



New York, Shanghai
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For Immediate Release

Beyond the Colony of Kitsch

Artists: Sin-Ying Ho, Heungman, Teresa Kwong, Bing Lee, Annysa Ng, Samson Young and Kaho Albert Yu.

Press preview: Tuesday April 6, 2 pm

Opening Reception: Saturday April 10, 2 - 5 pm

Exhibition Dates: Tuesday April 6 – Sunday May 16, 2010

Events: *Women and Post-Colonial Hong Kong Film Festival:* Thurs April 15, 6:30 – 9 pm
Six films from various directors curated by Teresa Kwong (Director of the Hong Kong Independent Film and Video Awards). See below for detailed schedule.

Chinese Contemporary Dance Performance: Sunday May 2 @ 3:00 pm

After Floating, Choreography by Aly Rose, Hou Ying of *Shen Wei Dance Arts*,
Performed by Madelyn Bullard, Lynn Hanson, Aly Rose. Music Composition: Arvo Part, Alina.

Crossing Art is pleased to announce the opening of *Beyond the Colony of Kitsch*, an exhibition that examines the work of seven artists from Hong Kong that employ images of western and eastern kitsch to investigate personal and cultural identity. The artists chosen for this exhibition work in mediums ranging from ceramics to video, painting to photography and features the sculptures of Sin-ying Ho as well as work by Heungman, and members of the Hong Kong Art Collective Tomato Grey; Teresa Kwong, Bing Lee, Annysa Ng, Samson Young, and Kaho Albert Yu.

The title of this exhibition, *Beyond the Colony of Kitsch* makes reference to a New York Times HONG KONG article titled “For Souvenir Hunters, Hong Kong Is a Colony of Kitsch” published July 1, 1997 shortly after Hong Kong went from being a British colony to a Chinese state. (Edward A. Gargan, “For Souvenir Hunters, Hong Kong Is a Colony of Kitsch”, The New York Times Hong Kong. 1 July. 1997. nytimes.com 2001.

<<http://theater.nytimes.com/specials/hongkong/070197hongkong-commerce.html>>). The “For Souvenir Hunters” article, detailed some of the obscure objects or “souvenirs” that were being produced to commemorate the 1997 “Chinese Takeover”. Amidst a list of these high to low-end “souvenirs”, was commentary on Hong Kong’s market driven culture. The reporter likened the mass-production of these objects (from t-shirts to Baccarat crystal sculptures being sold for upwards of \$40,000) commemorating 1997 to be evidence of Hong Kong’s reputation for commercial and capitalist driven market sensibilities. To this day, Hong Kong remains to be known as an overtly commercial and commerce driven city. In the art world, Hong Kong is known as a mecca for Fine Art Auction Houses, Art Fairs and high-end galleries recognized more for its art commerce than for the artists that are based there or its influence on the work of artists that once called Hong Kong home. Steeped in both western and eastern cultural influence, Hong

Kong is a city, unique and divided. *Beyond the Colony of Kitsch*, presented thirteen years after the article was written and the “takeover” complete, aims to offer an insight into a subculture of artists creating work that use kitsch images and forms to explore Hong Kong’s post-colonial identity, culture and future.

Sin-ying Ho incorporates computer decal transfer images and painted ornaments in her ceramic vessels that address issues concerning the old and the new in terms of communication, language, aesthetics, technology, identity, economy, and power. In Ho’s work her mix of symbolic meanings from old cultures and contemporary icons linked by cyber text and computer language evoke a dialogue about the collisions among cultures and the resulting residue of globalization. Heungman’s photographic series’ *Little Red Book* and *Little Mao in Me* depict the “little red book”, Chinese money and other traditional Chinese icons used alongside the human form to examine the influence or importance of these ‘objects’ on a cultural psyche. Teresa Kwong is the Director of the Hong Kong Independent Short Film and Video Awards for the Hong Kong Art Centre. All the films in her curated film series, *Woman and the Postcolonial Hong Kong* are in Mandarin or Cantonese with English subtitles and follow the theme of the exhibition in exploring the identity of women in post-colonial Hong Kong culture. Bing Lee’s large scale installations, public projects and murals stem from his ongoing project *Pictodiary*, daily iconographic journal, which he began devoutly in 1983. With this vast comprehensive visual vocabulary, Lee uses his icons or images from different days to write poetry and create compositions in the public works that relay personal myths and social concerns. Annysa Ng’s paintings, drawings and murals merge unknown and featureless identity silhouetted figures adorned in costumes of Kings or Queens (British Royalty) together with garb referencing Chinese emperors and empresses resulting in references to 19th and 20th century colonialism. The duality in the work evokes a conflict of identity swayed by authoritative power shifts in Hong Kong’s history. Samson Young in his film, *Build Socialism With Chinese Characteristics*, he has dressed himself and an actor in Teletubby costumes (as Lala, the yellow teletubby and Po - the red and supposedly Chinese teletubby) while touring Hong Kong as visitors from the UK. The sound track of the video features Deng Xiaoping's 1979 speech "Build Socialism With Chinese Characteristics" rendered with a text-to-speech engine, which becomes increasingly distorted as the video progresses. Kaho Albert Yu’s most recent series of photographs, *Silence*, two of which are on view, reveal empty landscapes of American suburban scenes taken from the eye of the “foreigner”.

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