

Adaptation of Frames for *OMIAI*♡, 2001, by Tomoko Sawada

OMIAI♡ by Tomoko Sawada, a 2001 artwork composed of 30 chromogenic prints displayed in frames of varying styles and sizes, presented unusual framing challenges to mountmaker Stephen Heer. In this series, the artist presents herself as 30 different characters in the style of traditional Japanese omiai (matchmaking) portraiture. Each of the 30 prints are displayed in vintage frames as they would appear in the windows of commercial Japanese photography studios. The frames are an integral and essential component of the overall work, but upon examination by conservators, it was determined they were not designed for long-term preservation. To ensure the longevity of the prints, modifications needed to be made to the framing systems while retaining the original vintage trade aesthetic.

Working with photographs curators and conservators, Stephen researched, devised, and implemented adaptations to the frames which maintained their original commercial look and stabilized them for the benefit of the photographs. Many of the off-the-shelf framing elements were replaced with conservation-grade materials not visible in the final displayed work. This included imperceptible setbacks within each sealed frame package to prevent contact between the print surface and the frame glazing. The original appearance of *OMIAI*♡ was retained while also allowing for display with its long-term preservation assured.



OMIAI♡, 2001, Tomoko Sawada (Japanese, born 1977). Thirty chromogenic prints. The J. Paul Getty Museum, purchased with funds provided by the Photographs Council, 2015.2.1-.30. © Tomoko Sawada. Installed in the Center for Photographs.



OMIAI ©, 2001, Tomoko Sawada (Japanese, born 1977). Three of 30 chromogenic prints. The J. Paul Getty Museum, purchased with funds provided by the Photographs Council, from left 2015.2.29, .14, and .20.
© Tomoko Sawada