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MASTER MINDS

KLEIN + MORIYAMA

Interviews with the 20th century icons ahead of Tate Modern's blockbuster show

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Another Country, Another Performance

First staged in Tokyo in 1974, *Printing Show* has become a legend among aficionados of Japanese photobooks, the event at which Daido Moriyama turned self-publishing into performance. The result, *Another Country in New York*, now changes hands for more than £40,000. Now he's restaging the show in London, in collaboration with **Ivan Vartanian**. **Russet Lederman** meets up with the Tokyo-based curator and publisher to discuss the genesis of the project

Staged in a Tokyo gallery in 1974, *Printing Show* was Daido Moriyama's highly original and performative approach to publishing and distributing his half-frame photographs of New York, shot three years earlier.

As Tokyo galleries operated primarily on a rental basis at the time, he leased a space himself, plus a Canon photocopy machine, creating an analogue version of what we call "on-demand" printing, employing an inexpensive new technology that allowed for further creative image manipulations. Titled *Another Country in New York*, this now legendary self-published book was produced by photocopying the images and collating the paper sheets into different sequences for each copy, then stapling them with their own, unique silkscreened cover. Editions of it now fetch up to £40,000.

Taken during his first ever trip outside of Japan, his vision of New York captured the streets, deserted hallways and graffiti-covered subways of a city slipping into social and economic decline. The dark, crowded, unsettling images are indicative of a distinctly postwar Japanese existentialism, but they also resonate with the raw aesthetic of William Klein, the native New Yorker whose pictures of the city published 15 years earlier clearly inspired Moriyama.

So it's particularly apt that the Japanese photographer is restaging the event during *William Klein + Daido Moriyama* at Tate Modern, opening this month, an exhibition exploring the relationship between the works of these two photographers with the photobook as a prominent theme. The museum has invited Tokyo-based publisher and curator Ivan

Vartanian to collaborate with Moriyama on a recreation of *Printing Show* in Tate Modern's East Room. This third iteration of the event transforms the space into a printing studio, where visitors who have bought advance tickets will have the chance to create a book entitled *Menu*. These books will be composed of 20 sheets, chosen out of a selection of 60 double-sided A3 sheets, containing more than 130 Moriyama images.

Russet Lederman: *Japanese Photobooks of the 1960s and '70s* (published by Aperture in 2009), which you co-authored with Japanese curator and scholar Ryuichi Kaneko, has been an important reference for introducing Western audiences to the Japanese photobook and its distinct role as the primary format for the presentation of photography in Japan. You first met Daido Moriyama when you interviewed him for this book, and in the four years since have organised several projects with him that explore the intersection of performance, book-making and the photobook. How do you see the relationship of book-making performances to the larger historical context of Japanese photobooks?

Ivan Vartanian: When I was researching *Japanese Photobooks* and interviewed Moriyama, I realised I was drawn to this period because it represented a real coming together of many different aspects of visual arts, culture, photography and political activism in Japan. The function of photography took on a whole different role in the 1960s, transforming from something in newspapers to something that students could use to document their immediate



experience. Reportage in and of itself shifted from ordained photojournalists to ordinary people who could have a camera, and maybe were using the wrong speed film and over-exposing their photographs. They were using really cheap equipment, and it had an authenticity and immediacy that was groundbreaking.

Photographers such as Daido Moriyama responded to this primal, urgent wave of photography by questioning publications: not just photobooks, but also magazines. The idea of being in print was something that a lot of photographers played with and manipulated as a vehicle for experimentation beyond established forms. At the time, there was a big overlap between theatre, literature, film, music and more traditional arts.

Many ideas about performance, drama, staging and *mis en scène* were heavily influenced by Shūji Terayama, who was a playwright, poet, filmmaker, writer and photographer. He was a risk-taker who would have these spontaneous performances where he'd break into someone's apartment. Moriyama regularly photographed performances, of Terayama's Tenjo Sajiki theatre troupe and was greatly influenced by him, as well as by what was happening in New York at that time. So it wasn't a big leap for him to do something like *Printing Show*, his original 1974 performance book-making event in Tokyo.

RL: The first recreation of Moriyama's *Printing Show* was called *Printing Show - TKY* and occurred at the Aperture Gallery in November 2011. What sparked the idea for a restaging of the performance?

IV: I've been working with Aperture for a long time. I did *Japanese Photobooks of the 1960s and '70s* and *Setting Sun: Writings by Japanese Photographers* (2006) with them. A number of years earlier, I was involved with several books that Aperture did on performance: Dona Ann McAdams' *Caught in the Act* (1996) and *Merce Cunningham: Fifty Years* (1997). Recently, I worked with Eikoh Hosoe, who had collaborated with Tatsumi Hijikata, the founder of Butoh dance, and Kazuo Ohno, one of Butoh's primary dancers. One of the ideas of Butoh that is interesting to me is the relationship between performance and photography. When I was researching the 1960s and '70s, I came across *Printing Show* and invited Moriyama to redo it in New York. He quickly agreed, but then it took us months to do all the planning.

It was really meant to be a promotion for *Accident: A Photobook by Daido Moriyama* (2011), a \$4000 limited-edition 20-metre long accordion book that I made under my own imprint (Goliga). But then in the process of planning *Printing Show*, it started to become more than just a promotional tool for the limited edition and ultimately became its own entity. Chris Boot had just become executive director of Aperture, and I mentioned to him that it would be really great to do *Printing Show* in New York at Aperture. I hadn't even finished my sentence before he said, "Let's do it."

RL: What I found interesting during Moriyama's *Printing Show - TKY* book performance was that the end result had a large element of surprise and randomness. In the assembled book, each of the 20 sheets was folded in half to create gatefolds. This made it nearly impossible to know

exactly what the final book would look like. Can you discuss the nature of this balance between planning and surprise?

