PORTFOLIO

TAIKI UEKI

September 2026

PROFILE

Taiki Ueki

Born in Hokkaido in 1994. Artist, Photographer, and Inventor.

Ueki creates “Ice Photography” a practice in which photographs are engraved onto ice, with the images gradually disappearing over time.

His work reexamines photography’s conventional role as a medium for recording and preserving, exploring themes of memory, loss, and the irreversibility of time.

Through an independently developed printing technology for ice, he obtained Japanese Patent No. 7759681, “Printing Method for Objects on Ice,” in 2025.

In 2026, he received the Grand Prix at the 13th 500m Museum Art Award.

STATEMENT

For me, having been born and raised in Hokkaido, a snowy region of Japan, the ice and snow of winter were things that disappeared with the arrival of spring. From childhood, the sensation of “something that was there disappearing before I knew it” was an entirely ordinary and familiar part of life.

Photography, on the other hand, is a medium for fixing and preserving time that has passed. When I first began taking photographs, I was deeply drawn to the act of preserving. Yet in an age when photographs, videos, and even conversations can be stored as digital data for virtually perpetuity, I find myself wondering,
"Is preserving everything, forever, truly a source of happiness for human beings?"

Human memory is imperfect. Yet it is precisely because we forget that we look back on the past, idealize it, and reconstruct our memories in order to live in the present.

Perhaps forgetting is not a deficiency of memory, but an inherently human act.

With this in mind, I sought to reverse photography itself—a medium of preservation—into something that gradually forgets.

Using an independently developed and patented technique, “Printing Method for Ice-Like Objects,” I engrave photographs onto ice. The images embedded in the ice melt, distort, and eventually disappear without a trace as time passes. This is an attempt to transform photography from “a medium for preservation” into “a medium for loss.”

In an age overflowing with records, I deliberately create photographs destined to disappear.

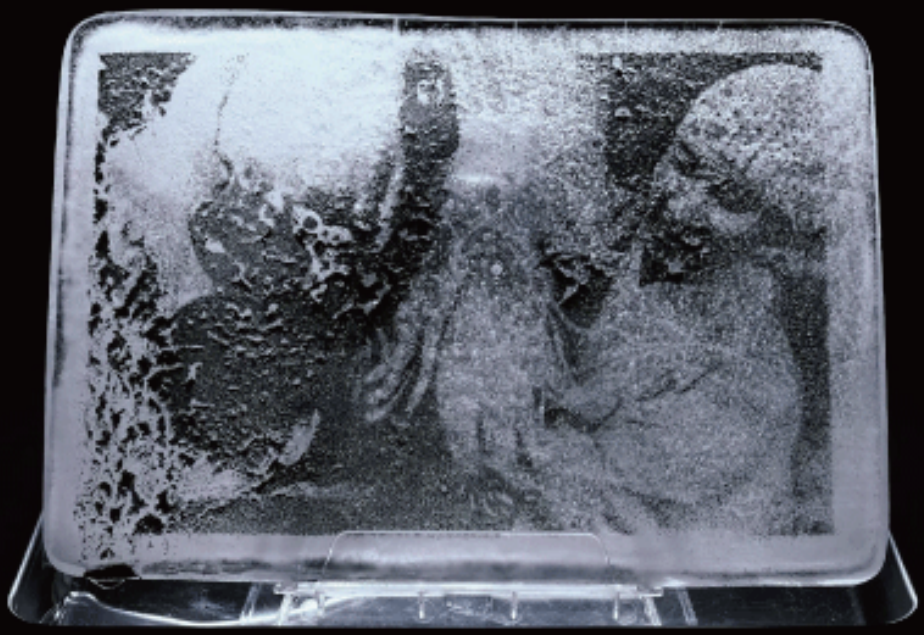
Between recording and forgetting, I reexamine the relationship between humanity and memory.

