

MURRAY GUY

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SHIRLEY TSE *Polytocus* 30 March – 4 May 2002

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Plastic for Shirley Tse is an infinite source of possibilities, being adaptable, strong, durable and cheap. Perpetuated by self-generation and referring only to itself, it is a substance having no prior model. A construction, the bases are naturally occurring molecules, but the organization of them is not. It is an unnatural, alien substance, yet quintessentially a part of our culture of convenience – a synthetic material that reflects a world of rapid transition.

In the current exhibition, Shirley Tse continues to use plastic as simulacrum, cutting into multicolored sheets of vinyl, peeling back strips or fastening on studs to make patterns across the surface. Through such arcing movements, forms are split away to reproduce themselves. Creating a play between the positive and negative, areas within the compositions continually move from background to foreground. In 'Freeways', the strips cross over to evoke an aerial view of a highway interchange. The fleshy pink color, however, brings to mind arteries of a more sanguine character. Tse uses extracted sections to make sculptural elements. In 'Flowers SML', rectangles are cut and roll outwards into origami-like floral shapes. The two-dimensional void is translated into a three-dimensional solid and the geometric is transformed into the organic. In 'I Saw Dragons Rising Above The Substrate (Mirrored)', forms are folded back ingeniously to make shapes reminiscent of thong sandals. This attempted usage of every scrap stems from her experience of piecework in garment factories.

The eye traces out different pathways across these planes. All the divergent elements are held together by the uniform quality of the material. Tse invites a consideration of new relations between the useful and the useless and the natural and the artificial. Applying playful strategies to reinvent and question a familiar world she practices an artisan's skill in contrast to the cool efficiency of the technologies and consumer delivery systems that have spawned such material abundance. Through simple gestures and inventive transformations, she shows the utterly foreign nature of the familiar and travels freely between the metaphoric and the literal.

Shirley Tse's work was recently included in *010101: Art in Technological Times*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; *Promises*, Vancouver Contemporary Art Gallery, Canada and *Officina America*, Galleria d'arte moderna di Bologna, Italy. This year she will participate in the Biennale of Sydney, Australia; *Sprawl*, Cincinnati Contemporary Art Center, Cincinnati; *Artists Imagine Architecture*, ICA, Boston; *Out of Site*, New Museum, New York and *Provisional Worlds*, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada. She lives and works in Los Angeles. This is her second solo show at Murray Guy.

Gallery hours are 10am - 6pm, Tuesday - Saturday. For further information please call Margaret Murray or Janice Guy at 212 463 7372