



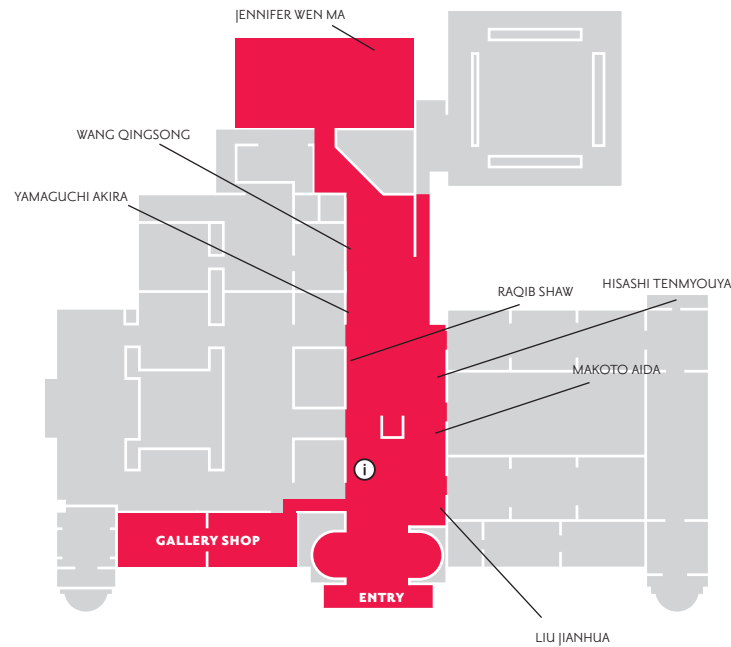
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FOCUS ON ASIA

Seven leading artists from Asia show challenging and beautiful works in the Grand Court.

One of Australia’s leading art museums, the Art Gallery of New South Wales is located within beautiful parklands overlooking Sydney Harbour, only 15 minutes walk from the CBD.

Visit on Wednesday evenings until 9 pm for Art After Hours – an entertaining program of celebrity talks, tours, film and music.



LIU JIANHUA

Born 1962 in Jiangxi Province, China
 Lives and works in Shanghai, China

Liu Jianhua is one of China’s best-known ceramic sculptural and installation artists. He was raised in Jiangxi Province, a region that dominated the Chinese pottery industry and famous for producing ‘ji’an wares’, fine white Chinese pottery. After the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, Liu completed classical training in ceramics, began to encounter western art and embarked upon his own experimental practice. In *Container Series* (2009), Liu makes bowls, vases, dishes, containers and urns of varying shapes and sizes, uniform in their celadon exterior glaze, and rich, blood-coloured interior. The glaze is particular to Jingdezhen, China’s ‘porcelain capital’, and gives the austere grouping of vessels a look of corporeality. Liu deliberately strips his works of overt symbolic content, moving away from any external reference that would pin the work to a particular ‘contemporary’ or ‘historical’ moment. His ceramic, porcelain and plastic works are a poetic and eloquent response to the vast changes that have beset China.



Liu Jianhua
Container Series | 2009
 Courtesy the artist and Beijing Commune, Beijing
 This project was assisted by Beijing Commune, Beijing

RAQIB SHAW

Born 1974 in Calcutta, India
 Lives and works in London, England

The spectacular nature of Raqib Shaw’s rare, intensely decorated paintings reflects his unique and labour-intensive process in which porcupine quills are used to delineate minute details in metallic or enamel industrial paints in strong, vibrant colours. At first glance, his works appear as enlarged Indian miniatures. On closer scrutiny, their imagery is clearly derived from the influence of Japanese kimonos and traditional screens, Kashmiri lacquer and textiles, Thai deities and the cloisonné techniques of early Asian pottery. In *The mild-eyed melancholy of the lotus eaters III* (2009–10), shown for the first time, anthropomorphised animals and mythical creatures intertwine in fantastical settings where phallus-headed birds, bird-headed butterfly catchers and human-snake hybrids commingle. Despite its deeply historical visual allusions, Shaw’s beautiful treatment of transmutation in erotic desire can be read as a contemporary allegory of human greed and lust.



Raqib Shaw
The mild-eyed melancholy of the lotus eaters III | 2009–10 (detail)
 Courtesy the artist and White Cube, London
 Copyright © the artist
 Photograph: Ellen Broughton

RAQIB SHAW’S BEAUTIFUL TREATMENT OF TRANSMOGRIFICATION IN EROTIC DESIRE CAN BE READ AS A CONTEMPORARY ALLEGORY OF HUMAN GREED AND LUST

HISASHI TENMYOUYA

Born 1966 in Tokyo, Japan
Lives and works in Saitama, Japan

Hisashi Tenmyouya combines the appearance and traditions of *nihonga*, Japanese-style painting, with the multifaceted realm of popular culture. Drawn from legend, folklore and contemporary subculture, his cast of characters includes samurai warriors playing football, breakdancers, graffiti-painted Buddhas, motorcycle gangs and mythical beasts. *Neo Thousand Armed Kannon* (2002) is the artist's portrayal of the Buddhist god of compassion. In Japan, she is often depicted with 1,000 arms to symbolise the deity's ability to reach out to all people to alleviate their suffering. In Tenmyouya's painting, guns and blades fan out around the figure, wielded by the god's multiple hands. The ironical combination of faith and violence was painted in the year following September 11, when the connection between religion and war was gravely apparent. It is shown alongside *Naraenkengooou* and *Misshakukongourikishi* (both 2003), two fearsome guardians that flank Kannon's right and left sides, their red muscled bodies braced and alert, their hands wielding Kalashnikovs.



