

My work derives from research and fieldwork. I approach issues of immigrant assimilation, identity and cultural merging in the global economy from an anthropological viewpoint and develop a specific visual form to effectively present my ideas regarding these issues. My methodology includes installation incorporating constructed objects and video, public intervention projects and on-site performance art.

I observe the intricate dynamics of commerce. I consider the confluence of different cultures in the market place, paying attention such aspect as product routes, specific cultural derivations of products, the ethnicity of vendors, and the influence of free trade on traditional culture. Instead of examining my subject from the purely academic theoretical perspective, I question by what new means artists can participate in shaping dialogue about cultural identity issues.

Whereas my installation art affects the appearance and mechanics of a market place, materially consisting of excessive accumulations of individually replicated objects, my incentive for performance art is to put myself directly into the place of commerce to carry out in-depth research in the multicultural urban environment that embraces various sociological and political factors.

For example I am fascinated with the social constructs, cultural keynotes and communicative qualities that lie within the lineage of objects. Typically my installations incorporate thousands of hand-cast porcelain and stoneware objects derived from mass produced goods that were found in discount stores and Chinatown souvenir shops or sold by street vendors. Initially stimulating an "acquisitive instinct," the work directs the viewer to see the surprising capacity for evoking nostalgia, empathy, compassion and personal attachment towards the banal commoditized objects. Through material transformation and by applying traditional ceramic methods, I attempt to link these objects to their lost origins and relevance.

My performance and site-specific public projects are the results of societal collaboration, often pursued with in-kind support from local small business owners. Under the guise of "street vending," I use a collapsible shopping cart, kiddie-rides, storefront displays, and other means and devices, as a strategy to promote an alternative circulation of art and ideas. I establish a situation where the viewer can engage my work from a commercial perspective they can control and from an art perspective leading to an open ended dialogue. This provides opportunities for collecting peripheral information that goes beyond academic research, especially knowledge gained by candid dialog that can only be elicited on site.

Through both studio production and public intervention performance work, I investigate the process through which cultural objects are transformed by capitalist market strategies, related to migration, hyper consumerism and pop culture. As a Japanese artist and an immigrant I question the idiosyncrasies of my own race and

culture and how Japanese symbols and cultural iconography have made inroads into the American economy. I examine a hidden lineage linking traditional cultural icons that were inspired from mystic belief or superstition and sub-cultural icons that can be found as a manifestation of contemporary popular culture, yet, at the same time, carry the resonance of a new or similar devotional power. At this time of vigorous global trade and robust economic exchange, simultaneously, I question how my work might address broader issues of identity and assimilation. It is fascinating to see how iconographic representations continually reappear throughout the chronicles of migration, transcending racial, generational, and geographical boundaries.

In this regard, my on going project entitled “Transmigration of the SOLD” is the most complex intervention work to date involving international collaborations with different vocations and disciplines. I am pursuing a four-phase plan that cycles hand-knitted wool sweaters with American flag designs that are made in the Andes Mountains. These were originally sold by Peruvian vendors on Canal Street in the wake of 9-11. By using an actual paradigm and direct involvement with its proponents for fabrication and import-export processes, I explore the human cost and benefit that lie behind the commercial exploitation of the products, probing the effects of global trade on indigenous culture, craft tradition and value systems in capitalism. Being obliged to travel as a sensitive witness to this process of socio-cultural and economic shift in foreign locals has shape my life long objectives to a more humanistic approach.

I want my work to be seen as a mapping of the intricacies of this complex equation and to create a tension between a lyrical reading and social reality. I believe in the collective responsibilities of creative communities for investing and sharing our resources (money, time and intellectual properties) and how we can collaboratively promote social awareness through art. This grant would help advance my research to a greater extent and facilitate the pursuit of my overall practice. The grant allows my work to develop more freely outside the constraints of the established art market.