

Hara Museum of Contemporary Art

Press Release 2013/10/03

Yasumasa Morimura – Rembrandt Room Revisited

October 12 (Saturday) – December 23 (Monday / national holiday), 2013



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The Hara Museum is proud to present *Yasumasa Morimura – Rembrandt Room Revisited*, a 2013 reprise of Yasumasa Morimura's *Rembrandt Room* exhibition held in 1994 at the Hara Museum. The works in this show, now part of the Hara Museum Collection, appear together again for the first time in 20 years. Morimura has won international acclaim for photographic self-portraits in which he has become the subject in a famous painting, an actress or some other widely recognizable icon. His first appropriations were of Van Gogh in 1985. These were followed by many famous paintings that now comprise a large body of work that offer unique interpretations of the original artworks and/or their historical background. In 1989, he became a focus of international attention for his contribution to Aperto '88 at the Venice Biennale. Since then he has held many major solo exhibitions at venues such as the Yokohama Museum of Art and the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography. As one of Japan's most well-known artists, he was awarded the Minister of Education Award for Fine Arts in 2007 and the Medal of Honor with Purple Ribbon in 2011. He was recently named artistic director of the 2014 Yokohama Triennale.

The Hara Museum has held two large-scale exhibitions of Morimura works. *Rembrandt Room* (1994) was an in-depth examination of the dark and bright sides of the Dutch artist's life. *Self-Portraits: An Inner Dialogue with Frida Kahlo* (2001) paid homage to the life and loves of one of Mexico's most famous painters of the 20th century. The Hara Museum also features a permanent installation by Morimura entitled *Rondo* (1994) which involved a unique conversion of one of the museum's toilets. The figure in the installation has been adorned with a new outfit for this exhibition.

Please note that the following solo exhibitions by Yasumasa Morimura will be held during the same period as the present show: *Las Meninas Renacen de Noche (In Praise of Velázquez : Handmaidens Reborn in the Night)*, at the Shiseido Gallery in Tokyo (September 28 - December 25) and *Yasumasa Morimura: Theater of the Self* at the The Warhol in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania (October 6 – January 12, 2014).

About Yasumasa Morimura - Rembrandt Room (1994)



Yasumasa Morimura – Rembrandt Room was held at the Hara Museum from September 10 to November 3, 1994. For this show, Morimura, whose subject at the time was the modern-day "self", chose to focus on the life of Rembrandt, the renowned 17th century Dutch painter who painted a large number of self-portraits and was a pioneer in the exploration of the "self" in art. Rembrandt emerged in the golden age of modern individualism, confronting the canvas and the mirror with the question, "Who am I?" Highly gifted, he gained wealth and renown early in his career. However, a declining economy and diminishing fame left him lonely and miserable in old age. Morimura put himself in the self-portraits which portray the different stages of the artist's life

and his way of approaching each stage: the energetic exploration of possibilities in youth, the confidence of maturity, and the lack of pretension and honesty with self that marked his old age.

Morimura also played the roles of four people close to Rembrandt - his respected mother, his beloved son, his young, voluptuous wife, and the lover who became his companion after his wife's death. In contrast to artistic predecessors who have been involved in a search for the authentic self, Morimura proposes the idea of an "open-ended self." After carefully examining the original paintings, he elucidated the characteristics of these people and their relationships to Rembrandt in his new versions.



Another theme of *Rembrandt Room* was light and shadow. One of the most fascinating aspects of Rembrandt's painting is the dramatic contrast of light and shadow produced by applying layers of bright color on a black canvas and spotlighting the main figure. Today, 350 years after the passing of Rembrandt's candle-lit world, light is represented by the flash of radioactive materials. This light is excessive, obscuring our vision and creating a new kind of darkness. Morimura was preoccupied by this problem of light and darkness as he worked on this series, and expressed his thoughts on it in *White Darkness*, the culminating picture of the exhibition. After the close of the exhibition, all of the works were purchased by the Hara Museum.

[Exhibition Details]

Title: *Yasumasa Morimura – Rembrandt Room Revisited*

Dates: October 12 (Saturday) – December 23 (Monday / national holiday), 2013

Organized by: Hara Museum of Contemporary Art 4-7-25 Kitashinagawa, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo 140-0001

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<http://mobile.haramuseum.or.jp> <http://www.art-it.asia/u/HaraMuseum> (blog) Twitter: <http://twitter.com/haramuseum> (twitter)

Hours: 11:00 am – 5:00 pm, Wednesdays until 8:00 pm (last entry 30 minutes before closing)

Closed: Mondays (open on October 14, November 4 and December 23), October 15 and November 5

Admission: General 1,000 yen; Students 700 yen (high school and university) or 500 yen (elementary and junior high); Free for Hara Museum members and students through high school every Saturday during the school term; 100 yen discount per person for groups of 20 or more.

