

L.A. Galerie Lothar Albrecht presents:

Ken Lum

works and videos

November 6 to December 31, 2009

6. November bis 31. Dezember 2009

You and your friends are cordially invited to the opening on Friday, November 6th from 7. p.m.
Wir laden Sie und Ihre Freunde herzlich zur Eröffnung am Freitag, den 6. November um 19.00 Uhr ein.

Ken Lum's works cross borders, figuratively but also physically. From his first pieces in the late 1970s, he has employed an unfettered range of media, including video, sculptural installations, painting, and photography. Similarly unrestricted, his works move beyond gallery walls to intervene in the greater public sphere of the urban environment - as a poster, as a billboard on a grand scale, or as fabrications like his *Four Boats Stranded*:

Red and Yellow, Black and White, that, installed in the year 2001, now permanently interrupts the roof-line of the Vancouver Art Gallery. These artistic transgressions, which unite image, text, and form in provocative ways, make apparent the social and political nature of his vision at the same time as they reveal his aesthetic interests.

Although Lum was born and raised in Vancouver and still lives there,

it is not unusual for his work to be seen as readily in Cologne, Germany, for example, as in his hometown. Early in his career, he captured the interest of an international audience. Today he stands as one of Canada's most celebrated artists, with work appearing in countless international exhibitions, recently including Documenta in 2002 and the biennales of Venice in 2001, Havana and Shanghai in 2000, Silo Paulo in 1998, Johannesburg in 1997, a Sydney in 1992.

*Martha Hanna, Director,
Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography*



„Kim Mart“, 2009, Aluminium lacquer enamel, plexiglas letters
approx. 178 x 198 cm

During 25 years of making art, Lum has been referred to as a sculptor, installation artist, photographer, painter, and performance artist. He refuses to be restricted to any one medium or approach: his politically oriented practice draws on Conceptual, Minimal, and Pop art, while he adopts the form best suited to the project at hand, whether that is performance, painting, sculpture, public sculpture, photo-based work, or posters and artist's books. (...) Whichever medium he chooses to explore at a given point, Lum often works in series, each series walking a fine line between art and non-art as the artist consistently questions the tensions arising in the relationship between artifice and the everyday. Lum describes himself, tongue-in-cheek, as an "old-fashioned type



„International Food Center“, 2009, Aluminium lacquer enamel, plexiglas letters, approx. 170 x 231 cm

Modernist", yet he clearly believes that the work of art must be self-reflexive - a defining element of much contemporary art - in order to illuminate the ideology through which it is read.

Kitty Scott, Curator of Contemporary Art at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa



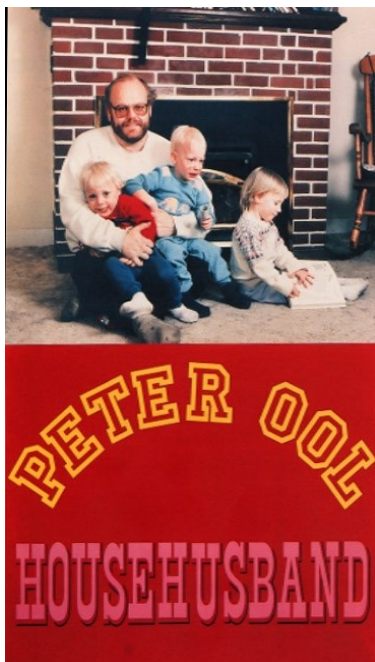
„Hum, Humm, Hummmm“, 1994, Laminated chromogenic print, lacquer aluminium, approx. 189 x 243 cm

Ken Lum's work is oriented toward the banal, the ordinary, and the everyday. In this respect he continues an ancient and important tradition, one that is critical of the grand themes, important statements, and philosophical and political generalities found in the 'great' art of the museums. This tradition is not anti-art, but it is anti-establishment art, and it has always inhabited popular forms - historically the popular print and the genre picture, in more recent times the illustrated novel and the comic book, and of course today television. Serious art has long sought fresh energies in popular culture - the strategy is a familiar one - but I think that a look at same of the historical analogues to

Lum's practice can illuminate his achievement. ...

