

Gaga is pleased to announce *New Images*, its third exhibition of works by Jay Chung and Q Takeki Maeda. *New Images* presents recent works made in line with the artists' interest in conceptual formats that might be considered suitable to the current status of contemporary art with respect to its own history and place in the world at large.

Millenarian sects are religious, social, or political groups and movements formed in the expectation of a major transformation in society. In addition to early Christianity, doomsday cults, and Bolshevism, the art movements known as the historic avant-garde (e.g. Dada, Surrealism, and Constructivism) exhibit properties of millenarianism insofar as the artists associated with these movements worked in anticipation of a radical upheaval of bourgeois aesthetic norms and values. As is true for all millenarian sects, the predicted avant-garde revolutions never came to pass. Nonetheless, the artistic formats and principles developed by the avant-garde were taken up by later artists, being recycled in the works of the Neo-Avantgarde during the postwar era and again in today's globalized contemporary art world.

There are many ways millenarian sects cope with the failure of their predictions. *Display System: Suicide, Affirmation, Mediation* (2018) divides the gallery's exhibition space according to designations for three of these: suicide, affirmation, and mediation. The first, suicide, is usually associated with doomsday cults such as the Peoples Temple and Heaven's Gate, and is the most violent of the three responses. But not all millenarian sects resort to such extreme ends. Others will instead proclaim their prophecy has in fact been fulfilled and simply affirm the existing state of affairs. In this second case, the failure of their prophecy paradoxically becomes the main evidence that the promise has arrived. Mediation, the third and most complex of the responses, involves a set of special texts, rituals, and institutions whose purpose is to manage the disparity between the prophecy and the reality of its non- appearance. Concrete predictions become metaphors, actions become rituals, and the sect becomes institutionalized, perpetually deferring expectations to some distant horizon.

Of the three sections comprising *Display System*, only one is used in the exhibition, with suicide and affirmation remaining empty. On the wall of the third section, mediation, the artists present a series of photographs of sharks, all *Untitled* (2018). In the sphere of contemporary art, the most well-known use of the image of the shark is *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*, a purportedly "shocking" sculpture by the artist Damien Hirst, who rose to prominence in the early 1990s as part of a highly publicized group known as the Young British Artists. It could be said that Hirst's sculpture, having been so widely disseminated in the media, is so notorious that even today any work of contemporary art featuring a shark or sharks would inevitably be linked to

Hirst's, regardless of the fact of any actual or intended connection. In the photographs on display here, sharks are depicted, alive and swimming, in a tank at a public aquarium, for city-dwellers the most mundane of environments in which to view the animal.

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