

## MICHAEL WOLF

*TOKYO COMPRESSION*

17 May - 29 June 2024

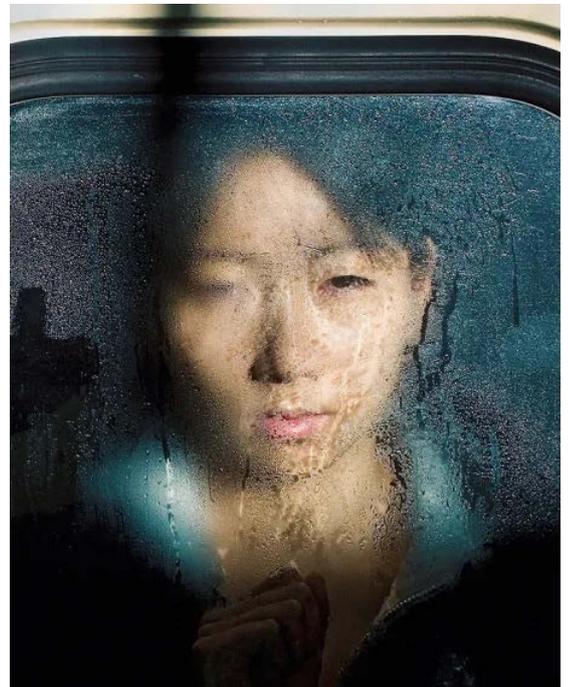
Preview: 16 May, 6-8pm

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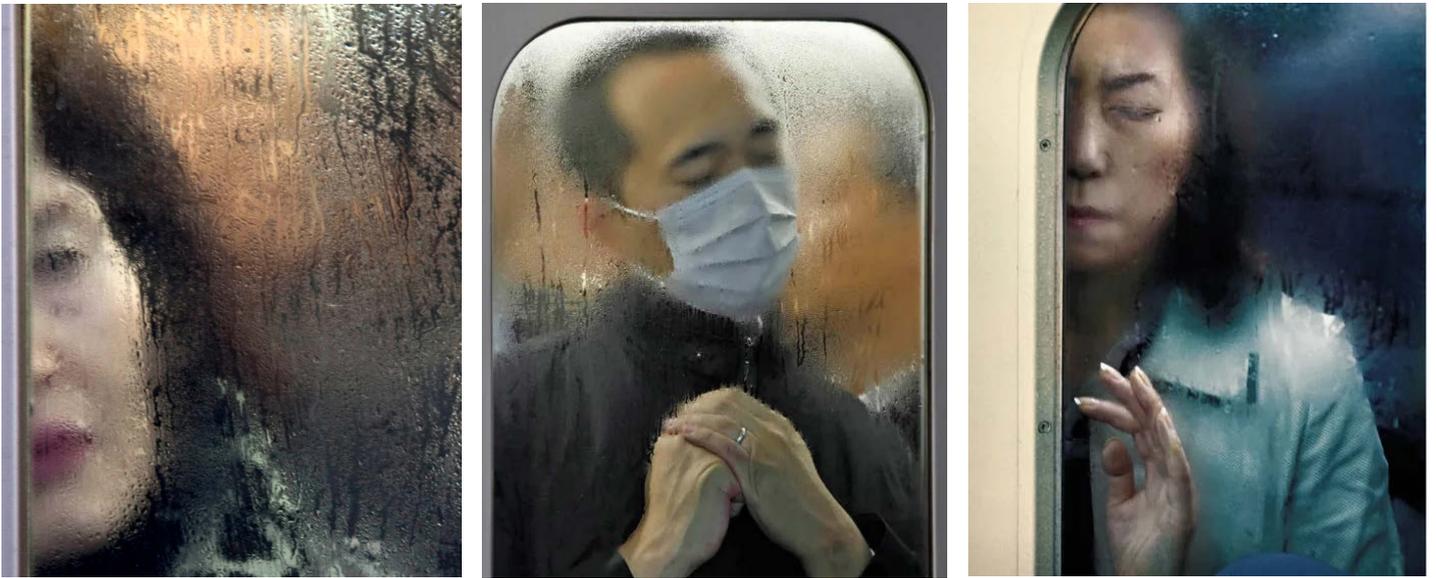
Flowers Gallery Hong Kong is delighted to present an exhibition of works by the acclaimed German artist and photographer Michael Wolf (1954-2019) taken from his Tokyo Compression series. The 72 photographs and 8 lithographs shown at Flowers Hong Kong were taken in 2012, and extracted from a wider collection of images in the series shot over a four year period at Shimo-Kitazawa station in Tokyo.

Wolf has become known for his documentation of life in hyper-density cities, and his Tokyo Compression series spotlight the claustrophobic experience of commuting in Tokyo subway in which millions of commuters make their daily journeys between work and home. Pressed against the windows, caught in the transitory space between home and work, the disquieting images of Wolf's subject capture the incommensurable life in densely populated urban centres.



Tokyo Compression #18, 2010

Exhibited as a one line installation at Flowers Hong Kong, the presentation will evoke the formality of passing by trains with its commuters crushed against its windows. Throughout the series, Wolf can be seen engaging with abstraction of his subjects through reframing and cropping with skin pressed against the windows, partially obscured and blurred from view by condensation on the glass or shielded by surgical masks. Feelings of discomfort and anxiety triggered by the overcrowding are omnipresent throughout the series as its subjects yearn for retreat and tranquility through closed eyes and headphones. The shut eyes and hands pressed against the windows to cover the commuters' faces present an act of resistance against the artist's lens while others meet Wolf's gaze, creating an intimate connection between the subject and the artist through his viewfinder



(Left to right ) Tokyo Compression #84, 2011; Tokyo Compression #75, 2009; Tokyo Compression #39, 2010

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Michael Wolf is known for capturing the hyper-density of cities, such as Hong Kong, Tokyo and Chicago in his large-scale photographs of high-rise architecture and intimate studies of the lives of city dwellers. Michael Wolf's work on life in cities was always driven by a profound concern for the people living in these environments and for the consequences of massive urbanization on contemporary civilization. This commitment and engagement remained central throughout his career, first as a photojournalist and then as an artist.

Born in Munich in 1954, Wolf grew up in Canada, Europe, and the United States, studying at University of California, Berkeley and under Otto Steinert at the Folkwang School in Essen, Germany. He moved to Hong Kong in 1994, where he worked for eight years as a contract photographer for Stern Magazine, before moving on from photojournalism in 2003 to focus on his personal work. Wolf published more than 30 books, including the critically acclaimed titles Tokyo Compression and Architecture of Density.

Michael Wolf won first prize in the World Press Photo competition in 2005 and 2010 and received an honourable mention in 2011. In 2010 and 2016 he was nominated for the Prix Pictet photography award. His work features in many permanent collections, including those of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; the Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago; Museum Folkwang, Essen; Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam and Gemeentemuseum, Den Haag. Michael Wolf's first major retrospective, Michael Wolf – Life in Cities, was held in 2017, premiering at the prestigious Rencontres de la Photographie festival in Arles, then moving on to The Hague Museum of Photography (2018), the Fondazione Stelline in Milan (2018), Deichtorhallen Hamburg (2018 –2019), and Urania, Berlin (2019). His work has also been exhibited at the bienal de arquitetura, São Paulo, Brazil; Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago; Gallery of the Goethe Institute, Hong Kong, and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

For more information and images please contact:

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Opening Hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 11 am - 6 pm

## Notes to Editors

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