



NEW RELEASE

Super Extra Natural! Emily Shur

Text by Emily Shur
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Images from Japan 2004 – 2016

American photographer Emily Shur's book *Super Extra Natural!* is a collection of images made in Japan between 2004 and 2016. What began as a one-time getaway possessing no agenda beyond experiencing something new expanded into a long-term body of work that has resulted in 16 trips to various parts of the country. However, these images are not a documentation of a place. They are explorations of an unspoken connection; a state of mind that has become its own version of a vacation. Initially, Shur was not exactly sure what kept drawing her back to Japan, but she found a personal feeling of freedom and peace there. She says: »Everything made sense. Lines, shapes, light, and color fit together like a math equation that added up to what still feels like a supernatural high.«

Emily Shur, born in New York City, attended the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University with a major in Photography and graduated with the Artist Award for Creative Excellence. Her work has been exhibited internationally and has been published in various books including *Milk and Honey: Contemporary Art in California*, *Photographers' Sketchbooks*, and *American Photography*. Shur lives and works in Los Angeles.

Between 2004 and 2016, I made a total of sixteen trips to Japan with no agenda other than to see. It was clear from the start that I had found my place: a country whose natural beauty is accentuated by thoughtful design, a culture that values simplicity and kindness, yet also embraces the completely absurd. These images were made on my daily walks and wanderings; stopping to pho-

tograph what speaks to me in that moment. The majority of my Japan trips so far have been adventurous and freeing, but there have also been some that felt strained and tiresome. Inevitably, the camera strap gets heavy, and I begin shifting the weight from one shoulder to the other and back again. Maintaining the intoxication of seeing anything with fresh eyes eventually becomes its own challenge. What began as an exploration of an unknown place has evolved into an exploration of my own perspective on photography and the act of taking photographs. The place absolutely informs and affects the images, but the images are not about a place. They're about a state of mind.

There have been times I've wandered all day without taking a single picture. I've walked for hours only to realize I'm lost and nowhere near where I intended to be. I've made long and complicated excursions to remote areas I assumed would be photographic paradises, only to feel exhausted and frustrated. Nothing speaks to me. The thought of no longer being inspired is terrifying. My head starts to fill with anxiety about my mindset and how it could affect the rest of the experience. I worry about how much I worry.

Eventually, I learned to surrender to and embrace the unexpected. What I thought would be interesting sometimes wasn't, but some of my favorite images in this book were taken because I went the wrong way or got lost. Instead of being constrained by expectations and potential disappointment, the process of making these photographs has become an exercise in letting go. Walk another block. Turn left instead of right. Explore and be open.

– from the text by Emily Shur

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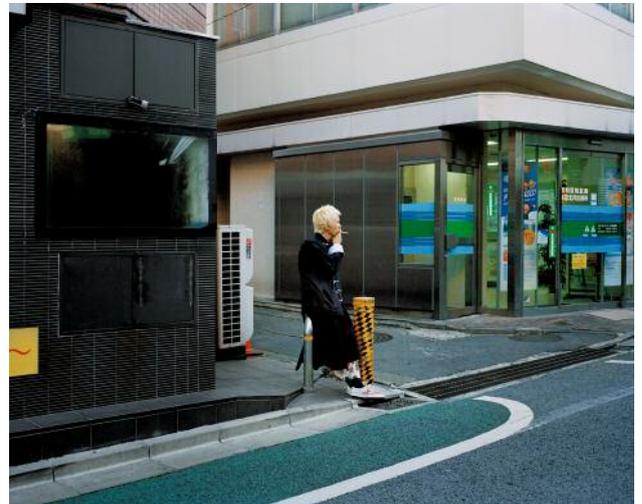
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