



Midori Harima. Lost Acquisition Owl, 2007. Xerox copy on archival paper, methyl cellulose paste, archival tape

worn" features. His symbols, the mask, the cross, the jeweled necklace, the fur, the eye patch and the bubble-like halo seem to derive from religious mysticism, and appear in their fetish style, more like protective talismans rather than status symbols.

The landscapes in which these characters are placed recall the subliminal paintings of German Romantic artist Caspar David Friederich (1774-1840). More psychological than actual, they represent a state of mind and serve as a backdrop to the characters' seemingly peaceful presence. In reality, they are reflective of the geography, and light of the artist's surroundings in upstate New York. Undoubtedly, his portraits reflect his desire to connect with the human spirit by creating a dialogue and connecting with the alter-ego of the "other".

Ephemeral "papier mache" sculptures made out of Xeroxed images taken from various publications inhabit the latter part of the gallery space. React-

ing against the seemingly loss of identity created by oversaturated consumerism and foreign influence in contemporary Japan, Midori Harima attempts to re-capture and re-create a dialogue with her fragile ancient culture.

In her installations, she presents subtle melancholic vignettes of minimal proportion inviting the viewer to question the loss of identity created by globalization. In one room, we find an individually framed fox, serpent, and an owl confronted by a naked figure of a young girl who appears sad and immobilized by her current condition, maybe not understanding the icons of her past. In the corridor we find, "Leaping Fawn", three spotted weightless deer hang delicately from the gallery ceiling by a fishing line.

The sculptures, shallow shells assembled by collages of black and white Xeroxes are adhered to construct the outer layers of the figures. Interestingly, her technique works as a metaphor to de-



Midori Harima. Lost Acquisition Standing Girl. 2007. Xerox copy on archival paper, methyl cellulose paste, archival tape



Midori Harima. Lost Acquisition Snake, 2007. Xerox copy on archival paper, methyl cellulose paste, archival tape

scribe the existing status quo in Japanese culture where the Western mantle of influence has engulfed, it leaving it "skin deep".

Deliberately, the animals or "magical creatures" she chooses to comment on the diminishing of her culture are taken from the iconography used in Shinto, the ancient native religion of Japan. In traditional Shinto Shrines, the fox, the Tengu (envisioned as a bird-like entity) and the Serpent, collectively known as Henge or shape-shifters, are used to cast off evil spirits.

Occupying the last room in the gallery is an installation reconstructing an idyllic landscape. A life-size sacred Sika deer, motionlessly confronts the viewer from behind an artificial curtain of rain. They face each other silently accepting the unavoidable, there's no turning back. Unlike Suen Wong (recently showing at Bruk's), who in her paintings employs imagery which seemingly celebrates the appropriation of Western culture in contemporary China, Midori once again makes reference to "paradise lost" and her longing to connect with nature.

In a globalized, politically charged environment where mass media drives perceptions and pushes the threshold for empathy, and tenderness, we find artists like Butler and Harima reaching to human landscapes and ancient cultures for a sense of identity and civilization.

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