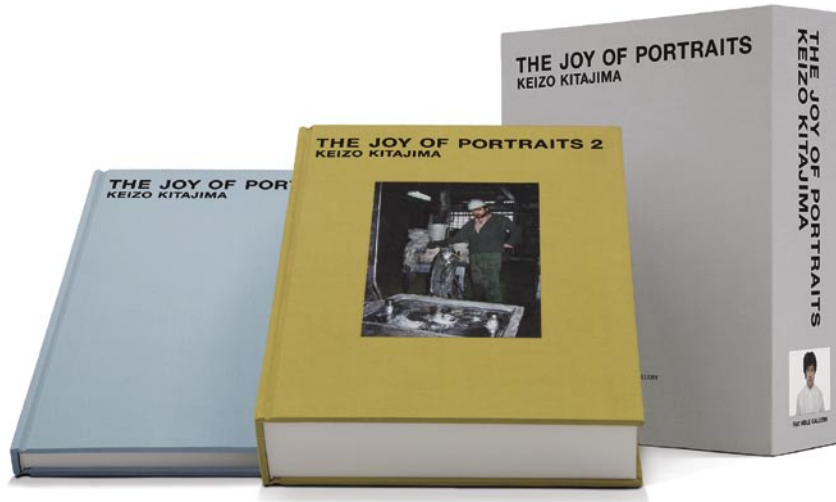


THE JOY OF PORTRAITS KEIZO KITAJIMA



THE JOY OF PORTRAITS

THE JOY OF PORTRAITS 1

PORTRAITS 1992- (160 pages)

Hardcover, two volumes with cardboard slipcase,
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THE JOY OF PORTRAITS 2

KOZA 1975-1980

TOKYO 1979

NEW YORK 1981-1982

EASTERN EUROPE 1983-1984

BERLIN, NEW YORK, SEOUL, BEIJING 1986-1990

U.S.S.R. 1991

TEXT Shino Kuraishi (714 pages)



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KIEZO KITAJIMA THE JOY OF PORTRAITS

THE JOY OF PORTRAITS 1

PORTRAITS 1992-



A long-awaited photobook published after eighteen years by the photographer Keizo Kitajima, who has continued to make his presence felt in the photo world even though the whole picture of his work has not been hitherto revealed.

In 1976 Keizo Kitajima made his impressive debut with photographs capturing Koza in Okinawa, a town near the US military base, in the period just after the end of the Vietnam War. Subsequently, he expanded his purview to include Tokyo, New York and Eastern Europe. While the photographs he made during those periods still strike us with their dazzling quality, Kitajima drastically changed his method of photographing after he visited the Soviet Union in 1991, as that nation was on the verge of collapsing; that is, Kitajima changed his place of work from the street to the studio, and in doing so, he denied the aesthetics of "selection" and "instantaneity" that is typical of street snapshot photography. In his still ongoing series *Portraits*, using a view camera instead of a hand-held camera, Kitajima repeatedly photographs the same models at certain intervals, following self-imposed conditions and rules. So far, he has photographed more than three hundred people, with the total number of his photographs amounting to over two thousand. This series has neither an ending nor a completion in the usual sense of the words. This means it will attain neither success nor failure. These pictures are no more than "photographs of faces," which have nothing to do with a sense of beauty or any aesthetic judgment. Still, viewers of this series nevertheless encounter the terrible dynamics of these images. Deprived of any hope of empathy or interpretation, the viewer's gaze is stopped by the surfaces of the photographs and is caught up in their "denseness without denseness." But, is not this the specificity of our experience of looking at photographs? We realize, then, that the "photographs of faces" are not representations or substitutions, but instead are nothing but "originals." What is at stake in this series, which Kitajima has been working on ever since he gave up street snapshot photography, is perhaps more significant than we can ever have imagined.

Aimed at disclosing the whole picture of the extraordinary photographer Keizo Kitajima's work, the photobook *THE JOY OF PORTRAITS* is composed of two volumes (874 pages in total), and the series printed in the book include *PORTRAITS* (1992—present), *Koza 1975*, *U. S. S. R. 1991* and others, including a number of as yet unpublished photographs.

THE JOY OF PORTRAITS 2

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