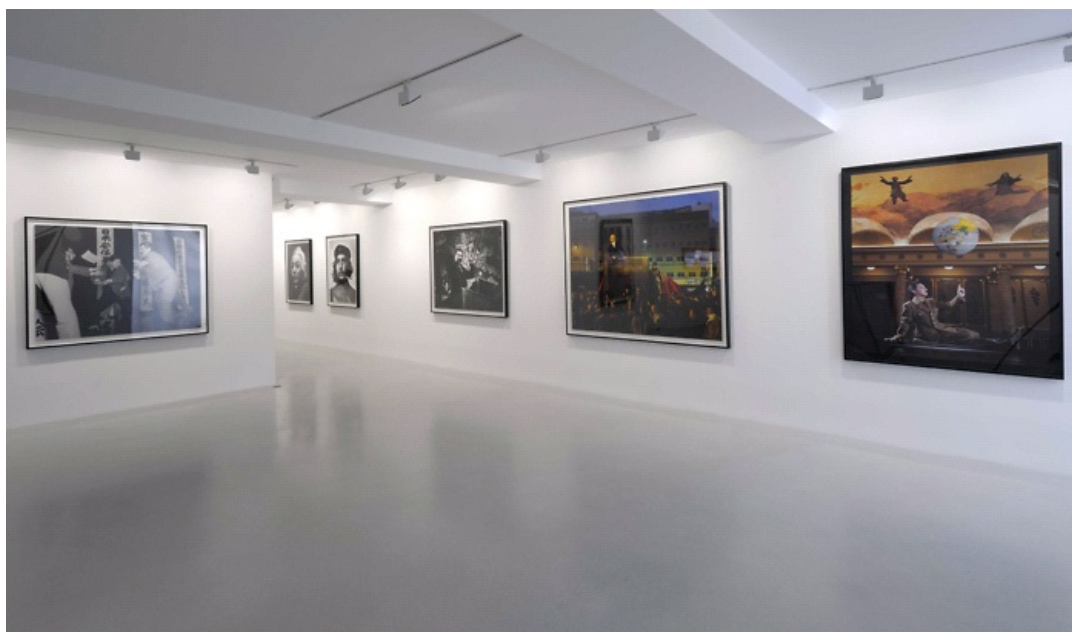


YASUMASA MORIMURA

REQUIEM FOR THE XX CENTURY: TWILIGHT OF THE TURBULENT GODS

PARIS DEBELLEYME

03 Thursday - 03 Saturday



Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac is pleased to present Yasumasa Morimura's latest series of photographs and video works, "Requiem for the 20th Century: Twilight of the Turbulent Gods."

Internationally known for his photographic self-portraits such as *Actress*, in which he inserts his own face into those of iconic Hollywood movie stars, and his *Self-Portrait as Art History* series, where he slips into art history's masterpieces, in this recent body of work Morimura impersonates and reinterprets major historical figures of the 20th century: Lenin, Mao, Che Guevara, Trotsky, Einstein and Hitler - as portrayed by Charlie Chaplin in his famous film *The Great Dictator*.

Through the *Requiem* series, Morimura infiltrates Western collective consciousness by dealing with memorable events of the 20th century as recorded in photography and films. With his meticulous use of make-up, costumes and props, he enters the body of these historical figures and reflects on his personal encounter with these images during his childhood and early adulthood. About this series, Morimura says, "History is public memory, and my recollections are personal. When historic images provoke recollection, sometimes it causes a commotion in me. When I catch such a moment, it stimulates my enthusiasm for expression, my enthusiasm to produce something that is my idea of 'beauty.'" Thus, these works create an ambiguity between past and present, making us reflect on the weight of their heritage and their significance in the context of today's uncertain political climate.

The exhibition at the gallery will feature a number of large format photographs of iconic images from history, two framed DVDs of Einstein and Che Guevara or "soluble photography" so called by the artist - as well as three videos: *A Requiem: Mishima* (2006), *A Requiem: Humanity is Sadly Futile* (2007) and *A Requiem: Laugh at the Dictator* (2007) in which Morimura recreates and reinterprets important speeches delivered by Yukio Mishima, Lenin and Chaplin's comical portrayal of Hitler.

Morimura, who lives and works in Osaka, Japan, graduated from the Kyoto City University of Arts in 1978 with a Fine Arts degree. Since the mid-1980s he has shown his work in international solo exhibitions and achieved global recognition when he exhibited at the Venice Biennial in 1988. His work is present in major museum collections around the world.

The artist's first solo show at the Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris was "*Beauty Unto Sickness*" (1997), followed by "*An Inner Dialogue with Frida Kahlo*" (2001) and "*Los Nuevos Caprichos*" (2005).

This spring, from April 25th to July 28th at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Lille, Morimura will show *Los Nuevos Caprichos* series alongside Jake and Dinos Chapman's work in an exhibition entitled *Les Caprices de Goya* (1799), creating a dialogue between their work and Goya's original drawings.