

DANZIGER

On Madison

RISAKU SUZUKI

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Born in 1963 in Wakayama Prefecture, Japan, Risaku Suzuki currently lives and works in Tokyo.

One of Japan's most prominent photographers, Suzuki has been working for over 30 years presenting quintessential Japanese subjects – in particular cherry blossoms, a subject he has published two books on - in a manner that is at once timeless and refreshingly new. Suzuki's "Sakura" (the Japanese word for cherry blossoms) are more than pretty pictures. Each individual image is a play between sky and flower, positive and negative space, line and form - as well as a contemplation of nature and the preciousness of every moment.

In Suzuki's own words:

When I stand under a cherry tree and look up at the blossoms, I always feel as if I'm floating. The blossoms continue beyond my field of vision, each shimmering so beautifully. It is impossible to see them all.

I've been photographing cherry blossoms (sakura) for 20 years, trying to capture and convey this experience. I use 4 x 5 and 8 x 10 inch film cameras to make large-format prints. I narrow the depth of field to a single point and let the foreground and background go out of focus.

In "Sakura," the blossoms of the intersecting branches appear melded together as one, making it difficult to distinguish the foreground from the the background. My work is about the experience of time and vision. The beauty of the sakura lies in the brevity of their blossoming, so I must rush to photograph their brilliance and vitality. I photograph sakura not as the conventional symbol of Japanese beauty but as an expression of the presence of time.

In addition to exhibiting his pictures in exhibitions around the world, Suzuki has received many prizes, including the Kimura Ihei Award, the most renowned award in the field of photography in Japan.