

76 GRAND STREET NEW YORK NY 10013



PHONE (212) 343 7300 WWW.DEITCH.COM

AFTER THE REALITY

CURATED BY HIROMI YOSHII

July 6 – August 12, 2006

76 Grand Street

**Yoshitaka Azuma
Enlightenment
Koichi Enomoto**

**Taro Izumi
Soichiro Matsubara
Aya Ohki**

Deitch Projects is pleased to present *After the Reality*, a exhibition featuring some of the most exciting new artists from Japan, curated by gallerist Hiromi Yoshii. The exhibition includes five artists and the art collective Enlightenment, all of whom are involved in portraying what could be described as a post-reality world. Fantasy and reality, fears and emotions, are presented amidst an optimistic embrace of life and a foreboding of death.

When asked about the original meaning of his work, Yoshitaka Azuma, born in Osaka, in 1977, begins by explaining that he was brought up in an “extremely normal” environment. He sees his paintings as an abstract mirror of himself and paints as a way to pursue this self-exploration. Though most of his paintings are of women, he sees them all as a kind of self-portrait. He aspires to achieve a sense of chaos in the paintings, explaining that one does not know where to focus while looking at the works, and this search parallels the artist’s own search for himself therein.

Koichi Enomoto, also born in Osaka in 1977, began painting while studying industrial metal arts and became especially interested in the patterns of metal work. His work is an exploration of the extreme power of nature over man. His largest painting in the exhibition portrays an urban environment upended by an earthquake. He explains that the power to dismantle is all around us. Other paintings in the exhibition juxtapose forest fires and rainbows. Geometric structures in the work draw on origami, traditional forms of Japanese textiles, and samurai armor. Enomoto always paints the sides of his paintings with upward-slanting stripes, as he says he wants his paintings to be free from gravity.

The video works of Taro Izumi, born in Nara in 1976, are based on his awkward *otaku* world. The artist explains that he feels weak in his social environment and he wants people with the same feeling to see through his art that they are also a legitimate part of society. He hopes that people who share this feeling of weakness or displacement will find relief through his artwork. In *Lime Lake*, created for the exhibition,

the imagery is based on the artist's lack of self-esteem, and is described as a personal problem project. He says he is not satisfied in his daily life, and in this video kills himself repeatedly by slapping his hand at his own image as he would swat to kill a fly.

Soichiro Matsubara was born on the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido in 1980 and the rural environment of his childhood converges with the cultural *mélange* of Tokyo where he studied and now lives. Thorny vines and pink intestines weave through his symmetrically oriented works on paper as supernatural beings appear and disappear from what he sees as other dimensions of experience. The sculpture titled *Antenna* he views as a lightning rod capturing natural and urban energies. His large wall paintings and works on paper are largely spontaneous creations, organic rather than architectural, and often site-specific.

Aya Oki, born 1983 in Fukuoka, studied at Tama Art University as did Matsubara and Izumi, and shares a feeling of spirituality based in natural forces. Predominately working in the medium of video animation, she presents a video sculpture in this exhibition. Her pieces are whimsical, combining handmade drawings and watercolors that she scans and animates with minimal diegetic sounds, and are infused with an animistic spirituality.

Enlightenment, directed by Hiro Sugiyama, has developed a unique artistic concept that blurs the boundary between commercial and fine art. Enlightenment creates some of the most innovative illustration and graphic design in Japan, as well as some of the strongest new art. In addition to Sugiyama, the other members of the group are Akiyoshi Mishima, Shigeru Suzuki, and Kaname Yamaguchi. Each of the members has a particular area of expertise: Suzuki and Yamaguchi are former students of Sugiyama and skilled in computer graphics and digital painting, while Mishima is skilled in movie production. Sugiyama is the organizer and director, creating the conceptual framework of the work. Enlightenment is interested in the "between-space"- not just the space between commercial and fine art, but the space between life and death, between photography and painting, and the interstice between the real and the fantastical. They are interested in the supernatural and in powers that cannot be rationally explained. The digitally painted mirrors featured in the exhibition they see as entrances to another world.

A 52-page catalog designed by Enlightenment has been published to accompany the exhibition. Towa Tei, the musician and DJ known for his chart-topping work with Deee-lite will present a special performance after the opening along with video projections by Enlightenment.

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT JASMINE LEVETT AT
212 343 7300 WWW.DEITCH.COM**