

Luhring Augustine is pleased to present its first exhibition featuring the work of Daido Moriyama, one of Japan's leading figures in photography. Witness to the spectacular changes that transformed postwar Japan, his photographs express a fascination with the cultural contradictions of age-old traditions that persist within modern society. Providing a harsh, crude vision of city life and the chaos of everyday existence, strange worlds, and unusual characters, his work occupies the space between the objective and the subjective, the illusory and the real.

Moriyama takes pictures with a small hand-held camera that enables him to shoot freely while walking or running or through the windows of moving cars. Taken from vertiginous angles or overwhelmed by close-ups, his blurred images are charged with a palpable and frenetic energy that reveal a unique proximity to his subject matter. Snapshots of stray dogs, posters, mannequins in shop windows, and shadows cast into alleys present the beauty and sometimes-terrifying reality of a marginalized landscape. His anonymous and detached approach enables him to capture the "visible present" made up of accidental and uncanny discoveries as he experiences them.

Moriyama emerged as a photographer in the 1960's at the tail end of the VIVO collective, a revolutionary and highly influential group of Japanese artists who reexamined the conventions of photography during the tumultuous postwar period. William Klein's loose, Beat style images of New York City in the 1960s also served as a major turning point for Moriyama, who found inspiration in Klein's free-form photographic style. Taken by these innovative approaches at home and abroad, Moriyama ultimately went on to forge his own radical style.

"Hawaii", Moriyama's most recent body of work, was produced over a period of three years and presents his distinct perspective on the daily lives of the people living on the islands of Hawaii and Oahu. Returning to the island five times before feeling prepared to shoot these surroundings, Moriyama's overall approach is purposeful and considered despite his loose and informal style. The series was recently exhibited at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography and published in a volume by the institution.

Daido Moriyama was born in Osaka in 1938. He has had museum shows around the world including the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Fotomuseum Winterthur, Switzerland, the Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain, Paris and the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography. His work is part of many major public collections such as the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Centre Pompidou, Paris, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the Los Angeles County Museum, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and the Getty in Los Angeles.

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