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# Zero-Horizon Photo Art Theory

A Pre-Phenomenal Theory of World-Structure and Photography

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# Canonical Declaration

## On the Scope, Position, and Limits of Zero-Horizon Photo Art Theory

This volume constitutes the Canonical Edition of *Zero-Horizon Photo Art Theory*.

The purpose of this declaration is not to summarize the theory, but to define its structural position, delimit its scope, and explicitly state what this work does and does not claim.

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### 1. Position of the Theory

Zero-Horizon Photo Art Theory is not a theory of representation, nor a theory of expression, authorship, interpretation, or institutional meaning. It is a structural theory of the **world-side conditions** under which photography becomes possible, articulated at a level prior to subjectivity, intention, affect, and experience.

Accordingly, this theory is positioned neither within aesthetics as evaluation, nor within phenomenology as the analysis of lived experience, nor within media theory as the study of apparatus or program.

Its domain is strictly limited to the **pre-phenomenal generative structure of the world**.

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### 2. What This Theory Does Not Do

This work does not:

- interpret photographs as images or symbols
- analyze meaning, narrative, or representation

- theorize artistic intention or creative agency
- address reception, perception, or viewer experience
- propose ethical, political, or institutional frameworks

Any reading that seeks such functions within this text constitutes a categorical misplacement.

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### 3. Structural Scope

The theory articulates a four-phase structural configuration:

- **Proto-zero** — undifferentiated equilibrium
- **Zero-tremor** — minimal deviation
- **Zero-response** — world-side structural response
- **Zero-return** — re-neutralization and generative continuity

These phases are not temporal stages,  
nor causal steps,  
nor experiential sequences.

They are **coexistent structural positions**  
within a single Zero-Horizon of generation.

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### 4. Relation to the Subject

The subject does not function here  
as a perceiving agent, expressive center, or interpretive authority.

Where the subject is referenced,  
it is treated **exclusively as an autopoietic system**—

a structurally closed organization  
capable only of internal modulation in response to perturbation,  
without access to the world's generative structure itself.

The point at which world-side structure  
and subject-side modulation intersect  
is designated **proto-qualia**—  
a qualitative threshold that precedes  
consciousness, meaning, and representation.

This threshold is not theorized phenomenologically,  
and no account of lived experience is derived from it.

The concept of autopoiesis is employed here  
solely as a **structural delimiter of subjectivity**,  
not as a biological, cognitive, or experiential theory.

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#### **4a. Explicit Limitation of Quantum-Theoretical Reference**

References to quantum-theoretical concepts,  
where they appear in this work,  
serve **neither as physical explanation nor as scientific foundation.**

No claim is made that the structures described here  
correspond to quantum states, physical processes,  
or empirical models within physics.

Quantum theory is referenced **only analogically and negatively**, as a historical example of a discourse that displaced classical causality and observer-centered explanation.

Zero-Horizon Photo Art Theory does not depend upon quantum mechanics, quantum ontology, or scientific validation, and must not be read as an extension, metaphorization, or application of physical theory.

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## **5. Photography within Zero-Horizon**

Photography is not defined as an act, an expression, or an image.

It is defined as a **material trace** produced at the singular intersection of:

- irreversible world-side deviation and response, and
- subject-side structural modulation.

Photography is therefore non-repeatable **by structure**, not by intention, decision, or technical limitation.

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## **6. Non-Integration with Praxis Frameworks**

This theory remains strictly confined to the description of world-side structure.

It is positioned alongside—but not integrated with—**Shadō**, a separate praxis framework addressing bodily orientation, ethical stance, and conduct.

No attempt is made in this volume  
to synthesize these two domains.

Any such synthesis would require  
a different conceptual operation  
and lies outside the scope of this work.

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## **7. Editorial Position of the English Edition**

While this English edition is grounded  
in the Japanese canonical text,  
it is not conceived as a literal or exhaustive translation.

Terminology, structure, and explanatory density  
have been adjusted to operate  
within the conceptual and linguistic constraints  
of English discourse.

Appendices and explanatory elements are, where necessary,  
integrated into the main text rather than segregated,  
in order to stabilize interpretation  
within the target intellectual context.

This editorial strategy does not alter the theory's structure,  
but **fixes its interpretive boundary**.

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## **8. Final Statement**

Zero-Horizon Photo Art Theory does not seek expansion.

It seeks precision.

It does not offer a framework to be applied.

It offers a structural position

to be recognized or rejected.

This Canonical Declaration defines the conditions

under which the text that follows

must be read—or not read at all.

## Abstract

Within the scope defined by the foregoing Canonical Declaration, The Zero-Horizon Photo Art theory situates photographic art at the level of pre-phenomenal world-structure rather than representation, expression, or institutional meaning.

