

Through the Peephole – The Art of Secret Viewing

1 April – 29 June 2010

Asia Gallery A

We have a different reaction to an object depending on the way we see it – openly in public or secretly through a gap or peephole. When we “peep”, we expect to find something special at the point of gaze. The situation to see something “secretly alone” allows us to feel as if the world under the gaze belongs to us, and turns action of “seeing” into more individual experience.

Among contemporary artworks, we can find works which employ elements of “peeping”. This exhibition explores the relationship between “seeing” and “to-be-seen” through installation, sculptures as well as paintings depicting “peepers”.

“Peeping” could put you in danger at times, but in this exhibition, please enjoy “peeping” openly and closely at the works.

1. Peeping

This section shows the works incorporating elements of “peeping”, but each of them carries different meaning and effect.

For example, Po Po’s work ① is intended to provide a personal viewing experience by which the viewers are invited to share the artist’s private memory. Meanwhile, this work also implies that there are restrictions for exhibiting and presenting contemporary art in the artist’s country, Myanmar. In Montien Boonma’s works, by peeping inside, we can feel a sense of unity with the works. In Paiman and Chen Shun-chu’s works, mirrors are used as a device to incorporate the viewers as part of the works. Only by closely approaching to the small worlds of Ham Jin and Suda Yoshihiro, the viewers can observe their lively look. The common point among the works in this section is that



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“peeping” becomes a method to form a closer relationship and intimate space between the viewers and the works.

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Ham Jin (Korea)

Encounter 2005
polymer clay, scrap material

Montien Boonma (Thailand)

Melting Void / Molds for the Mind 1998
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plaster, gold leaf, steel, bamboo, herbs, etc.

Noor Azizan Rahman Paiman (Malaysia)

Wailing Wheel 1996
stainless steel, tire, wall paper, mirror, fan, ventilator, light bulb

Chen Shun-chu (Taiwan)

Father's Lover and Mother's Family
1992 photographs in a wooden box

Suda Yoshihiro (Japan)

Weed 2002 pigment on wood

Po Po (Myanmar)

Peep Show 2 1999 ①
cardboard box, glass, light bulb, etc.

2. Seeing and To-be-Seen

In some sense, a painting is like a kind of peeping window. The viewers can watch various scenes from a safe place without being noticed by the subject. In the first part of this section, we have the works by Mokoh and Kham Tanh which depict “peepers” within the frame. By inserting “peepers” between the viewers and the central subject, it creates a physical depth, wider context or suggestive meanings in the works.

Figures depicted in the paintings of Huang Rui and Ali Rahim see us from behind the wall, fence or through the glass. Their gaze seem to say this world that we considered as safe is actually not, and evoke some sense of unease in us or seem to be making a sincere appeal about something.

In all the works, in addition to the one-sided gaze from the viewers to the subject, the relationship between seeing and to-be-seen is shifted and made more complicated, and the very presence of the viewers seems to become a part of the artworks.

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I Dewa Putu Mokoh (Indonesia)

Resting Man 1992 acrylic on canvas

Making Friends with Alligator ②

1992 acrylic on canvas

Unknown (China)

Chinese Family Qing dynasty (18th century)
reverse oil painting on glass

Nazlee Laila Mansur (Bangladesh)

Louis Kahn's Dream: Rupanzel

2002 acrylic on canvas

Niloofar Chaman (Bangladesh)

Summer Evening in 4 - Orphanage Road
1989 acrylic on board

Kham Tanh Saliangkham (Laos)

Time 2002 acrylic, cloth on canvas

Aisha Khalid (Pakistan)

Silence 2000 watercolor on paper

Anupam Sud (India)

Grill 1985

color etching on paper

(etching and aquatint-viscosity color print)

Ali Haji Abd Rahim (Brunei)

Blurred Glass Image (Cry for Recognition)
2002 acrylic on board

Tan Chin Kuan (Malaysia)

Gloomy 1987 linocut on paper

Huang Rui (China)

Back Palace of the Grand Palace ③

1981 oil on canvas



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