

apexart

2020-21 INT'L Proposal
submitted February 2020

Ownness

submitted by: Mizuho Yamazaki and Virginia Liu

city: Hong Kong

In East Asia, "her body" has been stripped away from "herself." She has been dreamt as tamed and obedient by her own patriarchy and by the "privileged" Western colonizers, including the suppression of her ideas by Western feminist studies, apart from her self-representation and agency. While gender inequality in East Asia is uniquely rooted in each sociocultural background, the gaze exerted upon women, especially their bodies, remains shared in many ways. In this exhibition, *Ownness*, we would like to shed light on East Asian women claiming the right to their own bodies. We will reveal the experience and empowerment of female bodies in their societies through the lenses of five emerging female artists from Japan, South Korea, Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

Kaai Ogaya (b.1987, Japan) illuminates the consequences of the idealized female appearance suggested by Japanese society. She reveals that this ideal is embedded in female's minds as an instrumental requirement to be a woman in the visually-oriented society. However, there is a gap between nature and the societal ideal of female bodies, which leads females to deny their inherent bodily functions, such as body hair growth, and damage their own bodies by shaving said hair.

Tiffany Jaeyeon Shin (b.1993, South Korea) expresses that the yearn for having glassy white skin promoted by Korean beauty erases the identity of Korean females. Shin attempts to "peel away" this prejudiced idea, caused by the trauma of Japanese colonization and the Korean War, and find their genuine flesh, or racial identity. Her works strive to rehabilitate from cultural colonizations and regain their female identity by seeking what skin, or racial identity, they are truly looking for.

Dong Jinling (b.1986, Mainland China) uses her own body as an experimental field to unveil the systemic exploitation of women. Through the manifestations of control over her own body, she aims to regain female autonomy of self, of motherhood, and of life, from the family-centric, self-sacrificing tradition of China.

Wong Ka Ying (b.1990, Hong Kong) responds to the issues of self-identity and sexuality by radical self-exposure of the female body. Her exaggerated eroticism in order to challenge the traditional concept of female nudity explores how women's bodies are fetishized in and traded as products by mass consumerism and capitalism in Hong Kong, a region where the West and East have crossed for decades.

Betty Apple (b.1986, Taiwan) mocks, questions, and subverts the hegemonic, patriarchal egotism of "good" music by making "bad" noise with kitsch instruments associated with femininity. Utilizing mass-produced objects symbolically intended for female eroticism and consumerism, such as vibrators, wigs, and shopping trolleys, the avant-garde sound artist improvises a chaotic music, a conversation of body and object, to speak to societal impositions on female bodies in post-colonial Taiwan.

By juxtaposing works by artists tackling gender inequality in our own context, this exhibition will show how women across East Asia are fighting hand-in-hand to overcome colonial and patriarchal subjugation and seize bodily control on their terms.

291 Church Street
New York, NY 10013
212.431.5270
info@apexart.org; www.apexart.org