

ARSENAL WIEN

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DAIDO MORIYAMA: RETROSPECTIVE

January 31–May 10, 2026

Opening: January 30, 2026



Daido Moriyama, Stray Dog, Misawa, 1971
© Daido Moriyama/Daido Moriyama Photo Foundation

A dog in the shadows, its fur unkempt, its mouth slightly open, and its gaze full of mistrust: While garish light illuminates its back, parts of its face disappear in deep black. This photograph from 1971 became an icon, marking a decisive moment in the history of photography. It was taken by Daido Moriyama (b. 1938 in Osaka, Japan), one of the most famous street photographers of our time, who has challenged and expanded the language of photography, presenting a new perspective of the world.

Daido Moriyama became famous for photographs that are grainy, out of focus, and tilted, offering us a radical new vision to talk about the upheaval of society, longing, taboos, and the theater of everyday life. Trained as a graphic designer, Moriyama has photographed life on the streets of Japan since the 1960s. He aims his camera at passersby and urban scenes. In the aftermath of World War II and the destruction caused by the atomic bombs, he found his subject matter in the tension between tradition and modernization, documenting the Western consumer-culture invasion

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through mass media and advertising. His work is an elegy on a period of deep transformation. With his snapshots, he reacted to the American occupation as well as the contradictory vitality of a society that was metamorphosing from grieving to euphoria.

Yet Moriyama is not a mere observer; he is part of what he photographs. "His extreme proximity and familiarity with the people, situations, and topics he documents make his photographs unique and revolutionary," explains Felix Hoffmann, artistic director of FOTO ARSENAL WIEN. Early on, the artist grappled with the issues of reproducibility and dissemination of images, influenced by American artists such as Andy Warhol and William Klein. His fascination with fragmentation and his experiments with negatives, enlargements, and image resolution make him a pioneer of photographic practice.

This retrospective retraces Moriyama's photography and his conceptual investigations on the media, starting from his works for Japanese magazines, his progressive distrust of photojournalism, his contribution to the *Provoke* generation, and the radical approach epitomized by his photobook *Farewell Photography* (1972). In the early 1980s, Moriyama slowly overcame a creative and personal crisis. His subsequent work developed a visual lyricism with which he reflected on his identity and the definitions of photography, memory, and history. Many of these works were produced for Japanese magazines and books, which were the central stage for photography debates in postwar Japan. Well known for his gritty black-and-white images, he also embraced color and digital photography. The exhibition ends with *Record* magazine, the culmination of his life-long investigations and a publication that Moriyama continues to produce to this day.

"This exhibition is based on three years of research on Daido Moriyama's archive and is the first large-scale retrospective to trace Daido Moriyama's photography and conceptual approach to the media by following his groundbreaking publications. It enlarges the understanding of one of the

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greatest street photographers of our time and shows that the questions he raised around media manipulation, citizenship surveillance, and image fetishism are still part of our contemporary debates," says Thyago Nogueira, curator of the show.

DAIDO MORIYAMA: RETROSPECTIVE is one of the most comprehensive exhibitions of his oeuvre ever to be shown. FOTO ARSENAL WIEN is the fifth station of this touring exhibition that has been presented with great acclaim in São Paulo, Berlin, London, and Helsinki. The show was selected by *The Guardian* newspaper as the best photo show of the year. The exhibition presents more than 200 artworks, 250 publication reproductions, rare books, and audiovisual projections, providing unique access to the Japanese photographer's work.

This exhibition was organized by the Instituto Moreira Salles, Brazil, in collaboration with the Daido Moriyama Photo Foundation, Japan, and the consultancy of Yutaka Kambayashi, Satoshi Machiguchi, and Kazuya Kimura. It was curated by Thyago Nogueira (Instituto Moreira Salles) in cooperation with Marit Lena Herrmann, curator of FOTO ARSENAL WIEN.

A comprehensive monograph published by Prestel accompanies the exhibition.

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About FOTO ARSENAL WIEN

FOTO ARSENAL WIEN is Austria's new center for photographic images and lens-based media. Inaugurated by the city of Vienna in March 2025, the institution presents and explains contemporary photography in all its forms and uses. FOTO ARSENAL WIEN also organizes the platform FOTO WIEN, Austria's largest, biennial photography festival, and, in a collaboration with the Kunsthalle Wien, the annual Festival Vienna Digital Cultures.

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PRESS BRIEFING:

Friday, January 30, 2026, 10:30 a.m., FOTO ARSENAL WIEN

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Other information and image material are available at
www.fotoarsenalwien.at