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# RECOLLECTION

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RECOLLECTION

by

Eriko Fujita

A THESIS


Presented to the Faculty of  
The Graduate College of the University of Nebraska  
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements  
For the Degree of Master of Fine Arts

Major: Art

Under the Supervision of Professor Karen Kunc

Lincoln, Nebraska

April, 2008



## RECOLLECTION

Eriko Fujita, M.F.A.

University of Nebraska, 2008

Adviser: Karen Kunc

World events, political satire and social commentary are expressed in my artwork. I believe that under the current political circumstances, history is often ignored, forgotten or miscommunicated. My work is a response to the misinterpretation and continuous change in the world around us.

I am interested in looking into the relationship between three countries, Japan, the U.S. and China. I grew up in Hiroshima, Japan until I was sixteen years old. Every summer, schools in Hiroshima have an intense educational program that teaches students about "peace" and how it is important for people to know that there is no such thing as a meaningful war. From the perspective of growing up in a richly historic place, I am interested in the notion of an ever-increasing misunderstanding that still causes war between countries and how it affects or will make an impact on one's life. Japan has long cultural connections with China and the U.S., as well as a shared history of much human tragedy. I realized that my own strong bias towards these particular countries was entirely constructed by the information of the mass media, creating a universal feeling of "loss" and unknown fear. For instance, when I visited China for a month in the summer of 2007, I felt shamefully ignorant and embarrassed about how little I knew. Yet, for the first time ever in my life, I felt energized by being in a moving atmosphere with stimulating people, and felt that I should express ideas about such memories and historical recollections.

Today, I have an increased sensitivity towards current events. I believe that one's mind, especially in my generation, needs to be flexible enough to accept and to be prepared for the world change that is continuously happening. My experiences of travel have allowed me to be receptive to a culture beyond the information of mass media. I have learned not to rely on the sanitized media



that causes public fear, and which separates us from developing a cultural awareness. Without this awareness, our world may collapse sooner than we have predicted.

My experiences of living in both Japan and the U.S. for more than a decade have developed my understanding of culture and human race from a comparative perspective. I frequently find myself conflicted, contradicted, and appreciative of each situation from different point of views. Logically, I need to process and reconcile the experience, while creatively I want to remember and memorialize it. This dichotomy of self has inspired me to create my current body of work.

My visual aesthetic has an element of Japanese pop culture: colorful, playful, "cute" graphically flat. Silkscreen is the ideal medium for my work, as it allows me to explore a visual aesthetic of bright colors, patterning, and repetition. I am fascinated by the ability to make multiples of strong graphic images and the capability to create large-scale work. I also manipulate and incorporate photographs as a form of documentation that has high potential to demonstrate our perception of reality. In the silkscreen method I can exploit this combination of media that offers a diversity of practice, interpretation and experimentation. I integrate the various mediums of print and photos in installation presentations that interweave with the way I see and think about the memory and experience. Such ideas expanded led me to create a video piece in which I reenacted the poses of people from my pictures of China and projected them onto twenty-five rolls of film that once developed in the U.S., were found to be blank. This unfortunate loss of the film record of my trip, in actuality reflected the fleeting memories and transitory nature of experience and life and becomes a meaningful object for the video to pass through.

I see my creative process as an act of recording transitory histories. What is universal may be the feeling of being under-informed, and no matter how hard we attempt to understand each other, our assumptions may always exist and we may never merge. In my work I intend to inform the present with the past in hopes of challenging viewers to investigate and question the world we live in, and also to be an active participant in society.



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