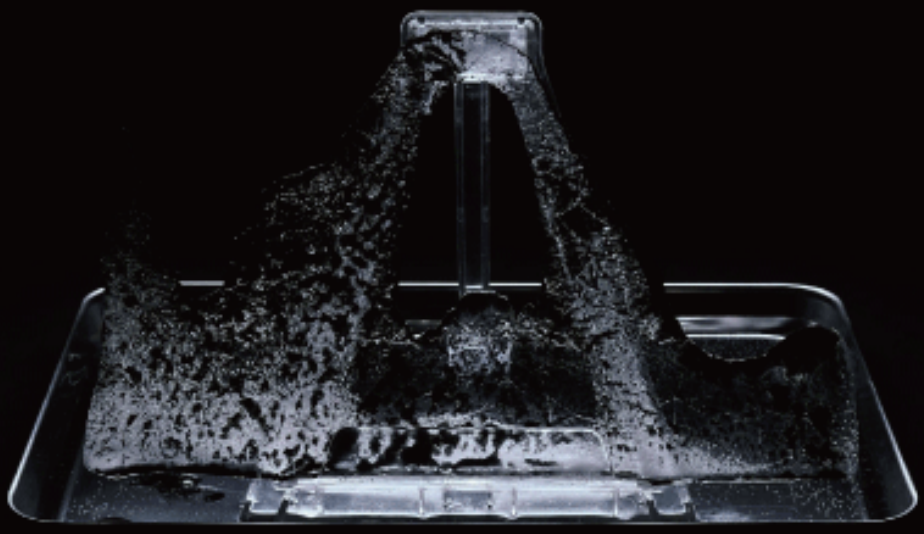
Shishimai

"Japanese lion dance"

I began creating ice-based works around the theme of memory. While looking through old folders, I came across this image—one of many. A memory I had forgotten until seeing this photograph. Memory is truly unreliable.
As the printed sand cascaded away, eye-like patterns emerged on the lion dance mask, creating a striking and memorable work.

Date: March 2025
Dimensions: H240 × W170 ×D15 mm
Materials: Ice, sand





WORKS

Tower of Crystals

A work that visualizes the crystalline structure of ice using polarizing filters.
I chose the Tokyo Skytree as the subject. As the Skytree, a symbol of man-made structures, emerges within the ice crystals, two contrasting structures—urban architecture and ice—overlap within a single photograph.

Date: August 2025
Dimensions: H180 × W130 × D8 mm
Materials: Ice, sand, polarizing filters

