

PHOTO
ELYSEE
DAIDO
MORIYAMA

PRESS RELEASE

From *Pretty Woman*, Tokyo, 2017. © Daido Moriyama Photo Foundation.

DAIDO MORIYAMA IS ONE OF THE GREATEST STREET PHOTOGRAPHERS OF ALL TIME, TRANSFORMING THE WAY WE SEE AND THINK ABOUT CITIES AND THE MEDIA.

Daido Moriyama. A retrospective
September 6, 2024 – February 23, 2025

With a career spanning almost sixty years, he used his camera to present and interrogate the world, challenging our views of Japanese society, while also reflecting on the abundant circulation of images and their consumption. Books and magazines were fertile ground for Moriyama's production and for such reason they take a central role in this exhibition.

Born in Ikeda, Osaka in 1938 Moriyama was raised in post-war Japan. Following its defeat in World War II, Japan was subject to US Military occupation which brought with it rapid westernisation and economic transformation. During these decades of enforced change, Moriyama captured the clash of Japanese tradition and western influences, but also envisioned photography as the most democratic media. Working for mass media magazines and publications, Moriyama was inspired by American artists and writers such as William Klein, Andy Warhol and Jack Kerouac.

This large scale retrospective, curated by Thyago Nogueira, head of Contemporary Photography Department at Instituto Moreira Salles (São Paulo, Brazil) revisits all major moments of Moriyama's career, from his early works for Japanese magazines *Asahi Camera* and *Camera Mainichi* to his contribution to the *Provoke* generation, from his distrust of documentary photography and journalism, to the radical proposition summarised by his photobook *Farewell Photography* (1972). During the 1960s and 1970s, Moriyama also established his unique aesthetic, famously known by the Japanese catchphrase *are bure boke* (grainy, blurry, out of focus).

Daido Moriyama began publishing his photographs in the early 1960s, after moving to Tokyo in 1961. At this time, Japan was undergoing a westernisation of its culture as the country reconstructed its economy. Images in popular, high circulation magazines prioritised humanistic photography and highlighted national themes. Printed in the rich tones of the *rotogravure* process, the magazines captivated readers with portfolios, reviews, and contests, providing a broad education in photographic art for both the general public and specialists. At the start of his career, Moriyama published three dozen articles in different magazines, crafting a multifaceted panorama of Japanese society, earning him the Japan Photo Critics Association's Newcomer's Award in 1967.

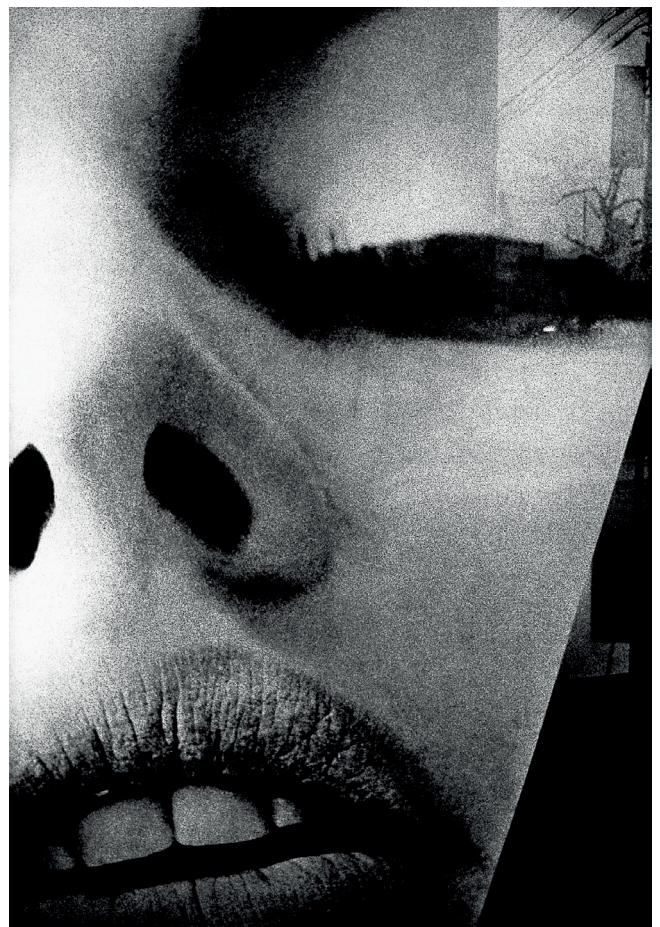
Two years later, in 1969 and inspired by his recent contact with the work of American artist Andy Warhol, Moriyama began one of his most ambitious and original projects, a 12-month series in *Asahi*



Kanagawa, 1967. From *A Hunter*. © Daido Moriyama Photo Foundation.



