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Press Release/Information

Shimabuku

Swansea Jack Memorial Dog Swimming Competition

18 October – 30 November 2003
Room 1 and Room 4

Preview Fri 17 Oct 7pm
The artist will be present

Shimabuku is an artist from Japan who makes extraordinary and thoroughly engaging process-based works which involve live art, video, drawing and photography. He has exhibited widely, recent shows include *As it Is*, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, The Yokohama Triennial and *Facts of Life*, Hayward Gallery, London.

The artist's process often involves a journey or quest through a previously unknown place in which he documents his experiences along the way. At its core the artist's practice centres around ideas of communication between self and others, and between art and its audience. Shimabuku attempts to create challenging and fluid works, which engage directly with diverse audiences in the community in which he is working. His gentle re-invention of local stories aim to break down often-rigid boundaries between inside and outside the art institution, his natural warmth encouraging people to enjoy participating in his imaginative projects.

Past works have included taking an octopus for a walk, whilst others have involved searching for deer, taking a curator on a canal journey and flying goldfish kites. His search for a legendary 165-metre-long mermaid, took him from Kyushu to Marseilles to Sydney, not in the belief that he would find the

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creature, but in order to make the journey and countless chance encounters along the way. His works are always touching and often funny, yet this humour belies the seriousness and integrity which lay at the core of his work and the respect he has for the stories he finds and the people he meets and places he visits.

Shimabuku was invited to Swansea to make new work and on his first visit he discovered the story of Swansea Jack. Swansea Jack is the name of a famous black retriever who saved the lives of local people in Swansea Docks and Bay area. For his new work Shimabuku has invited local people to a *Swansea Jack Memorial Dog Swimming Competition*. The first part of this involves a poster campaign in which local dog owners are invited to bring their dogs to a nearby beach where they will be filmed swimming. On 17th October the exhibition opens and will include the footage of the dogs swimming. During the exhibition the audience will judge their favourite dog, who will be awarded a prize in memory of this remarkable canine hero. The exhibition also includes important Swansea Jack Memorabilia and a series of recent works including *Then, I decided to give a tour of Tokyo to the octopus from Akashi*.

Artist talk Saturday 18 October 2pm

Exhibition catalogue available including an interview with Shimabuku by Jonathan Watkins, Director, Ikon Gallery. *Exhibition originated by the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery.*

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For further information or press photos, please contact Karen MacKinnon (Exhibitions Officer) or Lydia Hawkins (Exhibitions Assistant): **Tel 01792 516900**
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Admission Free Tues-Sun 10.00am-5.00pm

