

SHIMABUKU MY TEACHER TORTOISE

6 May to 5 June 2011, Upper Gallery

Wilkinson Gallery is pleased to announce its third solo exhibition with Japanese artist Shimabuku.

Often drawing upon collective experience and the otherwise banal or quotidian, Shimabuku's work – devoid of conventionality and pretence – is absorbingly human and richly poetic.

The exhibition's focal point is the impressive installation *My Teacher Tortoise*, 2011, from which the exhibition takes its title. The installation, which has also been exhibited this year at The National Museum of Art in Osaka as part of the exhibition: *Air Hole: Another Form of Conceptualism from Asia*, is typical of Shimabuku's effortlessly poignant narrative. As the artist himself defines 'This exhibition is a chance to think about stopping'. Contemplative and wise are the often fabled characteristics of the tortoise, correspondingly, in the context of the exhibition, the tortoise is emblematic of Shimabuku's suggestion that we ought to slow down and reconsider our often unconcerned appreciation of the present.

Something that Floats / Something that Sinks, 2010, as the title suggests, makes the very literal physical comparison between fruits that float and fruits that sink. The work is the realisation of something the artist noticed whilst cooking and always found bizarre and amusing. The viewer is neither asked to explain this physical difference nor to understand it, rather, to simply enjoy the work for all its curiosities. Similarly, *Leaves Swim*, 2011 – a beautifully ornate portrait of a seahorse filmed under water – presents the viewer with an exotic unknown, but encourages us to simply appreciate the uncomplicated beauty of this spectacular creature.

Through his ongoing practice, Shimabuku playfully challenges our desire to define the unfamiliar, suggesting that art should be an opportunity to accept and appreciate the unknown or incomprehensible, rather than the continual search for its definition or explanation.

Recent solo exhibitions include 'Kaki and Tomato', Air de Paris, Paris (2010), The Watari Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo (2009), 'The Street', Whitechapel Art Gallery (2008), 'Sea, Sky, Language and so on', DAAD galerie, Berlin (2008). Recent significant group exhibitions include 'Air Hole: Another Form of Conceptualism from Asia', The National Museum of Art, Osaka, Japan (2011), 'Eating the universe. Food in Art', Kunsthalle Dusseldorf, Germany and 'Laughing in a Foreign Language', The Hayward Gallery, London (2008).