

"Imagining the worst conceivable tomorrows gives me tremendous pleasure at the artistic level. The darkness of the future lights up my present, and foreknowledge of a coming end guarantees my happiness in living today. In this exhibition you will find the worst scenarios created by my imagination regarding the future of humankind. It is up to the younger generations to take every possible step to prevent them from becoming a reality. Where I am concerned, I choose to give completely free rein to my intuitions as an artist. That does not mean that we should not continue to hope for the future. I leave it to the last survivor to record the actual course of the end of the world, and to preserve the genetic information of the human species, either by metamorphosing into a mummy, by preserving his genes in a test tube, or else by handing on a DNA map of his genome."

-Hiroshi Sugimoto

Via a body of work in which technical virtuosity is backed by a sound conceptual framework, Hiroshi Sugimoto (b. 1948, lives and works between New York and Tokyo) explores the nature of time and perception, and the origins of consciousness. Among his most famous photographic series, mention may be made of Dioramas (1976-), taken in natural history museums, these photographs depict stuffed animals displayed in artificial habitats, Theaters (1978-), photographed by exposing the photographic film throughout the entire projection of a film, and Seascapes (1980-), which capture the essence of marine landscapes throughout the world, retaining only their crucial elements, air and water. "Aujourd'hui le monde est mort [Lost Human Genetic Archive]" is a new facet of a series of exhibitions Hiroshi Sugimoto has been elaborating for about ten years, juxtaposing his collections of objects, coming from a range of periods and cultures, and his photographic works. The objects in his collection are his "doubles," and are indispensable to the artist as sources of lessons that enable him to renew his art. Drawing on references to Albert Camus's novel *L'étranger* [The Stranger] and Marcel Duchamp's ready-mades, the artist has staged a world after human beings have ceased to exist: a personal vision of history, seen from the future. The exhibition consists of around thirty scenarios, narrated by different fictitious characters: a bee-keeper, a specialist in comparative religion, and a politician, who choose to preserve (or not to preserve) their individual genetic information for the future.

Devised as a kind of ruin, resonating with the atypical architecture of the Palais de Tokyo, the exhibition is not only the largest the artist has ever staged in Europe, but also a unique project that bears witness to his wide field of activity, ranging from literature to architecture. It is in the image of his attempt to understand art and human history according to a vast time scale that goes well

beyond that of the human species, at the same time including science, religion, economics, etc. Where is this human race heading, incapable of preventing itself from being destroyed in the name of unchecked growth? Guided by this question, Hiroshi Sugimoto lets his imagination and his creativity drift to meet up with both the past and the future.

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