

SIDE GALLERIES

mvrdrv
Pig City, 2000

DVD - Winy Maas, Jacob van Rijs, Nathalie de Fries



mvrdrv is a Contemporary Architecture Collective. Confronted with pending architectural concerns, mvrdrv asks the question: faced with a spatial crisis in the growth and export of pork products, do we all become vegetarians or do we change our production methods and demand biological farming? *Pig City* is a film that plays with the science fiction and futuristic genres. To centre all pig farming in towering skyscrapers seems to be the only answer, so mvrdrv (with a straight face) creates a towering and efficient agricultural city. *Pig City* is a digital film of this constructed cityscape.

mvrdrv was set up in Rotterdam (the Netherlands) in 1991 by Winy Maas, Jacob van Rijs and Nathalie de Fries. mvrdrv produces designs and studies in the fields of urban architecture, urbanism and landscape design. Early projects such as the 'Light Urbanism study for the Municipality of Rotterdam', the headquarters for 'Public Broadcasting Company VPRO' and 'housing for elderly Wozoco's' in Amsterdam brought mvrdrv to the attention of a wide field of clients and gave them international acclaim. Products range from buildings of all types and sizes, to urban designs, to publications and installations. Realised projects include the Dutch Pavilion for the World Exhibition 2000 in Hanover, an innovative business park 'Flight Forum in Eindhoven, two houses at Borneo Sporenburg, Amsterdam, an 'Orange Atelier' in Amsterdam, and the futuristic installation Metacity/Datatown that is travelling around the world.

POP IN ROOM

Shigeyuki Kihara

Fa'a fafine: In a manner of a woman



Chen Chieh-jen
Factory, 2003

16mm film transferred onto DVD
Courtesy of the artist



Chen Cheih-jen is a Taiwanese artist whose documentary *Factory* is a stunning portrait of labour, globalisation and women's rights. As more and more Taiwanese factories move offshore, with the owners declaring bankruptcy in the hope of avoiding pensions and layoff compensations, bitter unresolved struggles result for many workers even today. In *Factory*, Chen Cheih-jen revisits the Lian-fu Garment factory, which was closed down seven years ago, with some of the female former employees, many of whom had worked there for over twenty years. In their former workplace, the woman once again perform their different jobs. Because these female labourers wished to keep silent, the documentary is a subtle performative act.

Chen Chieh-jen was born in Tao-Yuan County, Taiwan, Fukien. Since 1983, he has realised exhibitions and performances in ruined houses, basements, streets, valleys, beaches, fringe areas and marginal spaces. Today, his large format photographs are exhibited all over the world in institutions such as the International Centre of Contemporary Art in Vancouver, the Kunstraum Ziuerich, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Taiwan and IT Gallery in Taiwan.

Shigeyuki Kihara

Fa'a fafine: In a manner of a woman, 2004-05

Triptych, C-type photograph

Photograph: Coylehall

Courtesy the artist and Sherman Galleries

The self-effacement of Shigeyuki Kihara

Kihara's artwork straddles an ambiguous field of binary forces - east/west, original/copy, male/female, and challenges the viewer by embodying both complexity and multiplicity, the burlesque and the real.

Post-modern theorist Judith Butler argues that it is not possible to be a human subject without taking shape within the law of a gender - either male or female. This exclusionary framework creates a domain of the "unliveable," occupied by people who do not fall into the binary divisions of gender. They either live in secret and 'pass' as if they do, or they are dehumanized. It is in this realm that is occupied by Kihara who lives her life as a transgender. Butler's theories ignore the role that race and ethnicity plays in human subjecthood and are limited to a Western construct of thinking. Kihara has been to some extent, protected from these understandings by her early assignation in Samoa as a *fa'a fafine*, who are born biologically male and express feminine gender identities in a variety of ways - an accepted role in Samoan society.

Shigeyuki Kihara's re-enactment of a colonial photographic postcard representation of the languid reclining South Seas Belle has a fidelity to detail, and at face value pays tribute to both the Kitsch aspect of the genre and the sexualized Dusky Maiden. There is a seriousness in Kihara's posturing that undermines the irony she may wish to invoke or the truth she wishes to declare - a sense of 'passing' as a woman or as a man impersonating a woman, against the woman who is a man impersonating a man.

"Who am I, what am I, and what are you?" are questions that will never haunt or torment Kihara. Rather, they provide her with the material for her artwork. The only possible answers to these questions are limited and draw boundaries that Kihara will continue to cross in the expression of her existence.

Jim Vivieaere (abridged from a larger text)

Shigeyuki Kihara is a visual and performance artist based in Auckland. She is the recipient of the 2003 Emerging Pacific Island Artist Award from the Creative New Zealand Arts Council. Her works are carried in public institutions including Te papa Tongarewa The National Museum of New Zealand and the Gus Fisher Gallery of the University of Auckland. Kihara was featured in the contemporary New Zealand art survey exhibition 'Prospect 2004: New Art New Zealand' held last year at the City Gallery Wellington. Her current solo exhibition 'Fa'a fafine; in a manner of a woman' is exhibited at the Sherman Galleries in Sydney as well as at the Auckland's Artspace. The selected works from the 'Fa'a fafine' series 05 will be exhibited again at the 'Somatechnics' group exhibition at the Macquarie Gallery held during the Body Modification conference at the Macquarie University in April 2005.