



WHITE ROOM GALLERY: A PROFILE

by Alethea Mock

Eiko Fukuhara, founder and owner of White Room Gallery in West Hollywood, California (www.whiteroomgallery.com), set out to create a space into which photographers could open up their work to the world after the intense and often reclusive process of creation. To use a platitude, White Room Gallery is the light at the end of the dark[room] tunnel. It is a simple and elegant space that allows people to discover new and exciting work.

Fukuhara worked for more than a decade in the advertising industry where she was exposed to a vast body of commercial photography. During that time she developed a deep passion for the medium in all its vibrancy, as well as an impeccable aesthetic taste. Out of her experiences with photography grew a desire to share the intensities of emotion, which were often evoked within her. White Room Gallery is the realization of that desire. Fukuhara sees the gallery as evoking “feelings of simplicity, of innocence and purity.” It is a comfortable space where one can view the work of a wide range of talented photographers without distraction, which can lead to a deeper communion with the art and the ultimate decision to make that work a part of their lives. Fukuhara consciously facilitates this process of acquisition by keeping the prices for high quality work as reasonable as possible.

Since the founding of the gallery in 2001, Fukuhara has mounted several important and innovative exhibi-



tions. One recent example was the show, *Taizo Kato: The Modernist Eye*, which featured a recently discovered portfolio of rare and vintage prints. Kato was a prolific Japanese-American photographer from the early 1900s who worked in the pictorialist tradition. Despite the fact that this movement fell out of style, later photographers such as Edward Weston were influenced by his work. Another groundbreaking show

put on at White Room was the *Inspirations & Interpretations* exhibit shown in the fall of 2003. Inspired by Ansel Adams' famous saying that a negative is like a musical score and a print like a performance, this experimental show had 14 photographers exchange negatives and print one another's work.

While photographers from America and around the world are shown at White Room Gallery, one defining quality it possesses is a heavy representation of Asian photographers, especially of Japanese artists. Since the idea of photography as a fine art form is not as accepted in Japan and other parts of Asia, as it is in America and Europe, the recognition provided by the gallery often enables the artist to expand his or her career in their native country. More than nationality, however, Fukuhara indicated that what truly drives the selection of artists at her gallery is the power of their work to move viewers. Whether it is through sheer beauty, emotional potency, or the story it tells the image must inspire thought or feeling. ■



Above: *Light and Shadow*, 1992. ©Intae Kim. Bottom Left: *Fibonacci, Acacia Tree*, Oakland, CA, 2003. ©Rolfe Horn. Bottom Right: *Edge of Port*, Ehime, Japan, 2003. ©Hisashi Kagawa.

Opposite Page (clockwise from top left): Exterior and entrance to *White Room Gallery*. ©Keith Nakata; Exterior side view of gallery. ©Keith Nakata; Interior of gallery. ©Keith Nakata.

