



LUHRING AUGUSTINE BUSHWICK

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Yasumasa Morimura: In the Room of Art History

September 14 – November 17, 2018

Opening reception: Friday, September 14, 6-8pm

Luhring Augustine Bushwick is pleased to present *Yasumasa Morimura: In the Room of Art History*, the artist's eighth solo show with the gallery.

At the center of Morimura's photographs is the artist himself in full disguise. For decades Morimura has challenged the conventions of self-portraiture by assuming the likeness of others, demonstrating the plasticity of identity. His approach to image-making stems from a desire to step into and inhabit pictorial space. Using props, makeup, costumes, and digital manipulation, Morimura embodies the personas of prominent figures in history, art, and entertainment as they are represented in popular visual culture. Finding inspiration predominantly within Western iconography, Morimura recasts his subjects and considers his own internalization of the imagery, a reflection of the influx of Western culture in the postwar era in his native Japan. Though his images are not exact duplicates, they bear an uncanny resemblance to their respective sources, operating in a space in which fiction blends with reality, and thereby disrupting the audience's preexisting associations of the depicted subjects.

In the Room of Art History presents examples from two bodies of Morimura's work: *Self-Portraits through Art History* (2016), in which the artist has derived his imagery from iconic masterpieces by Caravaggio, Vermeer, Magritte, and van Gogh; and his seminal *One Hundred M's self-portraits* (1993-2000), where he emulates celebrities such as Audrey Hepburn, Marilyn Monroe, and Brigitte Bardot. In these works, Morimura presents intimate encounters with the artists and actors by reimagining their environments. In *Self-Portraits through Art History*, Morimura animates the paintings by expanding the frame, often inviting the viewer to witness a quiet moment just before or after the original scene. Similarly in *One Hundred M's self-portraits*, through employing close up glamour shots and behind-the-scenes images, Morimura draws the viewer into an imagined private sphere where they shift between the roles of admirer, voyeur, and welcome friend.

Concurrent with Luhring Augustine's exhibition, Japan Society will present *Yasumasa Morimura: Ego Obscura* (October 12, 2018 – January 13, 2019), the artist's first solo institutional exhibition in New York City. Curated by Japan Society Gallery Director Yukie Kamiya, the exhibition showcases Morimura's signature photographic self-portraits, and features the U.S. premieres of two of his newest works: his first feature-length video piece, *Egó Sympósiion*, in which he embodies twelve master artists known for their self-portraits; and *Egó Obscura*, a multimedia cinematic installation developed from the performance work *Morimura's Nippon Cha Cha Cha!*, which the artist will perform live at Japan Society on Saturday, October 13 (www.japansociety.org).

Morimura (born in Osaka in 1951) has had recent solo exhibitions at the Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; the Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, Japan; the National Museum of Modern Art, Osaka, Japan; and Sammlung Friedrichshof in Zúrn Dorf, Austria, Germany. His work is in numerous prominent public and private collections, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh.

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