Stray Dog, Misawa, 1971, From *A Hunter*. © Daido Moriyama Photo Foundation.



Minato, Tokyo, 1969. *Design*, Dec. 1969. © Daido Moriyama Photo Foundation.

Camera magazine entitled *Accident, Premeditated or not*, which is displayed in its integrity in the exhibition. In this series, Moriyama reflected upon the way accidents and incidents are pictured in the press, addressing the passing of time, the exploitation of human vulnerability, sensationalism and the contradictions of photojournalism, among other themes.

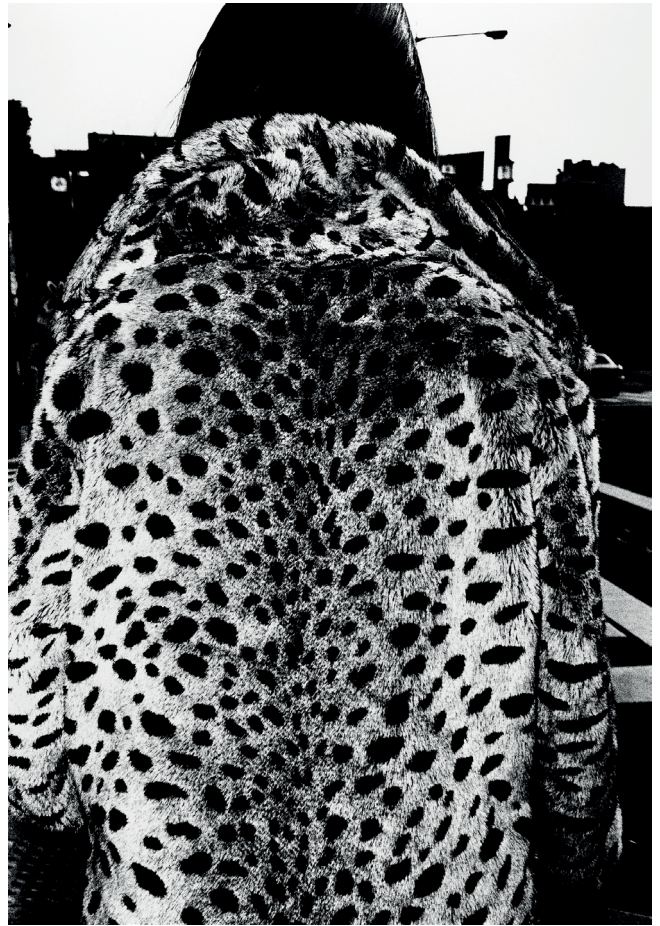
The same year Moriyama contributed to *Provoke*'s second issue. The independent magazine, which would go on to be one of the most influential of its time, had been launched in 1968 by art critic Kōji Taki (1928–2011), poet Takahiko Okada (1939–1997), and photographers Takuma Nakahira (1938–2015) and Yutaka Takanashi (b.1935). Imbued by leftist ideas, the contributors opposed the self-proclaimed neutrality of photojournalism and documentary practices promoted by commercial magazines, advocating instead for an autonomous visual language for photography.

While Moriyama is known for his dense, contrasting black-and-white images, this exhibition also features a selection of rarely seen colour photographs selected from the photographer's archive in Tokyo. Some of these images were destined for personal essays; others were published in magazines such as *Camera Mainichi*, *Asahi Camera*, and *Asahi Journal* in the 1970s and 1980s.

In the early 1980s, Moriyama slowly overcame a creative and personal crisis. His subsequent work developed a visual lyricism with which he reflected on the essence of photography, his identity, memory and history. During this period, Moriyama also renewed his interest in street photography, covering hundreds of miles in Tokyo, New York, Paris, and London, among other cities.

In the following decades, Moriyama presented series like *Labyrinth*, where he reinvents his contact sheets to challenge the linearity of memory and his own autobiography. Or *Pretty Woman*, where he addresses the progressive seduction of advertisements images and fetishist capitalism.

