segment/>
[Accessed 5 January 2022]

[3] Royal Collection Trust, object number: RCIN 405346
<https://www.rct.uk/collection/search#/1/collection/405346/lady-at-the-virginals-with-a-gentleman>
[Accessed 7 January 2022]

Further Reading

Ahrenberg, Staffan, Sam Keller, and Hans Ulrich Obrist, eds, Hiroshi Sugimoto. 38th Year (Paris: Cahiers d'Art, 2014)

Bonami, Francesco, and Marco de Michelis, eds, Hiroshi Sugimoto: Architecture (New York: D.A.P./Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, 2003)

Brougher, Kerry, and David Elliott, eds, Hiroshi Sugimoto (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2005)

Hrankovic, David, ed., Hiroshi Sugimoto: Glass Tea House Mondrian (Cologne: Walther König, 2015)

Müller-Tamm, Pia, Hiroshi Sugimoto (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2010)

Rousmaniere, Nicole, ed., Hall of Thirty-three Bays (Norwich: University of East Anglia, Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, 1999)

Schneider, Eckhard, ed., Hiroshi Sugimoto: Architecture of Time (Cologne: Walther König, 2002)

Spector, Nancy, and Tracey Bashkoff, eds, Hiroshi Sugimoto: Portraits (Berlin: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2003)

Sugimoto, Hiroshi, and Hans Belting, Hiroshi Sugimoto: Theatres (Cologne: Walther König, 2006)

Sugimoto, Hiroshi, On the Beach (Tokyo: Amana, 2014)

Sugimoto, Hiroshi, Hiroshi Sugimoto: Dioramas (Bologna: Damiani, 2014)

Sugimoto, Hiroshi, and Klaus Ottmann, Hiroshi Sugimoto: Conceptual Forms and Mathematical Models (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2015)

Sugimoto, Hiroshi, and Munesuke Mita, Hiroshi Sugimoto: Seascapes (Bologna: Damiani and Matsumoto Editions, 2015)

Sugimoto, Hiroshi, Hiroshi Sugimoto: Theatres (Bologna: Damiani and Matsumoto Editions, 2016)

Sugimoto, Hiroshi, Iran do Espírito Santo, and Philip Larratt-Smith, Hiroshi Sugimoto: Black Box (Madrid: Aperture/Fundación Mapfre, 2016)

Sugimoto, Hiroshi, and Jonathan Safran Foer, Hiroshi Sugimoto: The Long Never, Lightning Fields 289 (Bologna: Damiani, 2016)

Sugimoto, Hiroshi, and Jonathan Safran Foer, Hiroshi Sugimoto: The Long Never, Lightning Fields 304 (Bologna: Damiani, 2016)

Sugimoto, Hiroshi, Hiroshi Sugimoto: Snow White (Bologna: Damiani and MW Editions, 2017)

Sugimoto, Hiroshi, Hiroshi Sugimoto: Portraits (Bologna: Damiani and MW Editions, 2018)

Sugimoto, Hiroshi, Hiroshi Sugimoto: Architecture (Bologna: Damiani and MW Editions, 2019)
