

Three Generations

September 1 - November 1, 2007
Press Release

Pekin Fine Arts is pleased to announce its first exhibition of works by Jin Shan (b. 1977 Jiangsu), Marvin Mintofang (b.1955 Taiwan), and Aida Makoto (b. 1965 Niigata, Japan). In "Three Generations", each artist presents a solo mixed-media installation project shown for the first time in China.

The three artists from separate generations, brought up in different Asian regions, and educated under different systems, share a common and profound grasp of the power of humour in tackling societal and personal issues. Each relies on comic acts of every-day rebellion in his artwork, recognizing laughter's role as potent tool in contemporary visual art production. At the same time, the three also share a commitment to art making in public space and the importance of man-on-the-street reactions to their work. We applaud their shared sense of adventure and lack of self-seriousness.

Jin Shan, *Desperate Pee, Mixed-Medial Installation (2007)* Jin Shan's "Desperate Pee" (2007) recreates a classroom, with lone figure standing defiantly atop a desk, peeing down onto his desk and chair. The figure, an exact like-ness of the artist constructed in silicon, complete with human hair, wearing Jin's trousers, fly unzipped and pants down "pees" eight hours a day, non-stop in the gallery, like a public fountain brought indoors. In his Artist Statement, Jin asks viewers to be honest and to admit we've all had fantasies of acting out our most primal and personal needs in the most public and inappropriate settings.

Jin Shan (b. 1977 Jiangsu) first exhibited his silicon peeing twin earlier this summer in "Migration Addicts" (2007), a series of urban interventions, invited as official group exhibition of the 52nd Venice Biennale. Perched atop a bridge peeing down into a Venetian canal, Jin's silicon man raised the ire of local residents who mistook the artwork for a person. After much discussion on permitting and other rules governing off-site Biennale exhibitors, Jin was allowed to continue exhibiting his peeing man. Shortly thereafter, the silicon peeing man was found burned and destroyed by local drunken revellers. Why burn an effigy of an Asian man in Venice during the Biennale? This senseless act of destruction raises issues of racism and xenophobia common in every society and culture. Hence, our determination to "resurrect" in Beijing Jin Shan's "peeing man".

Jin Shan's work was included in the 1st Singapore Biennale (2006) where he built a traditional Chinese style pavilion and invited passers by to jump on a trampoline set up inside the pavilion with consumer goods prizes hanging from above, just out of normal reach. Visitors could keep whatever they could catch. Implicitly begging the question, "The higher one jumps the great ones reward?" Jin Shan's work is currently on exhibit in the Shanghai group exhibit "Rejected Collection" (2007), a large-scale show of Chinese contemporary art proposals rejected for inappropriateness or other reasons. Jin continues his participation in "Migration Addicts" (2007), an on-going group exhibition begun in Shanghai two years ago, dealing with how modern cities are affected by population inflows, and changing notions of fixed identity and culture. A special thanks goes to "Migration Addicts" (2005-2007) co-curator Biljana Ciric for introducing to us the works of Jin Shan.

Aida Makoto, *The Video of a Man Calling Himself Bin Laden Staying in Japan, DVD- Installation 2005 (8'14")*

Aida Makoto (b. 1965 Niigata, Japan) is a profoundly talented artist equally adept at getting his message across using a broad range of medium. In his earlier monumental work, "Blender" (2001), Aida worked over a year to complete a three-meter high photo-realist, unforgettable painting of hundreds of tiny naked women trapped inside a glass blender, with bodies closest to the bottom blades bloodied red as a raspberry milkshake. Aida explained away any politically incorrect misgivings by admitting his fascination with the inherent violence of the color red, noting how bloody red violence can be acceptable and even entertaining in fiction, and at the same time profoundly disturbing in non-fiction; disturbing even as the dominant color in one's own national flag.