Hisashi Tenmyouya
Neo Thousand Armed Kannon | 2002
Courtesy of Takahashi Collection, Tokyo
Copyright © TENMYOUYA HISASHI
The presentation of this project was made possible with assistance from Ishibashi Foundation

WANG QINGSONG

Born 1966 in Heilongjiang Province, China
Lives and works in Beijing, China

Wang Qingsong makes large photographic tableaux that capture different scenes, often featuring masses of people, either in simulation of art or reality. Some of these show waste, excess and the detritus of contemporary consumer society, particularly within the context of a burgeoning Chinese economy. His work often takes the form of an acerbic social commentary. *Competition* (2004) looks at the competitive element between multinationals and Chinese firms in a battle of posters and logos that covers every vacant wall space. *Debacle* (2009) looks at an economy in recession: the workers have disappeared and no posters have been replaced. Exposed to the elements, the ephemera fades and takes on the characteristics of a high modernist painting. These two large works depict the visual noise of advertising, amplifying it on a gigantic scale to an overwhelming cacophony, but they also offer a cryptic illustration of the boom and bust of the current world economy.



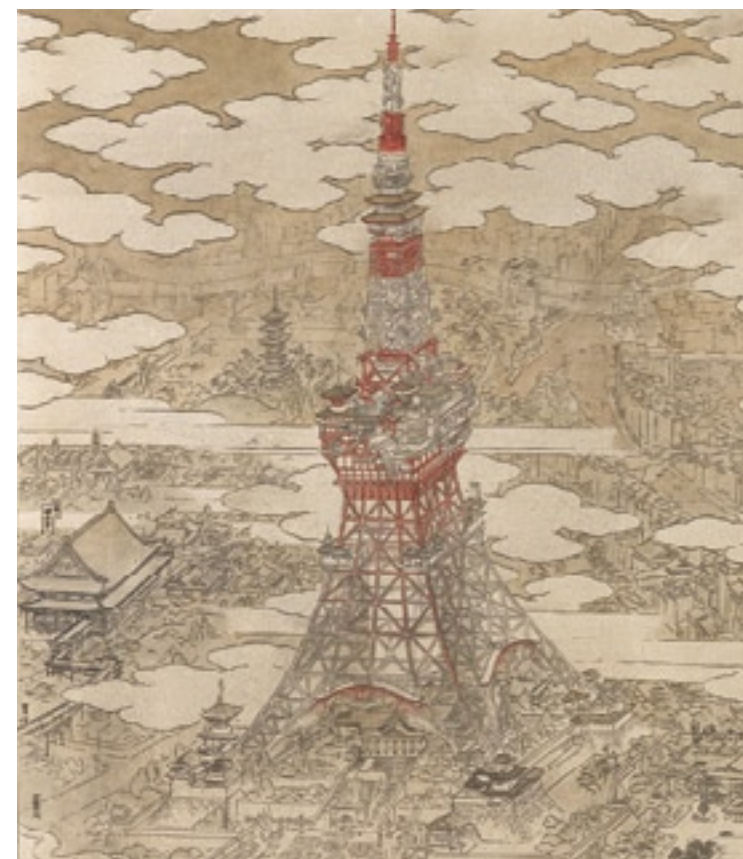
Wang Qingsong
Competition | 2004
Courtesy the artist

IN SOME OF HIS MOST EPIC COMPOSITIONS, WANG QINGSONG CONTRASTS THE LOUD PRESENCE OF ADVERTISEMENTS AND SLOGANS IN EVERYDAY LIFE WITH PROTESTS RELATING TO CHINA'S DEMOCRATIC ADVANCEMENT

YAMAGUCHI AKIRA

Born 1969 in Tokyo, Japan
Lives and works in Tokyo

Yamaguchi Akira's work combines the techniques and imagery of classical Japanese painting with contemporary urban realism. His paintings are compressions of time and space that meld eastern and western traditions and sensibilities into a form that eludes categorisation. They are often produced in recognisable traditional styles, including that of *yamato-e*, multi-panel works that feature gold leaf, flat planes of colour and scrolling narratives from classical literature, places of great significance, the progression of the seasons, and ceremonial rituals. In his works, however, such motifs are replaced by the fabric of contemporary Japan, with its urban landscapes and complex consumer technology. In forms re-imagined by the artist, the golden clouds of traditional art have become transmuted into urban smog and the skylines of pagodas are replaced by large department stores, radio masts and other contemporary icons.



YAMAGUCHI AKIRA CREATES ENTIRELY NEW WORLDS BY DEPLOYING THE TRADITIONAL METHODS OF JAPANESE PAINTING WITH THE DYNAMICS OF VIRTUAL IMAGERY

YAMAGUCHI Akira
Construction of Shiba Tower | 2005 (detail)
Courtesy of Kazuko Matsuda and Michael O.B Kraehe, Japan
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This project was made possible with assistance from Ishibashi Foundation