

Pictorialism

The Pictorialist movement in art photography flourished in the West and Japan, primarily during the late 19th and early 20th century. Characterized by a soft, richly shaded picture quality, the style was imbued with a painterly atmosphere.

In Japan, many of these works utilized motifs related to landscapes, still lifes, and traditional culture. Pursuing an exquisite handcrafted quality, the artists made prints using rubber stamping and other pigment techniques, and a retouching method known as *zokin-gake* (“rag-wiping”).

Although Pictorialism was frequently critiqued in Modernist photography circles as an “eclectic mix of painting and photography,” its historical significance has come to be reevaluated in recent years.