Aida's work not only frankly exposes men's most primal - and often most obsessive - attraction to women, he also dares to confront history and politically sensitive issues; shaking viewers out of complacency and self-satisfaction. Long before 9/11, he painted on a traditional Japanese multi-panel folding screen, images of Japanese world-war two fighter pilots descending on Manhattan and other western cities, and included this work in a first exhibit in NYC titled "War Picture Returns" (1996).

In 2005, while preparing a solo exhibit in London, and fearing his total number of artworks would not fill the venue, Aida quickly filmed himself, a bit drunk, playing the role of a Mr. Bin Laden, hiding out - and drinking - in Japan. In the video, "Bin Laden" thanks his good friend, an unnamed fledgling artist for making his life in Japan so comfortable, and proudly displays the artwork of his friend, whose works of course bear a striking resemblance to those of Aida Makoto. Aida, the butt of frequent jokes on his striking resemblance to the terrorist fugitive Bin Laden, delivers a hilarious and rambling Bin Laden-esque monologue seemingly spontaneously, rivalling the

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performances of today's great comedic TV and film actors. A visibly drunk "Bin Laden" declares Japan a great place to hide out. And expresses regret not only for his terrorist sins, but also for the current plight of his Japanese friends, stuck with what "Bin Laden" describes as mediocre leaders governing citizens uninterested in events outside their own borders.

At Pekin Fine Arts, the video installation is housed in a specially constructed tatami room, extending out from the video screen and showing Bin Laden comfortably seated atop tatami in an anonymous bar's private room, a room indistinguishable from the tens of thousands of similar drinking establishments scattered throughout Japan. The audience is invited to imagine the pleasures of hiding out in a cosy private drinking room, fully stocked with sake, salty little snacks, Japanese tea, and visions of girls soaking in hot spring tubs, just around the corner...

Aida's works are collected by major museums in Japan, and new work was most recently exhibited in the 1st Singapore Biennale (2007). His ten meter long painting, "Encounter of the Fat and the Slim with Ten-thousand Yen Bill Background" (2007) will be on exhibit in "Beautiful New World", (Japan Foundation, 2007), the first large-scale group exhibition of contemporary art from Japan to be shown in Beijing. The Pekin Fine Arts installation by Aida marks the artist's first, and certainly not last, exhibit in China. With special thanks to Mizuma Art Gallery, Tokyo and Mr. Mizuma and Ms. Eriko []

Marvin Mintofang, Ah Cho and Art Cho, Mixed-Medial Installation (2007)

Taiwanese artist Marvin Mintofang's (b. 1955 Taiwan) first solo exhibition in Beijing inaugurates his move to the capital city after four years resident in Guilin, Guangxi Province, working as creative director and artist-in-residence of the international sculpture park, Yuze Paradise, an outdoor collection of 200+ pieces of sculpture by international artists.

For his first solo exhibition in Beijing, Marvin staged a series of environmentally friendly mini-interventions by planting and growing grass over a two-week period along the concrete sidewalk leading up to the front door of Pekin Fine Arts, and continuing his grass growing experiment carpeting the concrete floor of the gallery space. By exhibit opening day, Marvin's freshly grown grass work spelling out "ART" led visitors along the concrete entranceway into the gallery's three main exhibit halls. The artist also planted an enormous circular field of grass inside the gallery space aimed at the "greening" of the white cube's over-reliance on bricks and cement.

Marvin, a sculptor and ceramicist by training, produced a 66-member strong fibreglass "army" of Ah Cho's, mini-sculpture warrior figures. Installed, marching down from the exhibition space's second story window, and descending onto the pristine green grass below; the fibreglass "army" is poised ready to trample nature with the sheer weight of its man-made numbers. Marvin's playful warning is clearly aimed at the devastating effects construction related pollution is having on China's natural beauty and resources. The fibreglass figures, although white and clean and small enough, remain an irritating reminder of all that pollutes and poisons in the name of manufacturing and other tools of economic development.

Marvin Mintofang's works are collected and have been exhibited by major museums across Asia as well as public institutions in Europe and the USA. The artist is currently working on a new sculpture park for Shanghai and other large-scale public sculpture projects for cities in China.

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