WORKS

Girl Eating Ice Cream

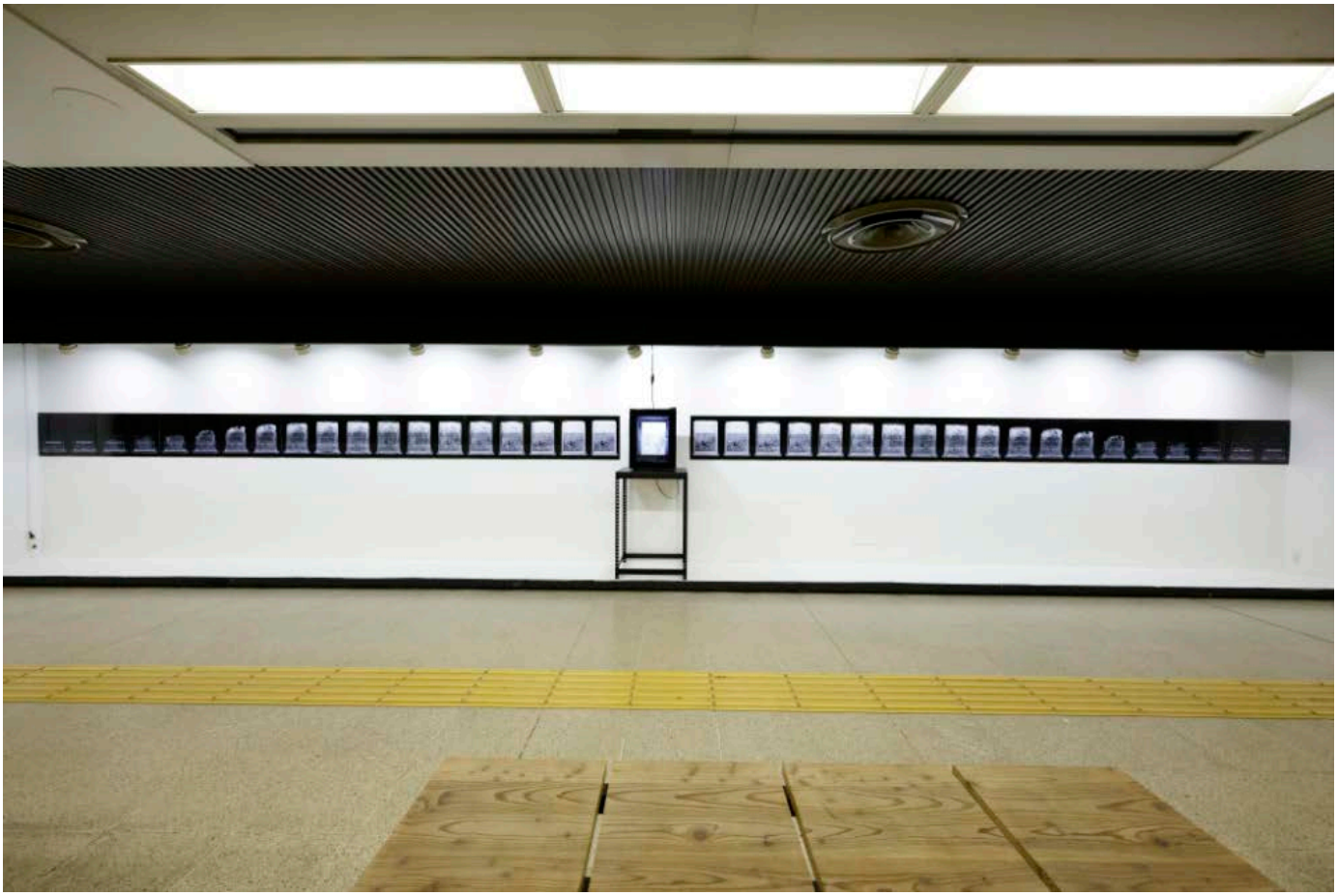
Date: July 2025

Dimensions: H240 × W170 × D15 mm

Materials: Ice, sand

The fragility of ice, disappearing at the slightest touch of a fingertip, is as delicate and beautiful as memory itself.
By intentionally creating crystalline structures on the surface of the ice, I sought to accentuate the mystique of the subject.
This work captures a fleeting moment destined to disappear over time, preserving it as a photograph while reflecting the beauty of transience.

Becoming Now After Loss



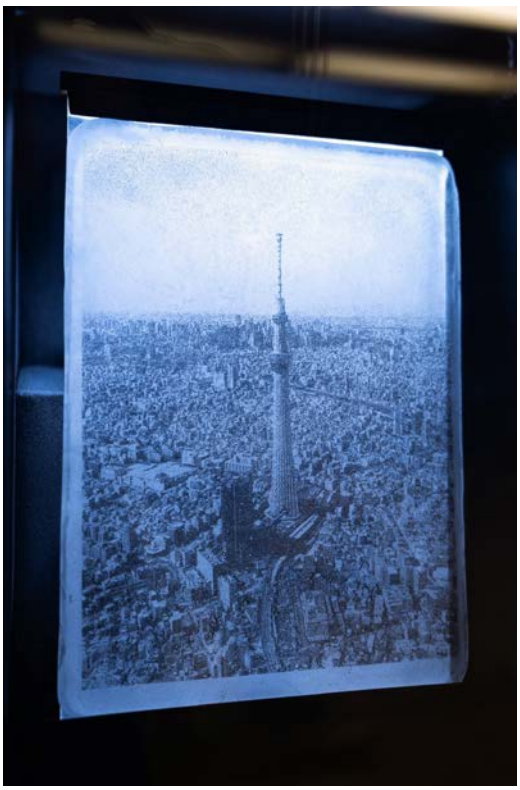
Date: January 2026
Dimensions: H2000 ×W12000 ×D700 mm(across two venues)
Materials: Ice, sand, freezers, trays, photographs

The work unfolds as a horizontal sequence of photographs extending along the narrow space of the 500m Museum. As viewers walk forward, each photograph is pushed into the past behind them, turning their physical movement into a passage of time inscribed within the space.

On one side, a freezer preserves “ice photographs” printed directly onto ice. Yet as the ice melts, the images gradually disappear. On the other side, an unplugged freezer, sand, and an empty silver tray remain. Once the image has vanished, the tray reflects the surrounding space and brings the present into view in place of the lost photograph.

Rather than focusing on preservation, the work centers on the process of disappearance, exploring the shifting relationship between time, memory, and the present through photographs that recede into the past, images that dissolve, and the present that emerges in their absence.

As viewers walk alongside the installation, they experience the process of its dissolution frame by frame. The work makes full use of the unique spatial characteristics of an underground subway passageway.



In the first venue, an actual Ice Photograph is “kept alive” inside a freezer.

In the second venue, the traces left by the melted Ice Photograph and a mirrored metal tray reflect the present moment.

ZIMA

Date: November 2025

Dimensions: H240× W170× D20 mm

Materials: Sunflower, ice, sand

“ZIMA” is a word meaning “winter” in Slavic languages.

