

Murray Guy

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Kota Ezawa

Thirteen Stolen Works of Art and a Videotape

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In the early morning hours of March 18, 1990, two thieves disguised as police officers entered the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston and stole thirteen irreplaceable works of art. Twenty-five years later, this summer, the FBI publicly released an additional surveillance videotape. For his fourth solo exhibition at the gallery, Kota Ezawa presents a cohesive and topical exhibition drawn from the infamous Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum theft.

Ezawa's new six minute animated film recreates the 1990 videotape recorded at the Boston museum the night before the largest art heist in American history, in which 500 million dollars worth of art was stolen. The footage shows a man dressed in a trench coat passing the security desk around midnight, the museum guard at his post, and a car parked outside the museum and soon after, being driven away. Apart from the potential crime evidence captured on the tape, the animation also looks at the material nature of this video. The low frame rate, time stamping, and video artifacts that attest to the age of the analog surveillance tape, become as much a part of the work as the events depicted.

Alongside the film, Ezawa has reconstructed the thirteen artworks stolen from the museum to their original size as LED light boxes. These include reproductions of paintings by Vermeer, Rembrandt and Manet, drawings and sketches by Degas, an antique Chinese vase and other objects.

Previous to this body of work, Ezawa exclusively used photographs, film, and television footage as source material. While working on this exhibition, he recognized the 17th century painters Rembrandt and Vermeer as photographers of their time. In the absence of photography, their paintings took the role of recording reality with the scrutiny and minuteness that we now expect from cameras. In this way, the new series is a pre-photography age continuation of his earlier work, *The History of Photography Remix*. Additionally, this exhibition reconsiders Ezawa's 'image theft' procedure through the reconstruction of the stolen art works in an attempt to steal the images back and give them an alternative narrative.

Kota Ezawa lives and works in Oakland, California. Recent solo exhibitions include Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY (2013), Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA (2013), and Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, OH (2009). His work has been included in group exhibitions, *Out of the Ordinary* at Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington DC (2013), *After Photoshop* at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY (2012), and *The More Things Change* at San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA (2011). Ezawa's work is in the collection of such institutions as Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and Pier 24 Photography, San Francisco, CA, among others.

Ezawa currently has a solo exhibition at the Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Virginia.

For more information or images, please contact the gallery at +1-212-463-7372 or info@murrayguy.com.