IV: A lot of people who came to *Printing Show - TKY* had never sequenced a book before in their lives, and a lot of those people were photography professionals. Moriyama, who has a long history with book-making, was interested in letting go of the editorial process in *TKY*. This is what he did with his *Goodbye Photography* (1972), where he chose to leave the edit and sequence entirely up to the book's editors - a conceptual leap from being a photographer to being an artist. In the original 1974 staging of *Printing Show*, Moriyama generated the composed pages by photocopying multiple prints together at the same time. He then shuffled the resulting photocopied sheets to assemble each copy of *Another Country in New York*. In one of our planning sessions for *TKY*, after a couple of hours of poring over prints spread across two large tables, Moriyama stood back, leaned against the wall and, in his signature way, said: "How about leaving the edit to the participants?" The idea was like an explosion in the room and the entire project jumped to an entirely different level.

Initially he was concerned that there would be too many pictures to choose from and this might frustrate people. I wanted to maintain that inability to find resolution in the selection process. That was why during the planning stages I made a dummy that had one gatefold. I love gatefolds and suggested to Moriyama that we make every page in the book a gatefold, to which he agreed. The idea was to completely eliminate all theme, narrative and concept, and to deal with



Daido Moriyama [Right] re-enacted his 1974 book-making performance with *Printing Show - TKY* at Aperture Gallery in New York last year. Visitors were invited to make their own edit of the Japanese photographer's work from a selection pinned to the gallery walls. Images © Jeff Gutterman



images in terms of surfaces and textures – to make people as aware as possible that they were looking at a facsimile, a reproduction that was also an original image in itself. The entire project was about this constant flickering between an image coming together as an image and also just being grain on a page, an abstraction.

Similar to the photocopy recompositions he did for the original *Printing Show* and that project's balance between image and abstraction, Moriyama generated contact sheets by mixing together his negatives in a new Aperture book that I am helping to make entitled *Labyrinth* (due this autumn). All these processes resonate on multiple levels across different, yet simultaneously occurring, projects. This is what is fascinating about Moriyama – he is always processing and rethinking his photography on countless levels.

RL: How does the interaction between audience members and the photographer impact a performance book-making event such as the *Printing Show*?

IV: After *Printing Show - TKY* at Aperture, I realised that when the photographer is present and doing something, anything, whatever space you're in changes into a theatre or stage. When the artist is in the room, it is a magnetic and completely different experience from an exhibition or regular book signing. This absolutely fascinates me and relates to my larger involvement with photographers. When I spend time with Rinko Kawauchi, Takashi Homma, Moriyama and Eikoh Hosoe, there's something special about them – I'm either on edge or nervous, but always excited to be in their presence. It's like the air is thick with potential.

In the case of *Printing Show*, just adding the simple action of having Moriyama present and the book-making process completed in front of the participant means that even for a short time there is this meeting, a connection between the participant and photographer. The participant can step into the photographer's world and connect to that body of work in a way that isn't possible otherwise. I want to get away from that white cube with framed prints on a wall that no one can touch.

RL: Tate Modern's *Printing Show* is the second restaging of the original. How is this version different, and how does it integrate with the *William Klein + Daido Moriyama* exhibition on view in the museum's galleries?

IV: With the Tate's *Printing Show*, Moriyama is keen to upstage what was done in New York. Reprising the 1974 performance nearly 40 years later at Aperture was interesting to him, but another restaging of what was done a year ago took some convincing. He agreed only if the



Each issue of *TKY* was produced with an original screenprinted cover, just like the original version of *Another Country in New York*, produced in 1974. Images © Ivan Vartanian

London version could be more fantastic and theatrical — kicking everything up a notch with a higher degree of polish.

For the New York event, we had a neon sign; in contrast, the *Printing Show* at the Tate Modern has a Broadway-like marquee made out of illuminated bulbs. We've expanded the selection menu of double-sided sheets from 54 to 60, including black-and-white prints that draw from every aspect of his career, and colour images that were shot in London when he was there in May earlier this year. It's an amazing selection that mixes well-known shots with previously unpublished material. Moriyama purposely avoided an overlap with the work that is on display in Tate Modern's *William Klein + Daido Moriyama* exhibition. Since this is the final restaging of *Printing Show*, I'm simultaneously excited and a little sad. To borrow Daido's words, "*Printing Show* should be a one-off thing, never to be repeated." Thankfully, he was nice enough to agree to this London reprise.

RL: In light of *Printing Show* and your continued interest in photobook production as "performance", how do you see your role as a publisher evolving?

IV: I think the question of what is a publisher is very interesting. Usually it's about taking a body of work and putting it into a traditional book format for distribution. That is uninteresting to me. I'm looking for that place where we can take the publishing process and make it as much as possible a clear reflection of the photographer's empirical involvement with the book/object/thing/experience/dynamic/installation/moment as a work in itself—while simultaneously incorporating a distribution and sales model.

I also want to bring people together and have them actively engage with the work. I see the performance venue as a theatre, library, thinking space, communal area, and the provenance of the artist. That's what these performances are about — being connected, being present. I see books as part archive, part documentation and part meta-process. The book itself has to be an outcome of the event process that it is documenting, but it is also this reflection of whatever it is that we are making at that time. And that, I think, is ultimately what I've learned from Japanese photobooks and Moriyama's *Printing Show*. It is not a reproduction of something that happens somewhere at some point. The photobook in its reproduction and in its creation is an original. Even though there are 300 of them, each one is an original and is a reflection of the photography it contains. Everything I'm doing now and everything that is embraced within *Printing Show* comes back to that one idea. *BJP*

Printing Show will take place at Tate Modern on 14 October 2012; tickets cost £20 and booking is essential. tate.org.uk golliga.com