

# HotShoe

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## Photo exhibition and book – In Memory of artist Naoka Yogo

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I do love it when photographers, or any artists for that matter, genuinely want to help promote a fellow photographer or visual artist. It doesn't happen all the time, but when it does, it's worth the effort. Two recent emails have done just this. In one case, a photographer sent information about an award for photographers and artists, The Allotment Award, and an exhibition of work in memory of Japanese artist, Naoko Yogo, who died in a bicycle accident in 2005. The other email was from someone who wrote to me after looking at the blog to recommend a Czech photographer's work. It was perfect timing as I had already booked a flight to Prague for two days and am writing this post on the outbound trip.

Call it serendipity, call it coincidence, it doesn't really matter. The fact of timing is crucial and the message is: Dare to Do. What have you got to lose? This is especially the case if you're a freelance photographer and have to do your own marketing and promotion,

negotiating and pitching, as well as keep accounts. This is something I am all too aware of as I am also freelance which means that my door, or this cyber portal, is always open – to everyone and anyone. For me, this is one of the wonderful aspects of blogging; direct and unmediated contact with an audience.

Photographer Robert Hackman wrote to me about the Award and the process leading up to last night's launch of the show, Naoko Yogo: GRANADA, and the accompanying book:

“Naoko had just come back from a trip around Granada, Spain where she had been on a month-long road trip with her Pentax 67 shooting landscapes in black and white. She was quite excited about what she had shot and was looking forward to developing the film and looking at the contact sheets. Tragically, she died before she could process the film. She died on 15 December 2005 on a South London road in an accident involving her bike, a truck and a bad corner.

“All of her friends knew that there were rolls of unprocessed film in her studio and that this should be dealt with as a last gesture for Naoko. However, the film canisters remained in the studio for a further two and a half years. Her husband, artist Masakatsu Kondo and I decided to get to work on the unprocessed film with a view to preparing for an exhibition, and planned to work on the project over a period of a year or two which would allow us to devote our full attention to it during quieter times in our own working schedules.

“All of Naoko's notes of her Granada trip were in Japanese, as were the film exposures and suggested development times. We had to trawl through her previous work notes to try and decipher her abbreviations and symbols. Once we had a clear idea of how to tackle the film, I developed them with a mixture of caution, fear and fond flashbacks of a dear friend. I processed the film in her studio where I had a strong sense that she was watching over my shoulder. At times, I swear I could hear her voice and laughter.



© Naoko Yogo, Granada, 2009

“Masakatsu, myself, and a few of Naoko’s close friends edited down Naoko’s photographs from a digital contact print to 16 images. We also emailed the contacts to friends, including Japanese-based photographer Taiji Matsue for feedback. This process and the involvement of her friends helped her husband on his own, long and difficult, path.

“Naoko loved Oriental Seagull photographic paper and had some half-used boxes in the studio but not enough to create 16 prints. We had difficulty trying to find a printer in the south of England who was still printing on fibre-based paper which is quite rare nowadays. However, all our efforts were rewarded when we came across Sharon Easterling of Downtown Darkroom, upstairs from Silverprint. Sharon was meticulous and lovingly absorbed herself in the project, creating wonderful prints on an Ilford Warmtone Variable Contrast fibre-based paper, which was used as a close alternative. I shot the prints on digital in my studio in preparation for offset printing for a book.”

The book includes a foreword by Tokyo-based art critic and historian, Tomohiro Nishimura, with a further article by London author, Chris Roberts. It is published by Sokyusha Publishing Japan. All proceeds from the sales of Naoko’s book and photographs will be donated to the Allotment Award.

The £1000 Allotment Award ([click on the link for details in English as the website is still in Japanese](#)) has been set up by Masakatsu to commemorate the life and work of Naoko Yogo. . The award supports emerging Japanese artists and photographers who are based

anywhere in the world and provides opportunities for young Japanese artists to travel, with the aim of enhancing their experience, broadening their knowledge and vision, and developing and nurturing their work. However, at present the annual award is only open to post-graduate Japanese artists/photographers. Entrants must submit examples of their work accompanied by a two-page text on the work with details as to how they will use the £1000.

“Before Naoko passed away in 2005, she devoted a lot of time and energy to her allotment in South London. In his text for Naoko’s book, Chris Roberts recalls one of her stories about her allotment: “There were no taps on the allotment so she had to carry water there herself [...] She had worked out the bare minimum each plant required, no more than a glassful each [...] it was just a small habitual act of kindness that would result in something coming to fruition.”

Naoko Yogo (1971 – 2005) was a Japanese artist who lived in London. She studied Fine Art at Chelsea College of Art & Design completing her studies in 1998. While a student her work was concerned with the three-dimensional, yet her preferred medium of expression always remained photographic. Yogo travelled alone with her camera and what she offers the viewer through her images is as much about contemplative reflection on the self and one’s own internal spaces as about the topographical and the lyricism of place.

Naoko Yogo: GRANADA opens today and runs until 31 January 2010 at Hepworth Court, London, UK.