

MORIMURA YASUMASA
REQUIEM FOR THE XX CENTURY
Self-Portraits in Motion

11 January - 25 February 2012
Tues – Sat: 11am to 7pm
Sun: Noon to 5 pm
(Closed on Mon & Holiday)
Free Admission

Ikkan Art Gallery is pleased to announce the first solo show in Singapore for the internationally acclaimed Japanese artist Morimura Yasumasa. This exhibition showcases moving image and photographic works from his *Requiem* series which recently toured museums in Japan.

Morimura (b.1951, Osaka), the “Daughter of Art History”, appropriates universally well-known images derived from art history, mass media and pop culture to create unconventional and bold self-portrait renderings in photography, performance and video.

Through the extensive use of props, costumes, make-up and digital manipulation, Morimura masterfully transforms himself into recognizable subjects that punctuate the western cultural canon. His unsettling deconstruction of iconic images challenges the assumptions already placed on such works/images while commenting on Japan's complex and conflicting absorption of Western culture. His ability to satirize and simultaneously create homage of his source material is what makes Morimura's work particularly forceful and effective.

Where art draws its inspiration from the human condition, Ikkan Art Gallery's philanthropic vision is to help alleviate the hardships faced by the less-privileged by contributing to a worthy cause. All of artworks from the exhibition will be available for sale, where a portion of the proceeds will be donated to Singapore Children's Society – Ikkan Art Gallery's adopted charity for the event. The mission of Children's Society – Bringing relief and happiness to children in need – resonates strongly with the Gallery. These funds will go to the running of the Society's 59 programmes and services that reach out to over 57,000 children, youths and families in need.

About the Exhibition

Based on the theme of ‘the men of the twentieth century’ the *Requiem* series considers the history and significance of the construction, war and destruction that symbolized this period and attempts to answer the question, ‘what was the twentieth century?’.

Morimura took old news photographs of various events characterizing these times, or the famous people of the age, such as Lenin, Hitler and Einstein, then used self-portrait techniques to bring these back to life. Impersonations of famous male artists from the period form a recent chapter to this series. Both Dali and Warhol feature here and through dialog with these pioneers of revolutionary art, Morimura focuses on the attraction of their humanity and creativity from a new angle.

The culmination of this exhibition, the most recent work in the series, is a 23 minute video referencing the historical events of 1945. *Gift of Sea: Raising a Flag on the Summit of the Battlefield* reimagines the famous news photograph ‘Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima’ into a dream-like story which weaves together Morimura dressed up as Marilyn Monroe and as a Japanese soldier/artist. Various strange happenings occur, many of which reference art history.

The Morimura/Soldier confronts and makes friends with a group of American soldiers on a beach - the film's climax sees them jointly raise a white flag on the summit of a mountain backlit by a symbolic sunset.

When asked 'what kind of flag would you raise over the battlefield', Morimura's answer is 'a white one'. For him, the symbolical plain white flag is the flag of art. Morimura portrays history by making himself 'become' its proponents, confronting historical memory through theatrical staging.

A requiem is a religious service for the repose of the souls of the dead. The object of these works is to look at the era of men that has now passed, to offer respect to its ideologies, and to verify the meaning of forgotten memories in order to pass them on to the twenty-first century. Using inherited items as a foundation, it is Morimura's desire to hoist the pure white flag of art at the summit of various battlefields, such as history, society and daily life, during the twenty-first century.

The unnaturalness the viewer feels from looking at his work arises from the difficulty of imitating subjects - the sense that he cannot quite 'become' them remains. It is through this response that he is able to take events that have become totally 'comprehensible' and unpick them to make them 'incomprehensible' - answering 'what is art?'.

About Ikkkan Art

Ikkkan Art International was established by Ikkkan Sanada in 1982 as a private art dealer and consulting/advisory firm based in New York. Founded on the values of integrity and discretion as top business priorities, Ikkkan Art provides purchasing and selling advices as well as related infrastructure and assistance to an elite group of international clients.

In May 2011, Ikkkan Art International expanded into Singapore to create, organise and launch key exhibition programmes.

About Singapore Children's Society

Singapore Children's Society protects and nurtures children and youth of all races and religions. Each year the Society reaches out to about 57,000 children, youth and families in need. Established in 1952, its services have evolved to meet the changing needs of children. Today, Children's Society operates 9 centres islandwide, offering services in the six categories of: Caregiving, Preventive, Developmental, Remedial, Community and Public Education.