The exhibition ends with a complete overview of *Record* magazine issues, Moriyama's ongoing diary and investigation on the cities and the media. The magazine was published in five issues, until it was discontinued in 1973. In 2006, Moriyama relaunched the project with the help of his gallerist Akio Nagasawa, and continues to work on it to this day. Currently numbering 57 issues, each one is based on a specific city or theme. Moriyama can produce an issue in one day or over three months, and dedicate issues to imaginary conversations with figures such as David Lynch, Roland Barthes or James Baldwin. *Record* is a platform for experimentation, and a space where Moriyama continues to challenge photography and himself, divesting the medium of its artistic preferences to highlight the ordinary nature. It is also a love letter to urban environment, as a space for personal, collective and creative experience.



n.p., n.d. © Daido Moriyama Photo Foundation.



For *Provoke* #2, Tokyo, 1969. © Daido Moriyama Photo Foundation.



Tokyo, 1982. © Daido Moriyama Photo Foundation.

Moriyama has spent his career asking a fundamental question: What is the essence of photography? He rejected the dogmatism of art and the fetishisation of vintage prints, instead embracing the accessible and reproducible aspects of photography as its most radical asset. As most of Moriyama's work was produced for publications and printed media, visitors will have the opportunity to see a range of Moriyama's most important magazines and books, as well as to browse through a selection of his editions in both Japanese and English.

The exhibition *Daido Moriyama. A Retrospective*, organized by Instituto Moreira Salles of São Paulo (IMS) in cooperation with the Daido Moriyama Photo Foundation, with the contribution of Yutaka Kambayashi, Satoshi Machiguchi and Kazuya Kimura, and the assistance of Daniele Queiroz (IMS), is one of the largest investigations ever conceived around his work. It was chosen by *The Guardian* as the best photography show in London in 2023 when it was shown at the Photographer's Gallery (*The Guardian*, 24.12.23). The show has also toured to C/O Berlin and The Finnish Museum of Photography in Helsinki.

The catalogue *Daido Moriyama. A retrospective* published by Prestel accompanies the exhibition.

Instituto Moreira Salles: www.ims.com.br

The Anonymous Project. Home & Away at l'Atelier

Lee Shulman – *The Anonymous Project* – has been given carte blanche to rethink l'Atelier. With the installation *Home & Away*, the Atelier will take on the allure of a "living room" from the 50's. The space will provide a forum for discussion about photography and the place of images in our contemporary lives.

Exhibitions

Sabine Weiss x Nathalie Boutté. Tribute
Until January 12, 2025.

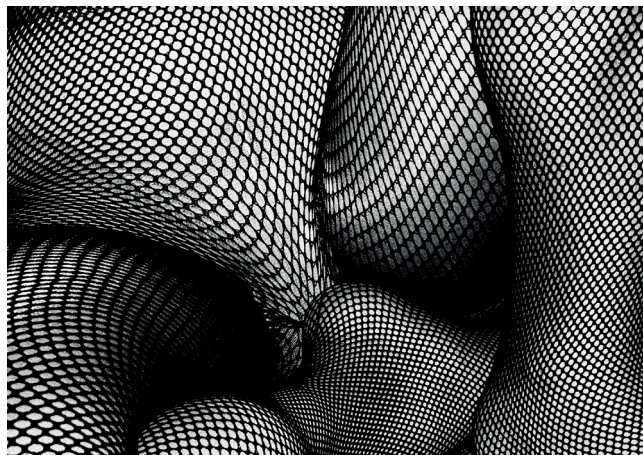
Tamara Janes. Set and Setting
Until September 29, 2024.

Biennial Images Vevey

In collaboration with Photo Elysee, Images Vevey presents a monumental installation by Daido Moriyama on the façade of the Hôtel des Trois Couronnes and an exhibition by Tamara Janes & Natalia Funariu at L'Appartement – Espace Images Vevey, on view until November 3, 2024.

Biennial Images Vevey, September 7-29, 2024

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From *How to Make Beautiful Photos*, 1987. © Daido Moriyama Photo Foundation.



Tokyo, 1967, *From Japan, a Photo Theater*. © Daido Moriyama Photo Foundation.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Thursday, September 5 at 10 am: visit of the exhibition *Daido Moriyama. A retrospective* in English and in the presence of Thyago Nogueira, Sohey Moriyama, Lee Shulman and Nathalie Herschdorfer.

PRESS CONTACT

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Exhibition partner

