

*Bruce Yonemoto*

October 27 – December 11, 2010



*Boy Peeling a Fruit* (2010)  
Photograph; Edition of 7 with 1 AP  
30.5h x 25.75w in (77.47h x 65.41w cm)

Alexander Gray Associates is pleased to present an exhibition of new work by Los Angeles-based artist Bruce Yonemoto (b. 1949, San Jose, CA). On view are a recent video projection and a series of photographs, included in Yonemoto's 2010 solo exhibition at the St. Louis Art Museum.

The video *Before I Close My Eyes* (2010) appropriates and re-casts a pivotal scene from Ingmar Bergman's 1966 film *Persona*, reconfiguring its social and political framework. In Yonemoto's scene, the female protagonist is replaced by Asian men, who watch television footage from a 1963 broadcast of a Buddhist monk practicing self-immolation. The scene loops, moving image within moving image, eliciting a mute response from the layers of viewers, as the highly charged image of political protest loses its power through mediated repetition.

Yonemoto's use of appropriation continues in the photographic series *Beyond South: Vietnam (Caravaggio)* (2010). Here the artist recreates masterpieces by the 16th century Baroque painter, Michelangelo Caravaggio. Each photograph re-imagines an original Caravaggio portrait setting with the original figures replaced by similarly posed Asian models. Further complicating the Western gaze and ideals of patronage and politics, Yonemoto's sitters are clothed in South and North Vietnamese military uniforms, themselves reproductions sold to contemporary tourists in Vietnam. Through Hollywood devices of costume and set, the photographs muddy readings of subject and gaze, Western art history and late 20th Century politics, religion and representation, imperialism and tourism.

Also on view is a video sculpture, *Exotica: Hashi de Mato Grosso* (1994). In 1994 the artist received a Lila Wallace Reader's Digest Fellowship to live and work in Brazil to investigate coexisting Brazilian and Japanese customs and culture. One of the resulting artworks from that research, *Exotica* reclaims explorer Lt. Candido Rondon's mid-1950s film of a tribe from the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso; this footage is projected onto a screen made of chopsticks manufactured in the 1990s from wood from the Brazilian rainforest. Yonemoto's unlikely juxtaposition of Margaret Mead-era, anthropological footage with a contemporary consumer product conflates ideas of cultural import and export, globalization and migration.

Yonemoto's work has been exhibited internationally, including individual exhibitions at the St. Louis Art Museum, MO (2010); Santa Barbara Contemporary Art Forum, CA (2008); the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, MO (2001); the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, PA (2001); the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, OH (1995); and the Santa Monica Museum of Art, CA (1993). His work has been included in numerous biennials, including the *Gwangju Biennale* (2008), Corcoran Biennial (2002); *Fukui International Video Biennale* (1993); and the *Whitney Biennial* (1993, 1987). In 1999, the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles presented a retrospective exhibition of Bruce and Norman Yonemoto's collaborative work spanning three decades. Other exhibitions include *California Video: Artists and Histories* at the Getty Center, Los Angeles (2008); *Los Angeles 1955–1986*, Pompidou Center, Paris (2007); *Exile of the Imaginary*, Generali Foundation, Vienna, Austria (2007) and *In Other Words*, and the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY (2006). Bruce Yonemoto is a Professor of Studio Art at the University of California, Irvine.

Alexander Gray Associates is a contemporary art gallery based in New York. The gallery has established a profile for high-quality exhibitions focused on mid-career artists who emerged in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Influential in political, social and cultural spheres, these artists are notable for creating work that crosses geographic borders, generational contexts and artistic disciplines. Gallery hours: Tuesday–Saturday, 11:00 AM – 6:00 PM.