

GALLERY 1: Taiyo Kimura—*Propagation*

GALLERY 2: Joshua Abelow—*Mystic Truths*

ON VIEW: March 5–April 19, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Branch Gallery is pleased to present the first US solo exhibition by Japanese artist Taiyo Kimura, titled *Propagation*. Kimura's work explores the idiosyncrasies and anxieties of modern existence. With wit and humor, Kimura crafts refreshing, engaging, and at times unsettling work that reveals the absurdity of daily life, leaving the viewer to ponder his fundamental question: "What possible sort of meaning is there in living the way we do?"

Often using the body as a starting point, the artist plays with the disconnected and confused nature of modern human relationships. In *Hatarake Hatarake (Work Work)* (2005–2008)—a sculpture of two crawling babies made out of deconstructed soccer balls—the artist teases the viewer. The plush infants are at once charming and inviting, and at the same time fill the viewer with the desire to kick them around like the soccer balls they mimic. Likewise, in *Untitled (milk box)* (1997–2008), we are presented with a row of identical blue and white milk cartons. From afar, the rhythmic colorful patterns created by the cartons seem an alluring, visually arresting presentation of seemingly mundane objects. Further inspection reveals that the milk cartons are filled with miniature clay people who multiply in each successive carton until the last, in which they have all disappeared. A reference to unconscious group behavior, commodification, and consumption, this piece once again brings to light the ridiculousness of existence in contemporary society through Kimura's trademark use of simple materials and black humor.

Kimura is based in Tokyo and received his BFA from the Sokei Academy of Fine Art and Design in 1995. Kimura's work is currently featured in the exhibition "Laughing in a Foreign Language" at the Hayward Gallery, London, and has been exhibited in venues including the 10th Istanbul Biennial, Turkey; the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art Kanazawa, Japan; and the Wuerttembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart, Germany.

Branch is also pleased to present an exhibition of new work by artist Joshua Abelow. His work is eccentric, hypnotic, and often self-conscious, playing on contradiction and visual tension to expose the foolishness of our own self-perception in ways that are both comical and perplexing. Visually, Abelow's work is imbued with a strong sense of flat, two-dimensional space which reflects the artist's interest in geometric shapes and graphic line. While at first his work may seem playful and even whimsical, the artist's use of shape, line, and color ultimately undermine this perception.

The artist's most recent work, *Mystic Truths* (2007), borrows its title from the well-known Bruce Nauman light sculpture "The True Artist Helps the World by Revealing Mystic Truths", a reference to the disjoint between language, form, and meaning in art. Abelow's piece is composed of seventy-two, 16 × 12 inch oil on linen paintings on which the artist has alternately painted the vibrantly colorful words "HARDER FASTER" or "HANG ME, HANG ME, HANG ME, HANG ME". *Mystic Truths* overwhelms the viewer in size, visual stimuli, and seemingly contradictory meanings. The work comes out of both a difficult break-up and new questions as to the purpose of making and buying art, and thus speaks to feelings of futility and frustration. As the artist says, "I am interested in how language can be used to say one thing, but mean another, and how color, text, surface, and repetition can be used to create multiple layers of meaning."

Abelow received his BFA with honors from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1998, and is an MFA candidate at the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan (2008). Abelow's work has been included in exhibitions at venues such as the Weatherspoon Art Museum, Greensboro, NC; Exit Art, New York, NY; Lehmann Maupin Gallery, New York, NY; and PM Gallery, Toronto, Ontario.

For more information, please contact Teka Selman or Chloë Seymore at info@branchgallery.com or 919.918.1116.

Gallery Hours: Wed–Sat 12–6 or by appt.

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