Another historical form that has links to Lum's work, in this case an obsolete one, and one that perhaps is also a development from the book illustration, is the silent movie inter-title. The relation of the inter-title to the image has an inherent ambiguity because it is up to the viewer to provide the inflection. Imagine a close-up of a film heroine speaking with some emotion. We then read her words on the inter-title. We then see the reaction to her words on the face of her interlocutor, but this doesn't require another title. Both the preceding and succeeding shots can join with the inter-title to form a single image in which the presence of the absent other party is conveyed without being shown. But the moving picture does not allow our mind to dwell on the moment, to explore the depths and nuances present in any human communication, and further, the sound-film closes the gap between words and image that allows those echoes to be heard. In his photo-text combinations, Lum recaptures this lost historical possibility for the two-dimensional still picture.

The multi-directionality of the inter-title hints at something that the Russian philosopher M.M. Bakhtin called "double-directed discourse". According to Bakhtin, nothing we say exists outside of a



Peter Ool, *Househusband*, 1989, C-print on plexiglas, 203 x 124 cm

web of meanings given by others' words, meanings captured by inflections of the voice that refer to the context of the utterance, a context that includes the immediate circumstances but may also include far away times and places. The rich, echoing nature of language becomes especially apparent when we are talking to ourselves. Moments of reverie and self-reflection are the smallest of moments, the most fugitive, the most invisible to others, yet when we look into them we see that many presences crowd that small inner space. In many of Lum's pieces, the speaking or musing



„Superior Drapery, 2002, Aluminium lacquer enamel, plexiglas letters, approx 198 x 198 cm

figures address absent interlocutors. In Hello, How are you?, we sense the presence of a teacher and a class, in You don't love me the absent lover and those others who have failed the speaker in the past and left her with a need that cannot be filled. In other works, such as What am I doing here? or I like myself the way I am, it is less clear who those others are, but we feel their pressure nevertheless. On the other hand, in so me of the pictures of children, we are seeing a person who has yet to accumulate those many voices in their mind.

... Lum's work is not necessarily influenced by these historic forms of text and image, but they can help us to see how the unremarkable scenes that he has chosen participate in one of the central discussions of modern culture - the search for the depth and significance of everyday life in a world

that has lost its 'grand narratives', and the problem of the artistic form that can render ordinary experience while respecting its open-ended nature.

Robert Linsley is an artist and writer living in Vancouver, Canada.

Entertainment for Surrey

Alongside a main feeder route leading to Vancouver from Surrey - a former farming community transformed by the urban development of Vancouver into a suburb, which then morphed into an Edge City with its greenbelt areas, industrial spaces, office and housing complexes joined by a grid road system with nodal monster malls - Ken Lum stood for four days during the morning rush hour in July 1978. This static figure in jeans and a grey hooded sweatshirt was glimpsed in passing as blue- and white-collar commuters rounded a curve and sped under the overpass. "People quickly came to expect me on the same spot," he said. "I became a sign." 1 At the same time and same place on the fifth day (corresponding to the duration of a working week), Lum positioned a white outline of this figure.

Entertainment for Surrey (1978, ...) obliquely introduces issues that are manipulated and materialized in other forms in Ken Lum Works with Photography. The paired issues of mobility and work, city and suburb, built environment and natural environment, identity and recognition, class and place are key both to Lum's critical visual project and to discussions of globalization today. Viewed in a larger context, the period that Ken Lum Works with Photography spans, and that *Entertainment for Surrey* provides a wedge into, is one of intensified globalization, of crisis and reorganization in the world economy.

Jeff Derksen



Alia Naffouj *Hooked on Tennis*, 1988, c-Print on Acryl, approx. 135 x 240 cm

Unterstützt durch / supported by
UWE LENHART
 Fachanwalt für Strafrecht / Lawyer
 www.lenhart-ra.de