Directions: 5 minutes by taxi or 15 minutes on foot from JR Shinagawa Station (Takanawa exit); or from the same station take the No.96 bus, get off at the first stop (Gotenyama), and walk 3 minutes.

[Artist Biography]

1951 Born in Osaka

1978 Graduated with B.A. degree from the Kyoto City University of Art

Selected Solo Exhibitions

- 2013 *Yasumasa Morimura: Theater of the Self*, The Warhol, Pittsburgh
Las Meninas Renacen de Noche (In Praise of Velásquez : Handmaidens Reborn in the Night),
The Shiseido Gallery, Tokyo
- 2012 *A Study of Yasumasa Morimura*, Mitsubishi-jisho ARTIUM, Fukuoka
Moriennale / Imitating Art History, Takamatsu City Museum of Art, Kagawa; Fukuyama Museum of Art,
Hiroshima; Shizuoka City Museum of Art, Shizuoka; Kitakyushu Municipal Museum of Art, Kitakyushu;
Riverwalk Gallery, Fukuoka; Takaoka Art Museum, Toyama
- 2011 *A Requiem: Art on Top of the Battlefield*, Galeria Juana de Aizquru, Madrid
Economic Portrait and Others, BLD Gallery, Tokyo
The Power of the Others: Microcosm of Yasumasa Morimura, Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe
A Requiem: Art on Top of the Battlefield, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, Tokyo; Toyota Municipal
Museum of Art, Aichi; Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Hiroshima; Hyogo Prefectural Museum of
Art, Hyogo
- 2010 *A Requiem: Another Story*, ShugoArts, Tokyo
- 2009 *Sickness Unto Beauty – Me As Actress*, Iwami Art Museum, Shimane
- 2008 *Requiem Por El Siglo XX*, Galeria Juana de Aizquru, Madrid
Yasumasa Morimura- Requiem for the XX Century: Twilight of the Turbulent Gods, Galerie Thaddaeus
Ropac, Paris
- 2007 *Yasumasa Morimura, Bi [bi:] – Class, Be Quiet*, Contemporary Art Museum, Kumamoto; Yokohama Museum of
Art, Yokohama

- Yasumasa Morimura – *Requiem for the XX Century, Twilight of the Turbulent Gods*, Galleria di Piazza San Marco, La Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, Venice; Luhring Augustine Gallery, New York
- 2006 *Yasumasa Morimura. One Artist's Theatre*, Gary Tatintian Gallery, Moscow
- Seasons of Passion / A Requiem: Chapter 1*, ShugoArts, Tokyo
- 2005 *Los Nuevos Caprichos*, Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris; Luhring Augustine, New York; Galeria Juana de Aizpuru, Madrid; ShugoArts, Tokyo
- 2003 *Yasumasa Morimura, Barco Negro on the Table*, MEM Gallery, Osaka
- 2002 *Yasumasa Morimura: Story of M's Portraits with a 25m Diorama*, Kawasaki City Museum, Kawasaki
- 2001 *An Inner Dialogue with Frida Kahlo*, Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris; Luhring Augustine, New York
- Morimura: A Hundred Polaroids*, RICE Gallery by G2; ShugoArts, Tokyo
- Yasumasa Morimura: Story of M's Portraits*, Museum "Eki", Kyoto
- 2000 *Art History: Yasumasa Morimura*, Telephonica Foundation Exhibit Space, Spain
- The Time with No Name, The Self with No Name*, The Art Center of Academic Resources, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok
- 1998 *Yasumasa Morimura: Self Portrait as Art History*, Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, Tokyo; The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto; Marugame Genichiro Inokuma Museum of Contemporary Art, Kagawa
- 1996 *Yasumasa Morimura: From Van Gogh to Marilyn*, Satani Gallery, Tokyo; Luhring Augustine Gallery, New York
- 1994 *Yasumasa Morimura - Rembrandt Room*, Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo
- Psychoborg: Madonna, Michael, Morimura*, The Ginza Art Space, Tokyo
- 1993 *The Sickness unto Beauty vol.1-5*, Nishida Gallery, Nara
- 9 Visages*, Fondation Cartier pour L'Art contemporain, Jouy-en-Josas, Paris
- 1992 *Yasumasa Morimura Sculptures*, Shugo Satani Art Room, Tokyo
- Options 44*, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Chicago; The Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh
- 1990 *Daughter of Art History*, Sagacho Exhibit Space, Tokyo
- 1989 *Criticism and the Lover*, Mohly Gallery, Osaka
- 1988 *Mata ni, Te*, Gallery NW House, Tokyo; ON Gallery, Osaka
- 1986 *Mon Amour Violet et Autres*, Gallery Haku, Osaka
- 1984 Hiramatsu Gallery, Osaka

