

James Whitlow Delano Japan

United States, written by [Laurence Cornet](#)



James Whitlow Delano says he feels more at home in Asia than in the United States. This can be seen in the wispy photographs he brings back from Japan showing daily life in Tokyo, where he lives, and in Fukushima, where he traveled after the 2011 tsunami followed by the nuclear catastrophe.

His Tokyo journal, *Mangaland*, shows a Tokyo far different from the one we're used to seeing, a distant, make-believe city of neon pop explosions and wild outfits. Here we see street scenes taken in a rainstorm, with crowds and along the Sumida River, whose foggy atmosphere Delano captures with his old Leica, which also thickens his subjects' facial expressions. He takes his time, making mental notes while he shoots: "Ponytails, piercing glance and a cigarette."



© James Whitlow Delano, *Black Tsunami*, *FotoEvidence*

His writing is as good as his photographs, and the short introduction to *Black Tsunami* (*FotoEvidence*) adds another dimension to the visual narrative. Black like the lines accentuated by his camera. Black like the missing memories that make up the visual and emotional ambiguity of the Fukushima disaster, where the traces and the memories dissipate faster than radiation, invisible and silent. This paradox is represented in the laundry he saw floating in the wind for a year, absorbing the traces of time but not of nature, whose power ravaged the landscape. The resilience of the plant life is misleading. In this perfectly bucolic setting, one is exposed to an annual dose of radiation in a single day.

In response to these forgotten memories, he gathered pictures of the first events, already a little fuzzy when they were taking place, the kind that our unconscious seems to quickly block out and rebuild. Concluding the work, two tree trunks on the shore have resurfaced from the sea plunging their weakened roots in the soil against a cleared up horizon.

Both series are now on view at the *Sous les Etoiles* gallery.

EXHIBITION

James Whitlow Delano, « *Mangaland* : a photo retrospective of Tokyo »

Until January 31th, 2014

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