Wars continue somewhere in the world, even now.

As they gradually fade from people's memories amid everyday life, I ask:Is this an endless winter?

#blue

Date:June 2026

Dimensions: H240 × W170 × D40 mm

Materials: Blue rose, ice, sand

A female figure engraved in ice, accompanied by an artificially colored blue rose.

The scissors placed at her neck represent the quiet self-oppression produced by internalized expectations of having to “remain beautiful.”

Perhaps the attempt to preserve beauty is powerless in the face of time.

I am not trying to preserve Photographs

Selected Work, Honorable Mention — 2nd THE NEW CREATORS (SONY)

The ice photograph exists as an “irreversible memory”—once the ice melts, it cannot return to its original form, rejecting the premise of reproduction or alteration.
The man holding a smartphone reflected in the ice symbolizes a contemporary world saturated with convenience and manipulation. The layers of sediment embedded within the ice, formed by air bubbles and sand, preserve traces of an unalterable reality as physical matter.
The final act of striking and shattering the ice is a quiet act of defiance against a world increasingly covered by reproduction and modification.

I Am Not Trying to Preserve Photographs

Rather, I create them to make them disappear.

Photographs made of ice

are difficult to keep intact.

But that's okay.

I'm not seeking data.

If they remain in memory,

I believe that is enough.

The video concludes with a dramatic scene in which I smash the Ice Photograph I created.

The narration, recorded in my own voice, was also well received, and the video surpassed 299,000 views on Instagram.

Technology & Patent

特 許 証
(CERTIFICATE OF PATENT)

特許第7759681号
(PATENT NUMBER)

発明の名称 (TITLE OF THE INVENTION) 氷状対象物への印刷方法

特許権者 (PATENTEE) [redacted]

上木　大樹

発明者 (INVENTOR) 上木　大樹

出願番号 (APPLICATION NUMBER) 特願2025-084941

出願日 (FILING DATE) 令和　7年　5月21日 (May 21, 2025)

登録日 (REGISTRATION DATE) 令和　7年10月16日 (October 16, 2025)

この発明は、特許するものと確定し、特許原簿に登録されたことを証する。

(THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE PATENT IS REGISTERED ON THE REGISTER OF THE JAPAN PATENT OFFICE.)

令和　7年10月16日 (October 16, 2025)

特許庁長官 (COMMISSIONER, JAPAN PATENT OFFICE)

河西康之

"Printing Method for Ice-like Objects"

Inspired by childhood memories of seeing the world through thin ice, invented an original technique for printing images onto the surface of ice through thousands of trials and experiments.

In 2025, I obtained Japanese Patent No. 7759681, “Printing Method for Ice-Like Objects.” This technology enables the creation of “Ice Photography,” using ice as a medium through which photographs transform and disappear over time, rather than being preserved.

CV

Taiki Ueki

Born in Hokkaido in 1994. Artist, Photographer, and Inventor.

Awards & Selections

2026 Grand Prize, 13th 500m Museum Award
“Becoming Now After Loss”
2026 Honorable Mention, The 2nd THE NEW CREATORS
“I Am Not Trying to Preserve Photographs”
2024 Excellence Award,5th JMPA Internet Photo Contest
“The Coat Without a Face”

Exhibitions

2026 13th 500m Museum Award Exhibition (Sapporo, Japan)
2026 The 18th Japan Modern Photographers Association Exhibition (Tokyo / Nagano / Aichi, Japan)
Special Exhibition within the Venue: Individual display on a dedicated wall section.
2025 17th Japan Modern Photographers Association Members Exhibition (Tokyo / Nagano / Aichi, Japan)

Patent

2025 Japanese Patent No. 7759681
“Printing Method for Ice-like Objects”
(Registered under his legal name, Taiki Ueki.)

Media Coverage

2026 The Tokyo Shimbun (Aug 3, Issue No. 30013, “From TOKYO” section)
“Ice Photography — Fragments of ‘Memory’ That Melt Away”
2026 Hokkaido Shimbun (Feb 28, Issue No. 29871, “Saturday Doshin” section)
“Grand Prix of the 13th 500m Museum Award goes to Taiki Ueki”
2026 Monthly lifestyle information magazine Wendy (Feb, Issue No. 441)
“Fading Forms of Memory — A New Expression Printing Photographs Directly onto Ice”

CONTACT

For inquiries regarding exhibitions, artworks, press coverage, and technology use or licensing, please contact me using the form below.

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