

For Immediate Release
March 20, 2011

WITHIN YOU WITHOUT YOU

Jana Benitez, Cao Yi, Taku Saito, Haeri Yoo, Zhang Yu
Curated by Michelle Loh

April 9th – May 8th, 2011

Opening Reception: 3:00 pm – 6:00pm, Saturday, April 9th, 2011

Artist Panel Discussion: 4:00pm, Saturday, April 16th, 2011

Moderator: Professor John Rajchman, Columbia University

The NARS (New York Art Residency & Studio) Foundation is pleased to present a group exhibition of New York-based Asian artists, featuring a site-specific installation and drawings by Haeri Yoo; paintings by Jana Benitez and Zhang Yu; an oil painting installation by Taku Saito; and a video by Cao Yi.

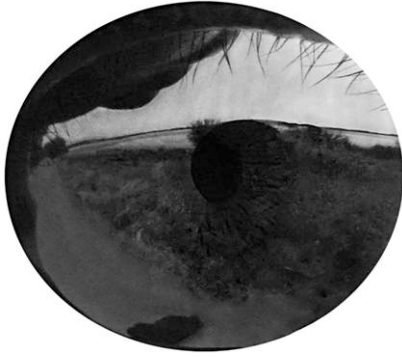
“The response of one organism to the gestures of another in any given social act is the meaning of that gesture” (George Herbert Mead). Each of the works in WITHIN YOU WITHOUT YOU is a kind of self-portrait that investigates the essential connection between the self and society; the dynamic is played out and transformed in the connection of each work to the others and to the exhibition as a whole.

Inspired by the Modern European art tradition and the elegant gestures of martial arts movement, **Jana Benitez** expresses an interior world with her bold murals. Combining figurative and abstract symbols with uninhibited brush work, Benitez explores emotion in human faces and figures. Her images can evoke an intense yet whimsical quarrel between vibrant internal organs and a cogitating mind.



Jana Benitez(b 1985) was born in New York to a Filipino family. She graduated magna cum laude from Brown University with a B.A in visual arts in 2008. She studied martial arts at a Daoist temple in China. Benitez had her first solo exhibition at the age of fourteen at the Walter Wickiser Gallery in New York. She has been exhibiting since then in New York, the Philippines, and recently in Berlin. Her works are included in some major private and public collections, including Pataka Museum in New Zealand, Ayala Museum and Museo Pambata in the Philippines.

Cao Yi demonstrates solid skills in a wide variety of media including photography, drawing, and painting. The video of his photo series “Beauty in My Eyes” captures images of nature literally reflected in Cao’s eyes. His photographic gaze is insistent but illusory. Cao’s works invite viewers into a dialogue between the outer landscape and inner self.



Cao Yi (b.1983) was born in China. He expects to receive a Master of Fine Arts degree from the New York Academy of Fine Art this May. He holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing. In 2010, he was accepted to the Leipzig International Artist Residency Program in Germany. He is a recipient of several awards including a second prize award from the Central Academy of Fine Art, and first prize at the “The Annual Exhibition of Selected Students” at the Central Academy of Fine Arts.

Taku Saito's self-portraits, at first glance, appear to be emotionless, yet, the sense of isolation and determination is evident. The facial structure in the portrait is fragmented, dissolved into dripping oil. Intriguingly, the influence of manga style, and reminiscences of adolescent struggles are embedded in the paintings. Saito uses his face as the motif to represent social portraits of ordinary, everyday lives, their unexpected distractions, chaotic incidents, and survival instincts.

Taku Saito is a New York based artist born in Japan. He studied painting at Tama Art University, and received his MFA from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn in 2010. His work has been exhibited at the Steuben South Gallery in Brooklyn, and at Takiyama Gallery in Tokyo.



Haeri Yoo's drawings and site-specific wall works explore human sexuality, bodily tensions, illicit thoughts and oppression. Yoo uses materials, including pencil, pastels, acrylic, handcrafted and found objects and spray paint as well as collage elements with an expressive energy. Blurring the boundary between abstraction and figurative depiction, her work segregates and playfully mutates reality. Beauty and violence, light and dark are left in an inconclusive, disharmonious impasse.

Haeri Yoo, who was born in Korea, currently works and lives in New York City. She graduated from Pratt Institute with a MFA. Her work has been exhibited in a number of venues such as: Thomas Erben Gallery, New York; Monica de Cardenas Gallery, Milan; Kresge Art Museum, East Lansing, MI; House of Campari, NY (curated by Simon Watson); Smith College Museum of Art Northampton, MA; and Queens Museum of Art. Most recently, her work was included in an exhibition at the Seoul Art Center and will be part of paint at the Saatchi Gallery, London. Her work has been discussed in the New York Times, Whitewall Magazine, the Brooklyn Rail, TimeOut Mumbai and Artkrush.

The female figures in **Zhang Yu's** paintings share common appearances: light colored skin and dehumanized eyes against an illuminated background. Zhang's use of snapshots, movie images, and magazine clips to depict a generic "female being" is an introspective process. Her exceptionally strong draftsmanship frees her to use canvas as the space where the intensity and complexities of the subject are brought forward. Zhang seeks the essence of human nature, which she believes can only be discovered within.



Zhang Yu was born in Beijing, China. She holds a MFA from both the Central Academy of Fine Art in China and the City College of New York. Zhang has received the Koan J. Baysa Award in 2008. She has had numerous solo and group exhibitions in the United States, Japan and China including Nasu-Kougen Museum, Japan; International Arts Festival Shanghai, China; Walter Wickiser Gallery, Thomas Erben Gallery, Artists Space, Exit Art, Ethan Cohen Fine Arts and White Box in New York. Her work has been reviewed in several books including "New China, New Art" by Richard Vine.

About the curator:

Michelle Loh is a New York-based art consultant who specializes in organizing art fairs and group exhibitions. Loh advises individual and institutional collectors about contemporary Asian art. Her most recent projects include *FOCUS SHANGHAI: Two Contemporary Chinese video Artists* at **Thomas Erben Gallery**, and *Trans-Realism: Contemporary Art from China* at Christie's. She was part of the founding team of the **Asian Contemporary Art Fair**, New York, 2007 and 2008, and the co-publisher of Art Asia Pacific from 2003 to 2005.

The **NARS Foundation's** mission is to provide a diverse platform for cultural exchange and collaboration among artists and curators. NARS provides an array of creative support services including cross-cultural exchanges, integrated residency programs and affordable studio spaces that support the needs of both emerging and mid-career artists. With a focus on international cultural exchange, the NARS Foundation is committed to supporting the creative professional development of artists and curators from around the world as well as community building through public programs that engage the local community in Brooklyn.

Gallery Hours:

Wednesday - Friday: 1:00pm - 6:00pm

Saturday - Sunday: by appointment between 12:00pm - 6:00pm

Please call the NARS office to set up an appointment at 718-768-2765.

The NARS Gallery is located on the 3rd floor at 88 35th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11232.

For further information please visit www.narsfoundation.org or contact info@narsfoundation.org.