

#67 December 2021
Cameraderie
Hiro (Yasuhiro
Wakabayashi)
(1930-2021)
)



Hiro passed away in August 2021 at the age of 90. He came to the United States in 1954. He studied photography in New York City, apprenticed for a short time to Richard Avedon (#3, Feb. 2013), then quickly launched his career as a fashion photographer, working for Harper's Bazaar, Vogue, and other magazines.

Hiro's Wikipedia entry is surprisingly brief, but here it is:
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hiro_\(photographer\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hiro_(photographer))

According to the Wikipedia entry:

Surreal and unique, Hiro's photographs are noted for their elegance and clean appearance. He uses uncommon lighting, the *juxtaposition of unexpected elements* [emphasis mine], and his particular use of color.

Below are some samples of Hiro's work. I think the brief quote above from the Wikipedia article aptly describes the samples I have chosen.

Balenciaga, Four Sided Dress, 1967



This image appeared in the Washington Post obituary on August 31, 2021.

Foot Series, 1982



This image also appeared in the Washington Post obituary.

The Rolling Stones, 1976, Original “Black and Blue” Album Cover



Here is a rare chance to see an image in both color and monochrome. Which do you think it more effective?



See this link for more of the story of this album cover:

<https://recordmecca.com/item-archives/rolling-stones-original-black-and-blue-album-cover-art-by-hiro/>

Toenail, 1982



This appeared in the New York Times obituary.

Maria Beadeux, New York, negative 1974; print 2011



The following is copied from an interview conducted by Stella Bugbee for the following website on June 13, 2012:

<https://www.thecut.com/2012/06/exclusive-see-vintage-images-by-hiro.html>

The Getty Museum recently purchased fourteen of the artist's iconic prints, and we spoke with curator Paul Martineau about the acquisition.

Did he tell you any of the stories behind the images?

He told me one about the gorgeous photo *Maria Beadeux*, of the lips with the smoke coming out of the mouth. When he was a child in Shanghai, he would pass by the opium dens — which were on the second floor of the buildings — but they would have a mirror so that you could see what was going on upstairs where people were lying down smoking. He wanted to capture that feeling of sensuality, of the smoke coming from the woman's mouth, so he taught the model how to let the smoke kind of linger. When I first saw that photo, I assumed it had been manipulated in the studio because it just looked so perfect.

Hiro leaves us and leaves behind a record of some of the most fabulously inventive photographs ever taken—he said, in the same interview as above, that when he was an apprentice at *Harper's*, Art Director Alexey Brodovitch told him, “If you look through the

viewfinder and you see something you've seen before, don't bother to click the shutter." Hiro clearly took this instruction to heart.