



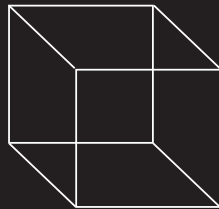
David Smith

*Memories
of
Noritsu*

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of
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David Smith

Noritsu is a black box.





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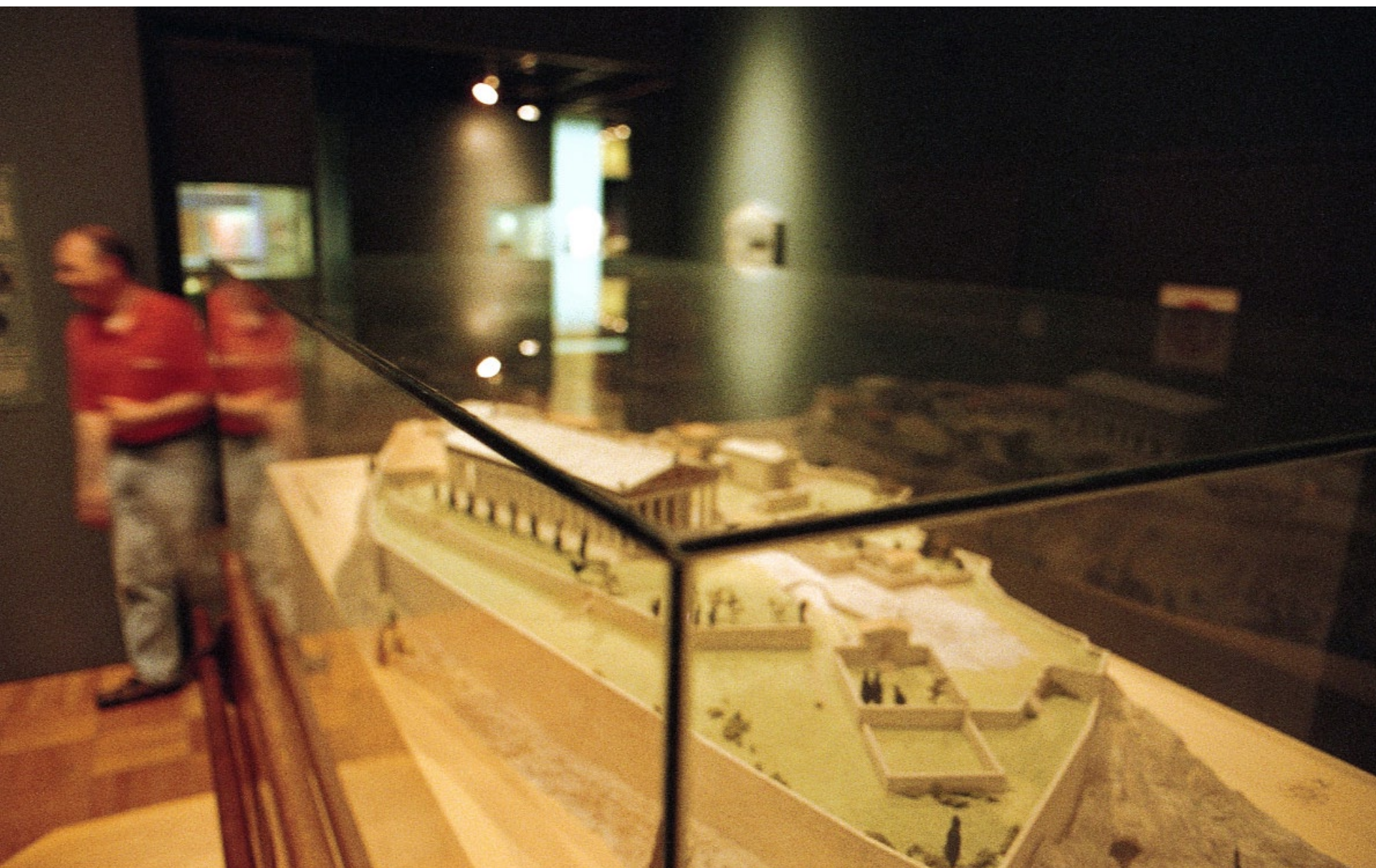
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Noritsu (Noritsu Koki Kabushiki-gaisha) machine prints helped define the ‘look’ of an era of consumer photography. Noritsu machines were a mainstay of the global minilab industry. They developed and printed millions of C-41 35mm negatives, on 3.5x5-inch, and 4x6-inch linen or glossy photo paper, with and without borders. It was like the hard-copy Instagram of its day, but without public sharing.

Some Noritsu machine prints had good tonal range and color balance, most had blocked shadows, blown highlights, and/or a pronounced color cast.

This, it turns out, was not necessarily caused by defective exposures in the taking cameras, but by scanning and color-correcting algorithms programmed into the machine (the ‘black box’), improper maintenance, exhausted chemicals, and/or operator error. Also, the dyes weren’t terribly stable, and the (by now) mostly older prints not exactly stored in archival conditions, but in albums and shoe boxes, in closets, damp basements and garages.

“Memories of [some foreign land]” is the evocative branding for a line of sauces sold in grocery “Superstores” to white-bread Canadians, for their home-cooked curries, pad thais, burgers and Kraft dinners. Principle ingredients: sugar, garlic, vinegar, water, thickener, spices and other flavorings.

The name, well, I took it.

A scenic autumn landscape featuring a calm river in the foreground, reflecting the surrounding trees. The banks are lined with trees displaying vibrant fall foliage in shades of green, yellow, orange, and red. The scene is peaceful and picturesque, with the water acting as a mirror for the colorful canopy above.

Memories of Noritsu