

**Ron Terada *Who I Think I Am***

**31 March – 16 May**

**Second Floor Galleries**

*The following is an extract from an email interview with Ron Terada, March 2010.*

**Why is your exhibition here entitled *Who I Think I Am*?**

It is a selection of works made over the past ten years, so I wanted a title that acknowledged this context and occasion: it's one thing to make a work, but to arrange and consider ten years' worth is something else. This is also my first solo showing in Europe – very few people here know of my work, if at all – so I felt I needed a title that reflected my awkwardness.

**Your sign, *Entering City of Vancouver* (2002) welcomes us. What does Vancouver mean to you?**

I'm not that interested in Vancouver. But I happen to live and work in Vancouver because I was born and raised there. I'm one of those fools who never left. But it shouldn't come as any surprise that where you live has an effect on your life. With *Entering City of Vancouver*, my interest is more in the idea of Vancouver as it pertains to cultural production. Or rather, the art world's idea or perception of what Vancouver art is or isn't. For the uninitiated, Vancouver is the home of some pretty serious artists: Jeff Wall, Rodney Graham, Ian Wallace, Stan Douglas, Ken Lum and Roy Arden. As a result, the bar is set pretty high. That same bar instils a stereotype in production – both here and abroad – typified by large-scale photographs and filmic installations of the urban surrounds or Pacific 'supernatural' Northwest motifs and histories. As a next-generation Vancouver artist, I found it interesting to be curated into exhibitions based solely on where I live – as if that's the only thing that mattered. *Entering City of Vancouver* is a response to this condition: the work either reassuringly gives you what you want (more of the same), or mocks the easy stereotype and 'branding' of Vancouver art and artists.

## **Why do you often work with text?**

Text is all around us. It's very graphic. And using it can be so direct and practical. I typically gravitate towards things that have something to say. At the same time, I like that text can go unnoticed and be seen as completely opaque.

## **How does *Soundtrack for an Exhibition* relate to your work as a whole?**

It is an extension of my interest in secondary or supplementary elements to an exhibition. Beginning with promotional or printed matter – such as posters, brochures, adverts in magazines etc – and then on into signage, it seemed natural to look at promotional material used in other areas of the cultural industry. At the same time, the project allowed me to pursue my own personal interest in popular music and continue the activity of making 'mix-tape' compilations beyond my small circle of friends. The DIY and giveaway aspect of the project was also a direct reflection of the times, what with Napster and P2P sharing becoming more and more mainstream. *Soundtrack for an Exhibition* is a conflation between a private activity and a mass-market one.

## **The *Jack* paintings are new, shown here for the first time. What inspired you to make them?**

I've been interested in Jack Goldstein's work for quite some time, despite knowing it mainly through books. In 2004 I picked up *Jack Goldstein and the Cal Arts Mafia* and I couldn't believe his story. I was absolutely floored and still am. Aside from the turmoil of Jack's life and career, I was intrigued by how someone so post-studio could suddenly switch gears into painting. In 2009, I was invited to an artist's residency programme at the Banff Centre (Canada), where the focus was on painting. At that point I had not made a painting since 1999, but I was curious about the possibility and challenge – as if I were being asked to switch gears. I also felt like I was in an artistic and personal funk of sorts, which naturally led me to think of Jack's story. The machinations of the art world had been an ongoing interest of mine since my earliest paintings of Artforum-like adverts, so after 15+ years it made sense to reflect upon it – and now my place in it – by re-examining painting again through Jack's words.