

Alive

An uplifting exhibition of cast sculpture and drawings
by Japanese artist, Akiko Ban

Opening Reception: 6.30–8.30 pm 1 March 2012

Exhibition: 2–24 March



Akiko Ban *Untitled (Yellow Figure)* plaster and pigment 2009

The intention of Akiko Ban's artistic practice is to give life to materials and generate separate entities which exist on their own. Each of her works is the result of a personal ritual and disciplined methodology. A process that has been influenced by the rigorous physical and spiritual training she has experienced as a qualified master of Japanese calligraphy.

She uses direct or real time casting as a means of capturing reality. Using liquid and flexible materials such as water, ink, plaster, fabric and rubber, she simultaneously integrates the process of model making, mould making and casting into one singular event.

There are aspects of capturing time, concentration, understanding and controlling material within real time casting. Unlike traditional casting, it is process which allows her to take the action and experience of something intangible over a short period of time and transform it into a visible object.

Akiko's work is about her personal mythology – the series of myths which reflect the world that surround her now. The work may be influenced by music she listens to, film she sees, fashion she likes or possibly social matters she experiences. To capture these moments in sculpture, a full understanding of the material is vital. Being honest and direct with the material, brings the mind to total concentration, letting an uplifting inner spirit emerge through the object – when those factors are integrated into the process, it finally generates the best work.

It is important to work intuitively, as her inner spirit can then be manifested and eventually generated as the object. She calls this work generation process 'manifestation of entity' which only happens when her unconsciousness is purely harmonized with the natural phenomena caused by materials. It is 'mass of life' which communicates itself on its own terms. The result of the process becomes her work. For Akiko, process and outcome are clearly linked together and inseparable. What she is casting is life.

"The idea – the imaginative concept – actually is the giving of life and vitality to material. When we say that a great sculpture has vision, power, vitality, scale, poise, form or beauty, we are not speaking of physical attributes. Vitality is not a physical, organic attribute of sculpture - it is a spiritual inner life."

- Barbara Hepworth

Akiko Ban has an MFA in Fine Art (Sculpture) from The Slade School of Fine Art and a BA (Hons) Drawing from Camberwell College of Arts.

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Akiko Ban *Four (detail)* plaster, pigment and wood 2011



Akiko Ban *Untitled (mask)* plaster, pigment and metal 2009



Akiko Ban *Mystic Parade (detail)* mixed media 2011

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Bicha Gallery represents living contemporary artists from the UK and around the world – working in sculpture, ceramics, drawing, illustration, painting, photography, printmaking, etching and metal work.

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Opening Hours: Tuesday through Sunday from 11am to 7pm