

THE  
WALTHER COLLECTION

**Acts of Intimacy The Erotic Gaze in Japanese Photography**  
**Araki, Moriyama, Yoshiyuki**

January 19–April 2, 2017



Nobuyoshi Araki, Untitled, from "101 Works for Robert Frank (Private Diary)" 1993

**Opening Reception: Thursday, January 19, from 6pm–8pm**

The Walther Collection Project Space

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The Walther Collection is pleased to inaugurate a yearlong exhibition series devoted to contemporary photography and video art from Asia, to be presented in thematic exhibitions in New York over the course of 2017. Stemming from the collection's first acquisitions of Chinese and Japanese photography in the early 2000s, and highlighting important recent additions, this program features an expansive range of photographic and video work exploring notions of performance, social identity, sexuality, and urban transformation. The first exhibition, *Acts of Intimacy: The Erotic Gaze in Japanese Photography* opens on Thursday, January 19, 2017. It is organized by guest curator Christopher Phillips, with curatorial coordination and support from Daniela Baumann and Oluremi C. Onabanjo.

*Acts of Intimacy: The Erotic Gaze in Japanese Photography* brings together three key photographic series by the Japanese artists Nobuyoshi Araki, Daido Moriyama, and Kohei Yoshiyuki—each of whom has given special attention to the role of eroticism and sexual subcultures in Japanese society. Araki's *101 Works for Robert Frank (Private Diary)* (1993) is an editioned version of the images contained in a unique scrapbook that Araki presented to photographer Robert Frank. Made during a time when Araki was emerging from a long period of mourning after the death of his wife Yoko, the photographs constitute an extended self-portrait of a man slowly reawakening to the pleasures of life. Moriyama's *a room* (2015) encompasses 67 images made from the 1980s to the present in Moriyama's Tokyo apartment. These photographs depict nude or semi-nude women who are unidentified, and whose faces are never complete when revealed. In *a room*, Moriyama places himself in the role of both participant and observer of an intimate erotic spectacle of his own creation. Yoshiyuki's notorious series *The Park* (1973) explores the clandestine world of sexual encounters that the photographer discovered during nighttime walks in Tokyo's city parks. Shooting with flash and infrared film, Yoshiyuki captured not only pairs of lovers locked in furtive embraces but also the voyeuristic onlookers, the "peepers," gathered in the bushes around them.

**Nobuyoshi Araki** (b. 1940) is one of Japan's most celebrated and controversial photographers. After studying photography and filmmaking at Tokyo's Chiba University, he worked for several years at the Dentsu advertising agency before launching a successful career as an independent photographer in the 1970s. An unapologetic visual provocateur, Araki has long made explicitly erotic imagery a key element of his work. As one of Japan's most prolific makers of photobooks, he has produced more than 400 publications devoted to his work.

**Daido Moriyama** (b. 1938) trained as a graphic designer before moving to Tokyo in 1961 to work as an assistant to the acclaimed photographer Eikoh Hosoe. A leading member of the late-1960s Provoke group, Moriyama identified his main influences as the Pop paintings of Andy Warhol, the Beat novels of Jack Kerouac, and the visually turbulent photobooks of William Klein. Moriyama's style of deliberately grainy, high-contrast, out-of-focus photography found its ultimate expression in the classic 1972 photobook *Bye Bye Photography*, which has exercised enormous influence on subsequent generations of Japanese photographers.

**Kohei Yoshiyuki** (b. 1946) attracted wide attention in Japan with his 1979 exhibition of the photographic series *The Park*, and with the 1980 publication of the now-legendary book of the same title. After producing several other books of a similarly voyeuristic nature, he devoted himself entirely to his commercial photography practice. In 2006, he brought out a new edition of the photographs. *The Park's* emphasis on the relation between photography, voyeurism, and surveillance, again became the center of intense critical discussion.

**The Walther Collection** is dedicated to researching, collecting, exhibiting, and publishing photography and video art. Since opening to the public in 2010, the collection has grown to become one of the most important holdings of contemporary African and Asian photography and video art, American vernacular imagery, and nineteenth century photographs and books from Europe and Africa. The collection presents exhibitions and public programs at a three-gallery museum campus in Neu-Ulm, Germany, and a Project Space in New York City, USA. Organized by leading international curators, the exhibitions from the collection endeavor to create dynamic juxtapositions by artists whose contributions to photography significantly expand the history of the medium. The collection's established publishing series with Steidl, complementing the exhibitions program with extensive catalogues and monographs, is informed by comprehensive research by acclaimed writers, critics, and art historians. Recognized as a leading institution in the study and presentation of African photography, The Walther Collection presents various thematic and monographic shows in New York, large-scale annual exhibitions in Germany, as well as traveling exhibitions around the world.