

MIKA TAJIMA



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AFTER THE MARTINI SHOT

July 16, 2011–June 17, 2012

Mika Tajima's thought-provoking installations, in which she integrates a vivid spectrum of source material, combines sculpture, painting, performance, video and sound. For *After the Martini Shot*, a title derived from the film industry's reference to the last shot of the day, the artist appears to anticipate a director's call for lights, camera, action! Tajima's take on it: "If this was a film set, it would be what was leftover. A site that was anticipating another production or had just finished up a production, and the objects become both characters, become the backdrop, become the setting for other activities that get made within the film."

Interested in the language of film, she often appropriates industry terminology in works like *The Extras*, *Appearance (Against Type)*—Tajima's nod to type-casting—and *Dead By Third Act* (2009), a video documenting a 2008 performance by Mika Tajima/New Humans, filmed in what was originally the Fiat Factory in Turin, Italy. An important influence came with Jean Luc-Godard's *One Plus One* (1968), which led her to create her now signature double-sided painting panels on wheels. Intrigued by the acoustic boards used in the recording studio in Godard's film, Tajima read these functional structures as both painting and architecture and began to repurpose them in her studio. These hybrid works doubling as fine art object and stage prop are further realized in her perforated painting *Appearance (Against Type)* and a vibrant, monochrome *Yellow Curve (Eternal Return)*, a painting made from seamless paper typically used in photo studios. The permeability of these paintings as both object and backdrop speaks to Tajima's conceptual flexibility and her imaginative experimentation.

Additionally, she maps multiple historical references onto her work, at times through the language of geometric abstraction, exposing influences in unexpected ways. For example, Tajima quotes early twentieth-century composer Erik Satie's ambient music in *Furniture Art*, a series of spray-painted paintings titled after Satie's compositions of the same name. Innovative in her approach, for *The Extras (Seattle)*, 2011, Tajima used a painting rack to archive what she calls "a show in a box," including the artist's *IV* (2008), a silk-screened print with a geometric pattern that references the 1970 film *Performance*, starring Mick Jagger. To this arrangement she added Josef Albers' *Study for Homage to the Square: Accordant*, a silkscreened *Flowers* by Andy Warhol along with his portrait of Jagger that perfectly mirrors her own visual language, and a print by Anni Albers from SAM's permanent collection—placing Tajima in a lineage of mentors, whose artistic sensibilities and cross-disciplinary approaches resonate with her own.

Tajima's interest in the act and space of production recalls another work in SAM's collection, Robert Morris' *Box with the Sound of Its Own Making* (1961). A seminal, process-based work which, as John Cage said, "is not only a sculpture but a performance," has influenced a generation of artists, including Tajima, who, in *After the Martini Shot*, opens the box and asks us to enter into it.

—Marisa C. Sánchez, Assistant Curator of Modern & Contemporary Art

This exhibition is organized by the Seattle Art Museum. SAM Next series sponsor is the Seattle Art Museum Supporters (SAMS).

Installation view of *After the Martini Shot*, Mika Tajima's SAM Next exhibition at the Seattle Art Museum, July 16, 2011–June 17, 2012. Photo: Nathaniel Wilson.

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