

EDITOR'S CHOICE



Ben Brain reviews *Ravens*, the celebrated classic that's been republished by MACK Books



Ravens

By Masahisa Fukase

ORIGINALLY published in 1984, *Ravens* has subsequently been published several more times, with each edition selling out due to its cult status. Featuring the work of Japanese photographer Masahisa Fukase (1934-2012) *Ravens* has been widely regarded as one of the most important photo books of the past 25 years, thanks in part to the wise words of Gerry Badger and co. Such an accolade now means that unsigned first editions can reach in excess of £2,000. Thankfully, this new edition makes acquiring the important book altogether more reasonable.

Fukase worked on *Ravens* between 1975 and 1982. In a state of emotional turmoil following the divorce from his wife, Fukase travelled to his hometown of Hokkaido and began photographing the landscape, which included an unkindness of ravens. The birds became an obsession, and they dominate the work. He originally titled the series 'Tonpoku-ki', or 'the accounts of an escape to the north', but he later changed it to *Ravens*.

The gritty and grainy black and white images are charged with a visceral energy that are both beautiful and disturbing. The work is laced with autobiographical reference to his troubled state of mind, but has also been seen as a metaphor for the spirit of post-war Japan. Fukase's life ended tragically when in 1992 he slipped on the stairs of his favourite bar and spent the next 20 years of his life in a coma, before dying in 2012.

This latest edition of *Ravens* has been beautifully produced by MACK and is a facsimile of the first edition. It's

presented in a slick slipcase and accompanied by bilingual texts by the founder of the Masahisa Fukase Archives, Tomo Kosuga, and an essay by Akira Hasegawa, which both add a fascinating insight into this life and work. Also included with the texts are recently discovered images from the Fukase archive revealing more of Fukase's creative process, showing us his experiments with multiple exposure and painting onto photographs.

If you've been hankering after a copy of this excellent book, which is a vital addition to any photo book lover's collection, but have baulked at the price in the past, then seize this opportunity now!

[Publisher] **MACK**

[Web] **Mackbooks.co.uk**

[Price] **£75** ➤➤



BOOK

Our pick of *useful, inspirational and just plain beautiful* photography books

SHELF

