

Kyoto City KYOCERA Museum of Art 1<sup>st</sup> Anniversary Exhibition

## Morimura Yasumasa: My Self-Portraits as a Theater of Labyrinths

March 12 (Sat.) - June 5 (Sun.), 2022

One of the pioneers of self-portraiture art to hold a large-scale solo exhibition surveying his thirty-five-year career

As part of Kyoto City KYOCERA Museum of Art's first anniversary exhibition, we are pleased to present a solo exhibition by Morimura Yasumasa (b. Osaka, 1951), one of Japan's leading contemporary artists. By creating self-portraits of himself as protagonists from art masterpieces, notable historical figures, and film actresses Morimura has visualized the multiplicity of individual identities that include gender and race, while expressing the intersection of personal and world history. In recent years, he has held solo exhibitions at the Japan Society (2018), the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts (2017), the National Museum of Art, Osaka (2016), the Andy Warhol Museum (2013), and the Artizon Museum (October 2021-), in addition to serving as the artistic director for the *Yokohama Triennale 2014* among other positions. He continues to be active as an artist both in Japan and overseas.

The exhibition comprises four sections: M's Photo Corridor, Theater of Voices, Square for Dreams and Memories and Hidden Costume Closet. In addition to over 800 of Morimura's treasured instant photographs taken since 1984, which have rarely been shown in public, the exhibition will feature a specially prepared acoustic space in which the audio from Morimura's CD *Faces*, on which he reads his own novel written in 1994, will be recreated as a closet drama. This will be Morimura's first large-scale solo exhibition in Kyoto since 1998, and the first attempt to reveal the entirety of his private world, which has continued for over thirty-five years.



All images above from the series *My Self-Portraits as a Theater of Labyrinths*, 1984- © Yasumasa Morimura

Morimura's expression, in which the self is deconstructed by taking the place of others to expose the multiple faces of the individual, shares similarities with the "selfie" that has been popularized by the evolution of smartphones and the spread of social media, and yet it also has a decidedly different aspect. In his images, one can discern Morimura's penetrating gaze at the self, and an overwhelming affirmation of the multiple selves that a person can assume in their lives. By returning to the origin of his own production, this exhibition will present Morimura's current state as he gropes for the future amidst the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Organizer:**

Morimura Yasumasa Exhibition Executive Committee  
(City of Kyoto, The Mainichi Newspapers, The Kyoto Shimbun)

Date: March 12 (Sat.) - June 5 (Sun.), 2022

\*Closed on Mondays except public holidays

Venue: Higashiyama Cube,  
Kyoto City KYOCERA Museum of Art

Opening hours: 10:00–18:00 (last admission 17:30)

**Admission:**

Adults: ¥2,000 (¥1,800),

University students: ¥1,600 (¥1,400),

High School students: ¥1,200 (¥1,000),

Elementary and Junior High students: ¥800 (¥600),

Preschool children: Free



From the series *My Self-Portraits as a Theater of Labyrinths*, 1984-

\*Figures in ( ) are rates for advance sales and for groups of over 20 persons

\*Tickets purchased through e-tix are eligible for ¥100 discount

\*Free admission for persons with disabilities and their caregivers (certificate required)

\*Advance tickets: Now Available on the museum website

## Exhibition Highlights

### 1. Changing into many selves! Contemporary Art and Selfies

Morimura's portraits involve his transformation into various personalities, such as characters from famous paintings or fashion magazines, or unknown figures who are created spontaneously in front of the camera. In these portraits, gender, nationality, and even age can become ambiguous, while the fluid multiplicity and manifold desires that we all possess are made visible. In an age when selfies and social media have become a part of our daily lives, these photographic works seem to signal acknowledgement of more diverse ways of living.

### 2. First exhibition of treasured instant photos

The exhibition will feature approximately 800 of Morimura's treasured instant photographs taken since 1984. For Morimura, instant photos are like traces of rituals performed in private spaces such as his studio. Presenting a comprehensive overview of this private

world, the exhibition will illuminate the entire background to Morimura's work over the past thirty-five years.



From the series *My Self-Portraits as a Theater of Labyrinths*, 1984-

### 3. Reborn as a closet drama in a new space—*Faces*

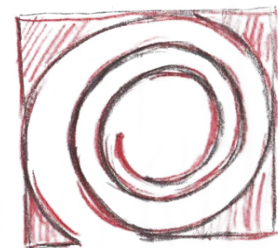
*Faces* is a CD produced by Morimura on which he reads his own novel written in 1994. For this exhibition, Morimura will expand on this work, recreating the mysterious and lyrical world of his novel, which takes place in a fictional nunnery in Kyoto, as a closet drama in a special acoustic space within the exhibition room. Morimura, who has been energetically working in theater in recent years, will use his "voice" as a self-portrait to create a space that recreates his novel after twenty-seven years.



From the *KAO21* series, 1994

### 4. A venue constructed through collaboration between the museum's co-designer Tezzo Nishizawa and Morimura Yasumasa

In addition to working with Jun Aoki on the large-scale renovation project for the Kyoto City KYOCERA Museum of Art, Nishizawa has also been involved in the composition of numerous venues for contemporary art exhibitions. In collaboration with Nishizawa, who knows the architectural spaces of the museum inside out, the new Higashiyama Cube will be transformed into a "labyrinthine theater."



Yasumasa 2021. Jan 21

Proposal for exhibition layout, *Tornado of Memory* (Morimura Yasumasa, drawing, 2021)

## Message from Morimura Yasumasa about the exhibition: Self-Portrait x Enigma x Theater = ?

"The person I think I want to be. The person I have decided I am. The unknown "I" that I had never even contemplated. There are many different selves in me, and they are intertwined like a complex labyrinth, or a stage where various selves appear.

In the end, we are the ones who interpret the world and unravel its history, so before anything else I would like to return to this tangled, enigmatic starting line called "I" and start over.

The theme of this exhibition is the question of what is important to us, which has emerged precisely because of the stifling environment of the Covid-19 era. What is it that I, and you, treasure most? I hope to discover the answer through this exhibition."



Born in Osaka in 1951. Since his debut in 1985 with a portrait photograph of himself disguised as van Gogh, Morimura has shown works in Japan and overseas. Served as artistic director for the 2014 Yokohama Triennale. Recent solo exhibitions include *The Self-Portraits of YASUMASA MORIMURA: My Art, My Story, My Art History* (National Museum of Art, Osaka, 2016), *Yasumasa Morimura: Ego Obscura, Tokyo 2020* (Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, 2020), *Morimura Yasumasa: Want to change the world? Be seriously unserious* (Toyama Prefectural Museum of Art and Design, 2020), and *Morimura Yasumasa M's Gift of the Sea: Auto-Mythology* (Artizon Museum, 2021). In 2018, opened Morimura@Museum in Kitakagaya, Osaka. His many publications include *Jigazō no yukue* ("Whither the self-portrait," Kobunsha Shinsho).

All images © Yasumasa Morimura

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For inquiries about the exhibition:  
Yoshiko Nawa  
Kyoto City KYOCERA Museum of Art Public Relations  
E-mail: [pr@kyoto-museum.jp](mailto:pr@kyoto-museum.jp)

\*Exhibition contents are subject to change depending on future conditions of COVID-19.