

SIGMA

KYOTO
GRAPHIE
international
photography festival

SIGMA and KYOTOGRAPHIE present :

Kikuji Kawada: Endless Map – Invisible

Exhibited as part of the “Arles Associé” sequence of the Rencontres d’Arles.



Kikuji Kawada
From the series The Last Cosmology
© Kikuji Kawada, Courtesy PGI

Kikuji Kawada: Endless Map – Invisible

Curated by Sayaka Takahashi (PGI)

Co-produced by: SIGMA × KYOTOGRAPHIE

SIGMA and KYOTOGRAPHIE (Kyoto International Photography Festival) are honored to be part of the Associated Program at Les Rencontres d'Arles 2025, following our successful participation in 2024. This year, we are proud to present *Kikuji Kawada: Endless Map – Invisible* under the curatorial direction of Sayaka Takahashi (PGI) at VAGUE, Arles. This exhibition builds upon KYOTOGRAPHIE 2024, bringing together key works by Kikuji Kawada from his iconic series -- *The Map*, *The Last Cosmology*, *Los Caprichos* and *Voltex*. It offers international audiences a rare and immersive encounter with one of Japan's most influential photographic voices.

At SIGMA, we believe in elevating engineering to an art form—and in devoting that engineering to the service of creative expression. Guided by the philosophy "The Art of engineering. Engineering for Art.", we have long supported and initiated cultural and artistic endeavors that advance photography and the visual arts.

Our enduring partnership with KYOTOGRAPHIE lies at the heart of this commitment. It is a true pleasure to once again participate as co-producers in the Arles Associé program of Les Rencontres d'Arles.

This summer, we are honored to present *Kikuji Kawada: Endless Map – Invisible*, a project that deepens our collaboration with KYOTOGRAPHIE 2024 while celebrating the visionary legacy of Kikuji Kawada. We warmly invite audiences from around the world to experience this singular and evocative exhibition.

About the Exhibition

Endless Map – Invisible is the first major exhibition in France of Japanese photographer Kikuji Kawada, co-founder of the VIVO collective and a key figure in post-war Japanese photography.

Curated by Sayaka Takahashi of PGI, a gallery in Tokyo representing the artist, this exhibition expands upon the presentation first shown at the 2024 edition of the KYOTOGRAPHIE International Photography Festival. In this year marking the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, *Endless Map – Invisible* brings together, for the first time, photographs from four of Kawada's most iconic series. It traces six decades of Japanese post-war history through the photographer's uncompromising gaze, where layers of time and memory intertwine to form a theater of the world. Through the four series featured in *Endless Map – Invisible*, Kikuji Kawada offers a deeply poetic and committed vision.

The Map (1959 – 1965) and *Endless Map (2021)* : *The Map*, a fully formed book-object later revisited in *Endless Map*, is a powerful visual response to the trauma of Japan's defeat. It marked a real turning point in photographic storytelling, breaking away from traditional documentary photography of the time.

The Last Cosmology (1995): Conceived as a poetic meditation on Japan's

transition from the Shōwa era to the end of the millennium, this series reveals Kawada's fascination with the cosmos and explores the sky as a stage for fate and disaster.

Los Caprichos (1972 – present): Inspired by Francisco Goya's eponymous work, this series has been recently revisited by Kawada. It offers a sharp look at the country's period of economic growth.

Vortex (2022) : Continuing his dive into abstraction and vertigo, *Vortex* expresses a form of inner collapse and cosmic exploration. Kawada further develops an aesthetic of the fragment, disturbance, and trace, making photography an instrument of thought in the face of the world's instability.

Kikuji Kawada : A Life in Books

At the conclusion of the exhibition, visitors can discover a selection of Kawada's publications, including several first editions, accompanied by a filmed interview with the photographer.

Kikuji Kawada

Kikuji Kawada (born 1933 in Ibaraki, Japan) is a major figure in post-war Japanese photography. After graduating Kawada joined the publishing company Shinchosha as a photographer. He co-founded the legendary VIVO collective in 1959 alongside Akira Satō, Akira Tanno, Shōmei Tōmatsu, Ikko Narahara, and Eikoh Hosoe.

Kawada belongs to a generation that profoundly renewed Japanese photographic language during a time of both socio-political and aesthetic upheaval. His book *Chizu (The Map)*, published in 1965, is considered one of the greatest masterpieces in the history of photography. This visual meditation on Japan's defeat and the nuclear catastrophe, rich in political metaphors and narrative experimentation, disrupted the conventions of the photobook.

Kawada describes his work as capturing "the demons lurking in the era, fixed as shadows of astonishment," adding that "memory itself could then become the mirror of the artist's style." At 92, he continues to renew his vision and revisit his work, maintaining a continuous connection with his audience by regularly sharing his photographic reflections on Instagram. (@kawada_kikuji)

Exhibition Details

KIKUJI KAWADA: Endless Map – Invisible

Curated by: Sayaka Takahashi (PGI)

Co-produced by: SIGMA × KYOTOGRAPHIE

Exhibition Dates: July 7 - October 3, 2025

*The festival runs until Sunday, October 5.

