

JAMES HARRIS GALLERY

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Maki Tamura

15 MAY to JUNE 28, 2008

Opening Reception

Thurs. May 15th 6 – 8PM

James Harris Gallery is pleased to present our first solo exhibition by Seattle artist Maki Tamura. For over the past ten years, the artist has been using watercolor on paper to merge cultures through their decorative artistic traditions. The concept of the Baroque implies absurdity carried to excess. This idea characterizes the artistic practice of Maki Tamura. The show will consist of five meticulously constructed pieces that explore classical and rococo motifs found in 18th and 19th century European decorative arts.

Tamura crafts objects that amount to philosophical incursions into the nature of representation and history. With her intensive technique of cutting, folding and gluing paper, laborious to the point of obsession, the artist creates convincingly illusionistic reinterpretations of porcelain vessels, manuscript illustrations and mass marketed Victoriana. Two of the works titled *Dawn* and *Dusk* consist of carefully cut roundels and polyhedrons creating elaborate three dimensional structures. She then paints them with delicate watercolor images of animals, flowers and cherubs. In *Dawn*, these playful images are surrounded by a lush idyllic landscape of a peaceable kingdom. In contrast, the landscape in *Dusk* reveals a verdant contradictory world.

By combining a variety of art traditions both high and low, Tamura's finely crafted works on paper brings to fore an unseemly fantasy that is characterized by its historical precedents. The sumptuous works ironically question the beauty of ornamentation and aesthetics. These provocative colorful multifaceted compositions are sweet but never cloying and meld innocence with arch sophistication.

Gallery hours are Tues. - Sat. 11:00am - 5:00pm & Tues. by appointment
Additional images are available upon request