

JAMES HARRIS GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE



Jason Teraoka *“Homesick”*

February 19 – March 28, 2009

Opening Reception
Thursday, February 19, 6 – 8 pm

James Harris Gallery is pleased to present our first solo exhibition of paintings by Jason Teraoka. His paintings are indebted to modern suspense cinema and graphic novels. Painted against plain or sparsely detailed backgrounds Teraoka’s figures communicate a sense of unease. The participants are caught in a moment of action with the viewer not knowing what happened before or after. Their expressive faces and body language evoke an unfolding drama.

At the core of Teraoka’s figurative paintings is a psychological and emotional tension created by uncomfortable situations, fear, or dread. His works chronicle the conflicts of contemporary life and its vulnerability. Like the suspense films of the 1950s and the 1960s, Teraoka focuses on the archetypal characters. From defiant to defeated, his subjects exude an emotional intensity.

A majority of the paintings are small scale portraits. Though intimate in size, their cropped heads, intense glare, and facial nuance convey intensity. Abstract backgrounds of solid or modeled color intensify their expressions. In other works, figures are placed in sparsely rendered landscape or interiors. The gestures of the figures combined with an atmosphere of absence add to the stage-like scene.

Jason Teraoka was born on the island of Kauai, Hawaii in 1964, and he is currently based in Honolulu. Teraoka's work was included in the exhibition titled “Shaka Nara;” a collaborative exhibition between six Hawaii-based artists and Yoshitomo Nara in 2005. In 2006 he had his first solo museum show at the Hara Museum of Contemporary Art titled “Neighbors.” His works are now part of the public collections at the Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Honolulu Academy of Arts, and the Hawaii State Foundation on Culture and Arts.