

# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

76 GRAND STREET NEW YORK NY 10013



## KOJI SHIMIZU ***STRAWBERRY BOMB*** July 5 – 31, 2001

Deitch Projects is pleased to present *Strawberry Bomb*, a painting, sculpture and drawing installation by Koji Shimizu. The work is inspired by the contradictory memories of the artist's childhood in rural Japan. The "strawberry" in the exhibition title comes from the small family strawberry farm where the artist lived until he left for art school in Tokyo at the age of eighteen. The "bomb" comes from the artist's vague childhood awareness of a more sinister history of modern Japan that contradicted the peaceful atmosphere of the strawberry farm.

Shimizu's work is direct and immediate. He transfers images from his memories and his imagination directly onto the fragments of paper, canvas and wood that he accumulates to construct his installations. Benign images of strawberries and farm implements are interspersed with disturbing images of bombs and war material. They are rendered with an equivalent naiveté and tenderness. The work is soft, made from tissue paper and paper maché. Sculptures of tanks and artillery are built up from layers of yellow tissue paper rather than from heavy metal. The images appear to have floated into the space directly from a dream.

The subject of Shimizu's work also derives from his childhood conception of what was "cool" and "uncool." Growing up on a small farm in 1970s Japan was uncool. Fighter planes, tanks, and bombs, as depicted in popular comic books, were cool. The work reflects the confusion of the artist's identity as a farmer's son in a Japan where rural traditions were under constant challenge from the enticements of popular culture. The work also reflects the contraction between the simple, truthful country life and the increasingly artificial Japanese popular culture.

**CONTINUED ON REVERSE**

Koji Shimizu is a graduate of Musashino Art University in Tokyo and received an M.F.A. from the University of Pennsylvania. He has lived and worked in New York since 1993.

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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT  
ELIZABETH SCHWARTZ AT 343-7300**