

Strolling with Markuz Wernli Saitō Through

Landscapes of Mirei Shigemori

OFF GO MY shoes at the entrance, abandoned is the luggage. Ripples of the temple's aging wooden floor press through my socks. Tofuku-ji is mine alone. A breeze from the courtyard heightens the anticipation. Eyes suddenly embraced by a sense of wonder. Shigemori's stone formations rock.

Flow, movement and play. Tiny transformations between me and the place of being. Passing through a garden is a sensory thing. Nothing can get in the way of that experience.

The camera is weightless and merely a witness. I touch the snow flakes and so does the camera. I hear the moss sprouting... Entering and penetrating that sphere can show the inner workings of its surface. Shigemori's garden displays strong formality and acute presence. The material quality in the front, grounds not only me but imaginary semantics rendered in the landscape. Diane Arbus knew it all along: "There are things nobody would see if I didn't photograph them."

Mirei Shigemori (1896-1975) believed that Japanese dry landscape garden (Zen garden) had fallen into cliché and applied modernist shapes, colors and materials to create avant-garde works which also celebrated ancient values of Japanese culture.



The images and graphics depicted are from the recently published book **MIREI SHIGEMORI - Modernizing The Japanese Garden** Stone Bridge Press, Berkeley ISBN 1-8805656-94-9 Photos: Markuz Wernli Saitō Text: Christian Tschumi

Camera Unleashed