

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DAIDO MORIYAMA



13 NOVEMBER – 20 DECEMBER 2019
PRIVATE VIEW: TUESDAY 12 NOVEMBER, 6–8PM
SIMON LEE GALLERY, HONG KONG

Simon Lee Gallery, Hong Kong, is proud to present a survey of photographs by renowned Japanese photographer Daido Moriyama, spanning the breadth of his five-decades long career. From examples of his idiosyncratic black-and-white street photography to a more recent collection of digital colour images, the exhibition captures Moriyama's discordant impressions of city life and chaotic visions of everyday existence, which have proved so influential to successive generations of photographers.

Widely recognised for his innovative, highly personal and unvarnished depictions of urban life, Moriyama is regarded as the most prominent artist to emerge from the short lived yet significant Provoke movement, based around the experimental photography magazine of the same name. Founded in 1968, the magazine sought to redefine the medium while chronicling shifts in Japanese society brought about as a result of its simultaneous globalisation and urban deprivation. Amid the upheaval of post-war regeneration, Moriyama documented Japan's transformation through the gritty underbelly of city life. Characters such as back-street boxers, strippers, and gay prostitutes figured in his signature black-and-white, grain-heavy style. Citing Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* as one of his greatest influences, his photographs are a record of his wanderings, in which the journey is as important as the destination.

Entering, two coloured photographs hang over a tiled wallpaper of an image from Moriyama's iconic and graphic Tights series. Providing a stark visual contrast to his uncompromising street photography, the Tights reveal a stark abstraction of their subject: close-up shots of legs in fishnet stockings. Although offering two seemingly diverse visions, the images are conceptually bound by Moriyama's unflinching commitment to the preservation of everyday details that so often exist in the shadows. Two large coloured photographs hang over the wallpaper, presenting a gaudy glimpse of Tokyo after dark: a woman's legs in kiss-printed tights and a storefront boasting a red, lacey lingerie set. Both images capture the city's erotic instinct and the artist's unfiltered gaze. Elsewhere, a coloured grid of photographs from the same series presents snapshots of Tokyo's backstreets. The out-of-focus *KAGEROU* and *provoke no. 3*, executed nearly fifty years previously, convey the sense of urgency and energy that has become synonymous with Moriyama's practice, capturing his expressive 'are, bure, boke' (rough, blurred and out-of-focus) aesthetic.

At the back of the gallery, visitors are invited to explore prints from various of Moriyama's most iconic series dating from 1972 to 2016, including *Farewell Photography*. In this seminal portfolio first published in 1972, the artist set out to 'destroy photography', making prints from destroyed negatives. The result was an illegible mass of blurred and marked images that led to Moriyama's return to photography, with a focus on specifically Japanese subject matter.

NOTES TO EDITORS

About Daido Moriyama

Daido Moriyama (b. 1938) was born in Osaka, Japan and moved to Tokyo in 1961, where he continues to live and work. He first trained in graphic design before taking up photography under Takeji Iwamiya and Eikoh Hosoe as an assistant. He became an independent photographer in 1964, publishing *Japan Theater Photo Album* in 1968 and *Farewell Photography* in 1972. In 2019 the artist received the Hasselblad Foundation International Award in Photography. He has been the subject of many major solo exhibitions at prominent institutions, including Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris, France (2016, 2003); Tate, London, UK (2012); The National Museum of Art, Osaka, Japan (2011); The Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, Tokyo, Japan (2008) Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporaneo, Seville, Spain (2007), Foam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (2006); Fotomuseum Winterthur, Winterthur, Switzerland (2000) and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA (1999) which travelled to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY. His work has been collected by prominent public and private collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; The Getty Museum, Los Angeles, CA; The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA and The Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France.

About Simon Lee Gallery

Founded in London in 2002, Simon Lee Gallery represents artists of diverse generations whose practices explore a wide range of media, from sculpture and painting to video and photography, and who share a broad interest in an exploration of the conceptual. Aiming to provide a significant international audience for its artists, the gallery also regularly punctuates its programme with historical exhibitions and curated group shows, which present shifts in contemporary art practice and thought, whilst broadening the dialogue with artists outside of the gallery's core programme. In addition to its UK activity, in 2012 the gallery opened a space in Hong Kong, which introduced its artists to a wider public in Asia, with a fully independent programme. In 2014, Simon Lee Gallery opened an office and private viewing space in New York. In 2017, this space was re-launched with a year-round programme of exhibitions and events, showcasing the work of emerging and established artists in dynamic group and solo exhibitions.

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter: @SimonLeeGallery

www.simonleegallery.com

Image: Farewell Photography, 1972/2012, Silkscreen on paper, Image size: 31.3 x 55 cm (12 3/8 x 21 5/8 in.), Paper size: 50.8 x 61 cm (20 x 24 1/8 in.), Set of 10, Edition 6 of 35. © Daido Moriyama Photo Foundation. Courtesy of Simon Lee Gallery and Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo.

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