

HIROSHI TAKIZAWA | Unheimliche Interiors

When the request to write this exhibition text landed in my inbox, clearly AI-translated and signed with a full name I'd never seen before, naturally, I assumed it was a bot. A so-called "photographer" (do human entities still engage in such activities nowadays?) with the web presence of a neo-luddite. It got worse in 3D. He looked suspiciously familiar, but living in central Europe too long has made me wary of cross-race bias. The guy he resembled was memory-cached in my brain with *Super Mario*.ⁱ

Like Mario, Hiroshi Takizawa does come from Japan. Like AI, his work does involve photography. But this is more sculptural, and way beyond the medium. It involves large quantities of laser-printing at the TUⁱⁱ. He probably works there part-time or something - but don't quote me. When have exhibition texts ever been a reliable source? Among found and self-generated images are many installation shots of his own works. Monochrome prints piled up, taped up, rolled up and dissected give a *Droste* effect to the image of his studio.ⁱⁱⁱ Strips affixed to debris from skips or furnishings, contorting around corners. Visual texture on a smooth surface on a rugged object with a seamless finish. The odd frame, but not to elevate. It's way beyond the frame.

Japanese and Austrian local authorities are kindred spirits when it comes to trash disposal. Both get a kick out of identifying, categorising and discarding according to elaborate deposit and collection schedules when an item outlives its utility or ceases to spark joy.^{iv} Those too old or confused, or anxious to risk the stink eye^v, opt to just keep it.^{vi} Takizawa's grandfather had been a hoarder and, evidently, passed on that gene.^{vii} Another off-cut mingles into a Ziploc of future potential while my teabag dangles over a receptacle of fair probability. A hoarder's trash can - what a site of decision fatigue!

All that suspended desire for a second chance. Takizawa avoids bringing his laptop to the studio to prevent distractions. All those untitled folders of untitled jpegs hoping for an incidental click.

Attention is neurological. When we look at an artwork, the visual cortex sends images from the frontal lobe to the anterior temporal lobe for emotional multi-sensory integration. Scanning around the room activates the parahippocampal area responsive to scenery and returning to the words on this page moves neural activity to the inferior frontal and occipital-temporal cortexes involved in reading. Our AI companions promise a numbing dopamine bump should the exhibition over- or

under-stimulate but it is our sentient cohabitants, activating the fusiform gyrus region with their faces and face-like stimuli, who hijack our attention most of all.^{viii}

Our attention span, like Hiroshi Takizawa's process and his works, flips between serendipity and precision: whatever the skip offers on a given day versus the artist's criticality and craftsmanship; which artworks were resolved enough to show this time against the architectural elements of this room; what the translation bot spits out this time alternating with my obsessive reediting; who happens to show up today versus the retrieval capacity of your neural contact list.

We are entering an era when mastery is no longer about being able to distinguish whether something is human or AI, whether it's critically sound or trash. Leave that to the MA48.^{ix} It's too random to prepare for: one cannot step into a dynamic engine twice.^x On this new playing field, the experts are the habitually foreign and chronically forgetful. Those well-practiced in not knowing what the hell is going on. It takes humility and courage in the face of faux pas, trusting that if you pay close attention and ask the right questions, you'll figure it out.^{xi}

Text by Signe Rose

ⁱ Mario's dinosaur sidekick "Yoshi", which may in fact be Hiroshi's nickname, but I could be wrong.

ⁱⁱ Technische Universität Wien, Vienna University of Technology.

ⁱⁱⁱ When a picture recursively appears within itself.

^{iv} Keeping possessions only if they "spark joy" is a core principle of organising consultant/author Marie Kondo. *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing*, 2010.

^v A look or glare that expresses anger, disapproval, disgust, etc.; a dirty look. *Oxford English Dictionary*.

^{vi} Tech consultant Matt Ketchum on hoarding in Japan. "The act of discarding items is bureaucratically difficult, often requiring specific labeling, designated trash days, and paid disposal tickets - factors that discourage even able-bodied individuals from throwing things out." *Japan's Hoarding Problem Is Crippling Real Estate Value and Community Health*, Akiyaz, 2025.

^{vii} Neuroscientist Shirley M. Mueller M.D. on the heritability of hoarding "Epigenetics may play a significant role in the development and transmission of hoarding tendencies across generations." *Generational Hoarding: Does Epigenetics Play a Role?*, Psychology Today, 2024.

^{viii} Epstein & Kanwisher, 1998/Kanwisher et al., 1997

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visual_processing

^{ix} MA48, City of Vienna waste management services.

^x Heraclitus said this about rivers. Greece, 500 BC.

^{xi} Reporter Sadie Dingfelder on living with prosopagnosia, a condition where one doesn't recognise people they have met "[it] has given me loads of practice walking into situations where I don't know what's going on and trusting that if I pay close attention and ask the right questions, I'll figure it out." *Do I Know You?* Little, Brown and Company, 2024.