Photography is treated not as an image that signifies, but as a material trace produced at the moment when the world undergoes a minimal structural event prior to subjectivity, intention, or affect.

This theory articulates a fourfold pre-phenomenal configuration— **Proto-zero, ZERO-Tremor, ZERO-Response, and ZERO-Return**—through which deviation, minimal response, and neutralization occur without presupposing an observing subject.

These phases are not temporal stages or causal steps, but coexistent positions within a single Zero-Horizon of generation.

The subject is therefore not understood as a perceiving agent or interpretive center, but as an autopoietic system that undergoes internal modulation in response to perturbation. The point of contact between these two non-mixing structures is designated as *proto-qualia*: a qualitative threshold that precedes consciousness, meaning, and representation.

Photography emerges as the trace of this singular, non-repeatable intersection, materialized through the camera as an autonomous sub-system.

While the theory itself remains confined to the description of world-side structure, it is positioned alongside—without conceptual integration—*Shadō*, a distinct praxis framework addressing the subject's ethical and bodily orientation.

By relocating photographic art within a non-representational and non-subjective horizon of generation, Zero-Horizon reframes photography as neither depiction nor expression, but as the material registration of structural becoming.

## Prologue:

### **The Zero Horizon — On the Structure Prior to the World's Coming-into-Being**

Discussions surrounding photographic practice have often been constructed from subjective frameworks—such as the understanding of the subject depicted, the intention of the author, or the experience of the viewer.

These perspectives are effective in explaining certain aspects of the photographic phenomenon.

However, long before photography comes into being—before subject and object take form—the structure of the world itself has scarcely been examined.

The **Zero Horizon** addressed in this book is precisely an attempt to describe this **generative structure situated prior to photographic practice**.

Here, the term *zero* does not signify lack or stasis.

Rather, it is understood as a foundational structure that, while the world has not yet acquired meaning, form, or objecthood, already contains a certain potentiality and makes the emergence of phenomena possible.

That is, *zero* refers to an **undifferentiated equilibrium field**, a layer that precedes the establishment of distinctions such as being/non-being, inside/outside, and subject/object.

The **Zero Horizon** designates the point at which this undifferentiated equilibrium field acquires a specific structure and functions as the condition under which the world's phenomena can arise.

At this level, neither subjective perception nor the contours of objects yet exist.

Yet it is not absolute nothingness.

Rather,

a **pre-phenomenal structure that allows the world to appear as world**

quietly persists.

The reason this book constructs the Zero Horizon is clear.

Although this pre-phenomenal structure is decisively important for understanding the photographic phenomenon, it has not been treated systematically within existing photographic theory, art criticism, or philosophy.

Western philosophy, particularly phenomenology, has addressed the *structure of appearing*,

while in Japanese thought, concepts such as *ma* (interval) and *kū* (emptiness) have been emphasized as conditions of generation.

Yet many of these discussions already presuppose the subject and experience, focusing on **structures that operate only after the phenomenal stage has been entered.**

Zero Horizon is positioned one step further back.

It addresses the layer that precedes the establishment of the subject, the formation of experience, and the constitution of objects.

Photography, then, is redefined as a **once-only generative phenomenon**

that comes into being only when this pre-phenomenal structure intersects with internal modulation on the side of the subject.

Zero Horizon is a theory that grasps the rising of the world as a pre-phenomenal structure

and, from there, reconstructs the conditions under which photography can come into being.

Through this prologue,

the reader will come to share the following questions:

— How can the world come to *appear* as world?

And at what position within that appearing does photography take form?

This book is written as one structural response to those questions.

## Introduction

This volume presents the English canonical edition of **Zero-Horizon Photo Art Theory**, a theoretical framework that examines photography at the level of pre-phenomenal world-structure rather than representation, expression, or institutional meaning.

The present edition is not conceived as a literal translation of the Japanese original. While grounded in the same conceptual architecture, the English text has been selectively rearticulated in order to address the expectations, discursive habits, and conceptual precision required within Anglophone philosophical and art-theoretical contexts. Certain explanatory elements that appear as appendices or annotations in the Japanese edition are therefore integrated directly into the main body of the English text, while others are deliberately withheld to preserve structural clarity.

The opening Declaration establishes the canonical scope and limits of the theory. The Abstract situates its central claims in concise form. The Prologue then marks the true point of conceptual entry, where the question of world-structure prior to subjectivity is posed.

The chapters that follow develop the four-phase Zero-Horizon model—Proto-zero, Zero-tremor, Zero-response, and Zero-return—exclusively from the side of world-structure. Any consideration of subjective practice, ethics, or bodily orientation is intentionally deferred and treated as an adjacent but independent framework.

This book should therefore be read not as a theory of photographic meaning, but as an inquiry into the structural conditions under which photography can occur at all.