*This exhibition is part of the “Arles Associé” sequence of the Rencontres d’Arles

Co-produced by:

KYOTOGRAPHIE International Photography Festival

www.kyotographie.jp/en/

Venue: VAGUE, Arles *14 Rue de Grille, Arles

tystudio.fr/vague/about/

Curation: PGI

<https://www.pgi.ac/en/about-us/>

Exhibitor Showcase

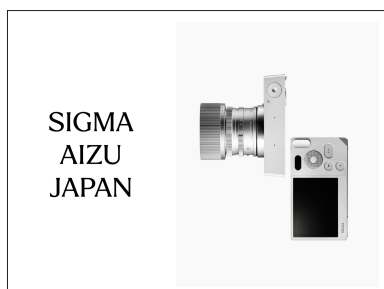
SIGMA AIZU JAPAN | “The Art of engineering. Engineering for Art.”

At the venue, SIGMA presents a simple but symbolic display centered on the concept that drives its craft. Featuring the latest mirrorless camera, the SIGMA BF, the installation highlights the spirit of craftsmanship cultivated at its sole production site in Aizu, Japan, and reflects its enduring philosophy: a deep commitment to the art of photography. This same commitment forms the foundation of SIGMA’s collaboration with KYOTOGRAPHIE and the photographic works of Kikuji Kawada. Through this exhibition, visitors are invited to discover the shared values that connect its manufacturing ethos with the expressive power of photographic art.

<https://www.sigma-global.com/en/cameras/bf/>

KYOTOGRAPHIE :A Kyoto Story / A Twelve-Year Cycle

To mark the twelve years anniversary of KYOTOGRAPHIE International Photography Festival, a newly released publication celebrating the history of the festival will be available at the exhibition venue VAGUE during the solo presentation of Kikuji Kawada’s *Endless Map – Invisible*. KYOTOGRAPHIE: *A Kyoto Story / A Twelve-Year Cycle* is a bilingual publication that captures the essence of a festival that’s growth has been shaped by its shared making and relationship with community, collaboration, and distinct sensitivity to place.



About Les Rencontres de la photographie, Arles 2025

Founded in 1970 by photographer Lucien Clergue, Les Rencontres de la photographie d'Arles (Les Rencontres d'Arles) is the world's oldest and largest photography festival, celebrating its 56th edition this year. Known for inspiring KYOTOGRAPHIE, the festival features complex exhibitions using historical landmarks from the Roman era. It attracts photographers, curators, journalists, and fans from around the globe, serving as a major hub for discovering talents and fostering cross-disciplinary exchanges. "Arles Associé" is a sequence of the Rencontres d'Arles.

About KYOTOGRAPHIE (International Photography Festival)

KYOTOGRAPHIE is an international photography festival based in Kyoto—a city that garners global attention as a centre of culture and the arts in Japan. Each spring the festival unfolds as an immersive celebration of photography. More than just an exhibition, KYOTOGRAPHIE offers unique experiences where traditional and contemporary expressions intersect. As a platform for encountering diverse worldviews, it fosters new forms of dialogue, and invites audiences to discover new perspectives on the city.

Unconstrained by conventional boundaries, KYOTOGRAPHIE is known for an innovative approach to scenography and thoughtful installations. The experiences crafted by the festival reshape conventional formats, connecting audiences with new ways of perceiving both the work and the spaces around them. It is a multifaceted experience that could have only emerged in Kyoto.

At the heart of KYOTOGRAPHIE lies the Main Programme. Each year, the festival's co-directors, Lucille Reyboz and Yusuke Nakanishi, establish a distinctive theme, around which the programme is curated and artists are invited. Various venues across Kyoto city are transformed into special exhibition spaces through close collaboration between the KYOTOGRAPHIE team, participating artists, venue partners, and scenographers.

About SIGMA

MADE IN AIZU, JAPAN

SIGMA is a Japanese manufacturer of photographic lenses and cameras. Since SIGMA's founding in 1961, we have continued to innovate and push the standards of optical engineering out of a deep respect for the creative ways photographers and filmmakers engage with the world. The exceptional quality of "Made in Aizu, Japan" is made possible by SIGMA's sole production base, the Aizu factory, and our supply chain concentrated in the Tohoku region. This quality embodies the true essence of SIGMA—an integration of local wisdom, craftsmanship, and technology.

"The Art of engineering. Engineering for Art."

As a camera and lens manufacturer, we have always been deeply motivated by the art of photography. We are inspired by the passion of photographers and filmmakers everywhere and hope that our relentless pursuit of quality and innovation will help artists realize their visions. Supporting the photographic and visual arts is a core tenet of our corporate mission. In addition to our ongoing sponsorships and partnerships with numerous festivals and cultural events, as well as maintaining, growing, and exhibiting our library of photobooks, we will continue to expand and deepen our support of the arts through new endeavors like this exhibition.

For more information

SIGMA official web site:

www.sigma-global.com

KYOTOGRAPHIE official website:

www.kyotographie.jp/

Les Rencontres de la photographie, Arles official website:

www.rencontres-arles.com/en

For inquiries regarding this matter, please contact:

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For more detailed information about this exhibition and Kikuji Kawada, please refer to the attached press release (available in English only). We would greatly appreciate it if you could include the content of the release in your coverage.