

TOMOKO SAWADA: REFLECTION

9 July - 17 September, 2011

Opening Reception. Saturday, July 9, 2011 from 6-8.00pm



Tomoko Sawada
Mirrors 6, 2009

ROSEGALLERY is pleased to present *REFLECTION* our second exhibition of photographs by renowned Japanese artist, Tomoko Sawada.

Since her breakthrough series, *ID400*, which debuted in 1999, Tomoko Sawada's work has remained at the cutting edge of contemporary art and conceptual photography. Sawada's pictures focus exclusively on her self and her assumed identities; her signature being the uncanny ability to alter her persona time and time again and to produce simple but fresh images that raise questions about cultural identity, gender performativity, the perception of the "self" versus the "other" and authorship in photography.

Unlike artists Cindy Sherman, Nikki S. Lee and Yasumasa Morimura, with whom she has been compared, Sawada rarely recedes into a theatrical environment or complicates her imagery with melodrama or stagecraft. Instead she relies on variations of superficial details in costume, makeup and hair, posture and facial expression, to examine the tension between a public image on the one hand and what we believe is our individual or core inner self on the other. As the artist herself states, "I don't become someone nor do my pictures have a referent outside of myself."

In her latest series, *Mirrors*, Sawada once again tackles the issue of identity by questioning the boundary between one's own appearance and the self-image reflected in a mirror. The dual images in each photograph are presented like twins and while they bear a striking resemblance to one another, a closer inspection reveals how different they truly are. In her series *Decoration*, which

will also be on view, Sawada transforms herself utilizing a form of contemporary street fashion, which is highly popular in her native country of Japan. With all of the accoutrements characteristic of the Goth Lolita movement, the artist highlights the use of clothing and accessories to create a personal identity and at the same time illustrates the ubiquity and anonymity ultimately engendered by this manner of self expression. Together, the images from *Decoration* and *Mirrors* question the extent to which identity is actually an expression of an authentic self and not simply the dramatic effect of how we present, perform and continually reinvent ourselves.

Tomoko Sawada was born in 1977 in Kobe, Japan and studied at the Seian University of Art and Design. She has been the recipient of the Grand Prize at the Canon New Cosmos of Photography, the ICP Infinity Hyogo Arts Award and the prestigious Kimura Ihei Memorial Photography Award. Her work is held by internationally renowned collections at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the International Center of Photography, New York, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Essl Collection, Klosterneuberg, Austria, the Fogg Museum of Art, Harvard University, Cambridge, the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles and the Brooklyn Museum.

Monographs of Tomoko Sawada's work include: *ID400*, Seigensha Art Publishing, 2004; *School Days*, Seigensha Art Publishing, 2006; *Masquerade*, Akaaka Art Publishing, 2006.

For more information please contact Shaun McCracken at shaun@rosegallery.net