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Wednesday-Saturday 12-6

Naotaka Hiro

May 10-June 7, 2008

Opening Reception May 10, 6-8pm

Screening of Complete *To and From*: May 24th at 7pm

Lecture/Screening "The Flickering Body: Japanese Experimental Works" by Jonathan M. Hall: June 6th at 7pm

This exhibition will include two new video pieces by Naotaka Hiro and a new collaboration with Sid M. Duenas. The first video *It on It (Skinny Wire Neck)*, 2008, was originally shot on Super-8 film and then transferred to DVD, single channel. The video runs for 3 minutes and is the third in a series of pieces that Hiro has done using a human skull. This piece is a documentation of a performance Hiro did in which the skull hung from the ceiling by a wire, upside down, at the height of Hiro's genitalia. Over a 3-week time period Hiro applied sticky rice to the skull, attempting to make a sphere. The video shows the quick movements of a disjointed male nude, with the frame of the video disconnecting the artists' body from his feet and his head. The image has been rotated upside down making the skull right side up. By doing this the wire becomes the neck of the skull and the white vacant "spot" of the skull with the rice on it, hides Hiro's genitalia. While the skull is directly connected to the artist's body via the touch of his hands building on the surface, it becomes uncanny in its isolation, making us reflect on the disassociation we feel to our bodies.

The second video, *Night and Fog, Two Penises*, 2008, was also originally shot with Super-8 film and then transferred to DVD with two channels that are projected side by side. This piece also dissects the body; placing plastic toy body parts into a non-descript landscape. In this case the body parts in the video are objects that are not attached to a human figure, it is as if they are body parts left behind from dead bodies. Their isolation is disturbing to the viewers as they contemplate their own vulnerability. The title, *Night and Fog, Two Penises*, is derived from Alain Resnais's documentary, *Night and Fog* (1955). This documentary shows actual footage from the Holocaust, including the bulldozing of bodies, hairs and bones.

The third piece, *To and From* is a collaboration with Sid M. Duenas, in which these the two artists explore the relationship of their personal and political cultures. With Hiro being of Japanese decent and Duenas being of Saipanese decent, they decided to travel to Saipan together and explore the location of conflict between these two countries. The resulting work is a four-part video series, shot at four historically relevant locations in Saipan. The resulting work is a four-part video. Each part shows unedited footage, beginning with a tight view of Duenas writing and speaking, while Hiro (behind the camera) slowly begins to recede into and engage with the environment. The camera moves away from the speaker, whose voice remains audible throughout the video, reciting excerpts derived from descriptive texts written on-location. The texts serve as visual and aural accounts of the four locations. These accounts became a direct source for the improvised speech that accompanies the video. Part 1 of this series will be on view in the exhibition and a special screening of the complete version with all four parts will be shown on May 24th from 7-9pm.

In conjunction with the exhibition, Naotaka Hiro has invited Jonathan M. Hall to present "The Flickering Body: Japanese Experimental Works", a lecture/screening that will be held at the gallery on June 6th from 7-9pm, on the eve of the show's closing.

Naotaka Hiro, who lives and works in Los Angeles, was born in Osaka, Japan. He received his MFA in 2000 from Calarts and his BA from UCLA in 1997. He was recently part of *FIGURES*, a group exhibition curated by William E. Jones at David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, CA. He shows regularly with Misako & Rosen in Tokyo, Japan.

If you have any further questions please feel free to contact me at mara@theboxla.com, or by phone at 213 625 1747 or 626 463 8144.