

STEPHEN WIRTZ GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Julie Casemore, (415) 433-6879, julie@wirtzgallery.com

MISAKO INAOKA

The Origin of Species

Exhibition dates: September 5-September 29, 2007

Reception for the artist Thursday, September 6, 5:30-7:30 PM

Stephen Wirtz Gallery presents *The Origin of Species*, an exhibition of sculptural objects and installations by Misako Inaoka. Representing fantastical examples of imaginary flora and fauna created from artificial materials, Inaoka's exquisite objects are arranged to mimic the display of artifacts in a museum of natural history or *Wunderkammer*.

Titled after Charles Darwin's seminal work, the exhibition features an evolutionary tree wall installation that traces ancestral interrelationships between various hybrid creatures of Inaoka's invention. Small objects representing animals of varying complexity are placed on shelves that represent specific time periods of development. Birds with extra heads and uncharacteristic protrusions are presented as descendants of a single, egg-like form. The final stage is represented by twisted hybrids of birds and four-legged animals such as deer and pigs. Specimen boxes present additional objects of strange and unsettling curiosity from nature gone awry. Some are equipped with motion sensors that activate the creature's beak or wings and produce sound.

Inaoka states "My interests arise from the boundary between what we call natural and artificial. I observe the physical and social environment in detail, to find hidden beauty and peculiarity-- things such as a cell phone antenna in the shape of a pine tree, birds that are not native to the area, or moss growing in a crack of cement sidewalk. I emphasize these subtle details and exaggerate their illogicality to cultivate my own version of invented creatures." Inaoka presents a strangely enchanting and unsettlingly humorous world that examines the dark possibility of rapid mutation in nature and vanishing of species that compels the viewer to take a harder look at their own surroundings.

Misako Inaoka was born in Kyoto, Japan. She received her MFA from Mills College in 2006 and a BFA from Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) in 2001. This is her first exhibition with Stephen Wirtz Gallery.

Stephen Wirtz Gallery is located at 49 Geary St., 3rd Fl., San Francisco, CA 94108, (415) 433-6879. Gallery hours are Tuesday-Friday, 9:30-5:30, Saturday 10:30-5:30.

For additional information please contact Julie Casemore, Tel.: (415) 433-6879, julie@wirtzgallery.com