

Daido Moriyama: Audio Description

Written by Eleanor Margolies

Tokyo, c. 1971.

This is a colour photo in reddish browns, almost sepia. It is taken in reflection in a mirror. To the right of the image, a young woman stands with her back to the mirror, looking out at the photographer. She appears to be Japanese, with dark eyes outlined in black, and glossy dark hair cut in a bob with a heavy fringe. Her head is tilted to the left and her expression neutral, perhaps a little melancholy. She wears a shirt or coat buttoned up to the neck, with a pointed collar, made of a heavy brocade fabric that has glittery threads that reflect the light. Her face is in close-up, filling most of the right side of the photograph, but slightly blurred.

In the mirror behind her, there is a reflection of the back of her head and shoulder, brighter and more blurred than the main image.

Also reflected in the mirror, in the left-hand side of the image, is the photographer. He holds an SLR camera up to his left eye to see through the viewfinder, using both hands. His right eye is screwed up and the rest of his face is obscured by the camera. He wears a white sweater over a shirt, with a camera strap loosely looped around his wrist.

The room in the background is hard to make out – in the brownish gloom, there is a window to the left, and a framed poster with large Japanese characters on the back wall. Lines of speckled light reflected from the mirror seem to focus in towards the photographer.

Daido Moriyama is known for his dense, contrasting black and white images. His colour photographs are less known – partly due to the high cost of printing in colour, and the scarcity of colour magazines at the time.