

Featured Review: Currents 104: Bruce Yonemoto

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Currents 104: Bruce Yonemoto

Recent
Washington University
Freund Fellow and notable
LA-based multimedia and
conceptual artist Bruce

Yonemoto presents a new video piece and two suites of photographs that repossess history on behalf of the oppressed, villainized or deliberately omitted. The video, *Before I Close My Eyes*, re-creates a pivotal sequence in Ingmar Bergman's 1966 film *Persona*, replacing the female protagonist with three different Southeast Asian males. In a stark room, the new protagonists confront a television screen that broadcasts iconic 1963 footage from Saigon, wherein a Buddhist monk self-immolates. In its mute contemplativeness, the brief looped sequence heightens the immediacy of the nearly 50-year-old scene. In one photographic series,

Yonemoto re-imagines nineteenth-century *carte de visites* (an early form of popular portraiture) in full color, again with Southeast Asian men replacing American Civil War soldiers. And in the other photo set, Asian actors play lead roles in re-creations of portraits by Caravaggio. As it asserts the truth of alternative histories, the exhibition challenges and underscores the complicated subjectivity and visual rhetoric that belies "objective" documentary history. Through July 11 at the Saint Louis Art Museum, 1 Fine Arts Drive (in Forest Park); 314-721-0072 or www.slam.org. Hours: 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tue.-Sun. (10 a.m.-9 p.m. Fri.)