

NEW RELEASE 2024

Alexandre Morvan

Cherry Trees



Texts by Julien Bouvard and Iizawa Kōtarō
 Designed by Kehrер Design (Laura Pecoroni) and Alexandre Morvan / Illustration by Claude Eigan
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Cherry blossom, the pandemic and 20th Century dystopian anime

The photographs in *Cherry Trees* were made in Japan in spring 2020. Spring is the time of “hanami”, the annual celebration of cherry blossom, a symbol of the transience and fragility of life. But in 2020, it also coincided with the very beginning of the Covid pandemic.

Here, French photographer Alexandre Morvan documents the invisible threat of the virus to everyday life. As his work progressed, he began to see connections between the strangeness of the situation and the dystopian worlds of anime and Japanese TV series that he had watched as a youth. Anticipating major environmental and humanitarian crises, some of these turned out to be visionary.

This book is a story about transmission – the transmission of a virus, but also about the transmission of lifeworlds from the fictions of the past to our current lived reality.

From the text *Where are We? Alexandre Morvan’s Photographs from Japan* by Iizawa Kōtarō, photography critic and historian of photography:

Nevertheless, it was evident that these photographs were captured through the gaze of a foreigner — in other words, a stranger. This is not to be perceived in a negative sense. (...)

When you find yourself in an unfamiliar place, anything and everything that meets your eyes appears tinged with a fresh brilliance. This wonder and subtle sense of discomfort likely work well to imbue photographs taken by strangers with a character different from those taken by photographers living in that locality.

(...) Japanese society is on the verge of a period of great change in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis. Furthermore, that future is by no means bright but is enveloped in thick fog. In this situation, boys

and girls are probably asking “Where are we?” and “Where are we going?” with their whole being. Morvan is engaging with those questions and is trying to find answers through his photographs.

From the text *Blossom Among the Ruins* by Julien Bouvard, professor in Japanese Studies at Jean Moulin Lyon 3 University: *The elements of daily life presented here are all traces of the passage of time. They themselves echo the period when the photographs were taken: spring and the cherry trees so typical of Japan, whose pink hues are a sign of resilience in the face of disasters of all kinds, even global pandemics.*

If hope is perceptible in these photographs from an anxious period, it is resolutely found on the side of plants, omnipresent, surviving despite the cracked concrete, indifferent to viruses from the human species.

Alexandre Morvan is a French photographer based in Paris. Explore his work on the website alexmorvan.com and on Instagram (@alexmorvan.)

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