

Spring 2026 Arts of Asia Lecture Series
Asia Reimagined: Mapping Cultures Beyond Borders
Sponsored by the Society for Asian Art

Photography and Art/Photography as Art (in Japan)

Karen M. Fraser
University of San Francisco
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Time periods and key dates:

(~1615-1868 – Edo period)
1854-1868 “opening” of Japan (*bakumatsu*)
1868-1912 Meiji era
1889 Promulgation of Meiji Constitution
1894-95 Sino-Japanese War
1904-05 Russo-Japanese War
1912-1926 Taisho era
1926-1989 Showa era
1989-2019 Heisei era
2020~ Reiwa era

Key terms and people:

Yokohama-e (Yokohama woodblock prints)
Yokohama Shashin (Yokohama photography)
Bunmei kaika (“Civilization and Enlightenment”)
Shashin (photography)
Yōga (Oil painting, literally Western painting)
Nihonga (Japanese-style modern painting)
Bijutsu (“Fine art”)
Geijutsu Shashin (art photography)
Shashin geijutsu (photography art)
Historiography (the writing of history)

Matthew Perry
Felice Beato
Tamamura Kōzaburō
Yokoyama Matsusaburō
Ogawa Kazumasa
Fukuhara Shinzō

Further reading:

Charrier, Philip. "Nojima Yasuzō's Primitivist Eye: 'Nude' and 'Natural' in Early Japanese Art Photography," *Japanese Studies* 26:1 (May 2006): 47-68.

Doi Kumiko, Itō Yoshiaki, and Ogawa Mikio. "The 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exposition" in *Japan Goes to the World's Fairs: Japanese Art at the Great Expositions in Europe and the United States 1867-1904* (Los Angeles: LACMA, 2005), 72-93.

Fraser, Karen M. "Fukuhara Shinzō and the 'Japanese' Pictorial Aesthetic," *Review of Japanese Culture and Society*, vol. XXVI (2014): 205-223

Fraser, Karen M. "Shashin geijutsu: Making 'Photographic Art' Modern," in Chelsea Foxwell and Wu Hung, eds., *Photography and East Asian Art* (Chicago: Center for the Art of East Asia/Art Media Resources, University of Chicago, 2021), 115-142.

Hirayama, Miki. "'Elegance' and 'Discipline': The Significance of Sino-Japanese Aesthetic Concepts in the Critical Terminology of Japanese Photography, 1903-1923," in Nicole Coolidge Rousmaniere and Mikiko Hirayama, eds., *Reflecting Truth: Japanese Photography in the Nineteenth Century* (Amsterdam: Hotei Publishing, 2004), 98-108.

Hirayama, Mikiko. "The Emperor's New Clothes: Japanese Visuality and Imperial Portrait Photography," *History of Photography* 23: 2 (2009): 165-184.

Hockley, Allen. "Cameras, Photographs, and Photography in Nineteenth-century Japanese Prints," *Impressions* 23 (2001): 42-63.

Hockley, Allen. "[Felice Beato's Japan: Places](#)," *MIT Visualizing Cultures* website, 2010.

Kaneko Ryūichi. "Japanese Photography in the Early Twentieth Century," in *Modern Photography in Japan, 1915-1940* (San Francisco: The Friends of Photography, 2001).

Wilson, Alona. "[Felice Beato's Japan: People](#)," *MIT Visualizing Cultures* website, 2010.