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2012 *Double Vision: Contemporary Art from Japan*, Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Moscow
- 2011 *Pictorial Theory of Evolution*, Tochigi Prefectural Museum of Fine Arts, Tochigi
- 2009 *Hundred Stories about Love*, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa
- 2008 *Busan Biennale*, Busan Museum of Modern Art, Gwangalli Beach, APEC Naru Park, etc, Korea
- Into the Atomic Sunshine*, Daikanyama Hillside Forum, Tokyo
- Still / Motion: Liquid Crystal Painting*, Mie Prefectural Art Museum, Mie; The National Museum of Art, Osaka; Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, Tokyo
- 2004 *Marcel Duchamp and the 20th Century Art*, The National Museum of Art, Osaka; Yokohama Museum of Art, Yokohama
- 20th Anniversary Exhibition: The Copy Age – From Duchamp through Warhol to Morimura*, The Museum of Modern Art, Shiga
- 2002 *Emotional Site*, Sagacho Shokuryo Building, Tokyo
- Theater of Our Lives*, Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art, Hyogo
- 2001 *Yasumasa Morimura, Sawako Goda*, Kochi Prefectural Museum, Kochi
- 1998 *Technotherapy*, Nakanoshima Central Town Hall, Osaka
- 1996 *Hugo Boss Prize 1996*, Guggenheim Museum Soho Annex, New York
- 10th Sydney Biennale*, Sydney
- 1994 *Cocido y Crudo*, Reina Sofia National Art Center, Madrid
- Of the Human Condition*, Spiral Hall, Tokyo; Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, Hyogo
- 1992 *Homage to Spanish Still Life by Yasumasa Morimura & Miran Fukuda*, Nagoya City Art Museum, Nagoya
- Post- Human*, Musee d'Art de Pully, Lausanne; Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Turin; Deste Foundation for Contemporary Art, Athens; Deichtorhallen Hamburg, Hamburg
- 1991 *A Cabinet of Signs: Contemporary Art from Post Modern Japan*, Tate Gallery / Liverpool; White Chapel Art, London; Malmo Kunsthall, Sweden
- Art and Daily Life*, National Museum of Art Osaka, Osaka
- 1990 *Culture and Commentary: An Eighties Perspectives*, Hirshhorn Museum Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C.
- 1989 *Against Nature; Japanese Art in the Eighties*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; Akron Art Museum, Ohio; MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge; Seattle Art Museum, Seattle; The Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati; Grey Art Gallery and Study Center; New York University Art Collection, New York; Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, Texas; ICA Nagoya, Nagoya
- 1988 *East meets West: Japanese and Italian Art Today/LA 88*, Los Angeles Convention Center, Los Angeles
- Faces of Men*, Gallery Haku, Osaka
- 43th La Biennale di Venezia, Aperto '88*, Venice

- 1987 *Art Now '88*, Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Modern Art, Hyogo
Photographic Aspect of Japanese Art Today, Tochigi Prefectural Museum of Fine Arts, Tochigi
Yes Art / Deluxe, Sagacho Exhibit Space, Tokyo; Gallery Haku, Osaka
- 1986 *Art Different-Scene Differentible de peinture*, Gallery Haku, Osaka
- 1985 *Smile with Radical Will*, Galerie 16, Kyoto
- 1984 *Can't You See We Are Not Reticent?*, Gallery [vju:], Osaka

Selected Recent Publications

- Self-Portrait as Actress: Yasumasa Morimura*, Nigensha Co., Ltd, 2010
Manebu Art History (Imitating Art History), Akaaka Art Publishing Inc., 2010
Rojian Sensei no Anpontan, Shinshusha Publishing, 2010
Conversations About Requiem / Considering the 20th Century, Iwanami Shoten Publishers, 2011

Recent Awards

- Kyoto Cultural Merit Award, 2006
Minister of Education Award for Fine Arts, 2007
52nd Mainichi Art Award, 2011
Photographic Society of Japan Award, 2011
24th Kyoto Artistic Culture Prize, 2011
Medal with Purple Ribbon, Autumn 2011

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[2] *Self-Portrait as the Prodigal Son 1636*, 1994 color photograph on canvas, 77 x 63 cm ©Yasumasa Morimura
[3] *Portrait of the Family - Wife*, 1994 color photograph on canvas, 120 x 100 cm ©Yasumasa Morimura
[4] *Face Study III*, 1994 black and white photograph, 25 x 20 cm ©Yasumasa Morimura

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