

## YASUMASA MORIMURA

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### LOS NUEVOS CAPRICHOS

PARIS DEBELLEYME

02 Wednesday - 02 Saturday

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With this series of self-portraits "Los nuevos Caprichos", the artist Yasumasa Morimura pursues his personal discovery of art history's major masterpieces. This time, Morimura pays homage to Goya. We are particularly pleased to be able to present this new series of works accompanied by a selection of engravings from Goya's first edition of the Caprichos. We would like to thank Indivision 1799 for loaning us these engravings.

The birth of Los Caprichos in 1799, represents one of the most important moments in art history, along with the invention of perspective by Giotto and the introduction of "chiaroscuro" painting by Caravaggio.

What Goya saw in the absolute silence of his deafness: the end of one world (the old neo-classical one that court painters were trying to keep alive) and the birth of another; modernism, was clearly more than a simple intuition of the avant-garde. "Los Caprichos" are images of this version of the future, windows thrown open to the dreams that will drive the paintings "Island of the Dead" by Böcklin, "Temptation" by Odilon Redon, "The Scream" by Munch, "La Montagne Sainte Victoire" de Cezanne, and further still onto Dali's surreal nightmares, all the way to Picasso's "Guernica", which was greatly influenced by Goya.

A careful look at this series of 80 engravings, reveals that Goya anticipated, time and again, all the themes of the major periods in art history: Romanticism, Symbolism, Expressionism and even a sort of lyric abstraction that fueled painting until the 1950's. Even today we can find his influence in a new generation of artists like the Chapman brothers and Morimura.

To enter Goya's universe is to be confronted by both the possibilities and the painful limits of the spirit and the human heart that were a reality in the corrupt and despotic society of late 18th/early 19th century Spain. The Caprichos lie at the heart of Goya's work and his genius. The 80 engravings put forth an accusatory vision of all the ills, the superstitions and the absurdities of this society. By depicting witches, elves and scenes of black magic he satirizes prostitutes, noblemen and the clergy.

Since his series "Self-Portrait as Art History", Morimura's work has been influenced by the benchmark paintings of art history. By inserting his own body in that of the figures represented in the paintings, Morimura creates a critical dialogue with the work and provokes a reinterpretation.

"Los nuevos Caprichos" also furthers Morimura's exploration of his own identity and that of the possibilities offered by creating another 'performance' personality through his work. His reflection on the notion of the masterpiece and its deconstruction, also allows him to comment on the perception and assimilation of occidental art in Japanese culture.