

Parts of a Whole: Lynne Yamamoto at P.P.O.W

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Lynne Yamamoto: Project 2, Genteel at P.P.O.W

October 13th to November 12, 2011

535 West 22nd Street, between 10th and 11th avenues

New York City, 212-647-1044



Installation shot of Lynne Yamamoto's *Genteel* at P.P.O.W, October 13 to November 12, 2011

Lynne Yamamoto is one of the two female artists with solo-shows on view at P.P.O.W, continuing the gallery's trend of exhibiting mid-career women this season, beginning with Martha Wilson's "I have become my own worst fear." Katherine Kuharic's series "Pound of Flesh" showcases her signature collages and oil paintings. Particularly resonant commentaries on consumerism today, her works recall the pop art of Tom Wesselman and Richard Hamilton. A smaller, more private gallery is devoted to Yamamoto's hauntingly austere works. Born and raised in Hawaii, much of the artist's oeuvre speaks to the implications of nationality and culture in shaping identity. Titled "*Genteel*," Yamamoto's minimal and monochromatic exhibition houses only two projects: *Insect Immigrants, After Zimmerman (1948) Hawaii*, 2009-11 and the sculpture *Grandfather's Shed*, 2008-10.

Insects are a reoccurring device in Yamamoto's work. Often employed to speak to issues of seriality and taxonomy, they are used here to examine the complexity of Hawaiian nativity. *Insect Immigrants* consists of a collection of found white doilies, each hand embroidered with a different insect and displayed to face the wall, making visible the painstaking production of each loop and knot. Yamamoto's exposure of her elaborate process speaks to the complex construction of Hawaiian identity with its multi-ethnic population. Much like the identity of Hawaiian immigrant people, each work in her series is unique, yet forcibly classified, titled with the embroidered insect's scientific name.

Yamamoto's handmade pieces are clustered and suspended using black insect pins, originally intended for mounting and displaying real beetles and butterflies. Here, the pins are used to draw the doilies away from the gallery wall, casting dramatic shadows. The installation almost appears to glow from within, the visual impact of the 78 insect immigrants alluding to the effectiveness of a critical mass. Within the group, however, there is a painstaking allegiance to individuality, the personal identity of each insect crafted by hand upon a vintage doily, itself imbued with a lengthy history.



Lynne Yamamoto, *Grandfather's Shed*, 2008-10. Hand finished, digitally carved marble from 3D scan of hand-made positive, 10-3/4 x 11-1/4 x 9-3/4 inches, edition of 2. Courtesy of P.P.O.W.

A statement from P.P.O.W references the arrival of American missionaries to Hawaii in the early 1800s who established plantations that drew waves of immigrants. This immigrant presence has had a lasting effect on the ethnic diversity, and in turn the collective identity, of the state.

Yamamoto's title, *Insect Immigrants, After Zimmerman (1948) Hawaii*, refers to a 1948 scientific volume compiled by Elwood C. Zimmerman, an entomologist who catalogued all Hawaiian insect fauna including over 5,000 insects native to the state. This metaphor of a native species serves to inform the larger dialogue of nationality in a place with such a complex cultural identity.

The fragility of Yamamoto's doilies is countered by the stoic impenetrability of her marble sculpture, *Grandfather's Shed*. Displayed on a pedestal in the corner of the gallery, the small relic is a markedly more personal commentary on cultural identity, paying tribute to Yamamoto's own family history. The work is subtitled *Lana'i City, Island of Lana'i* and memorializes her grandfather's humble woodshop, originally constructed from scavenged materials. The sculpture was produced through a 3D scan of a hand-made positive, then hand-detailed by the artist from memory. The shed is rendered in what appears to be realistic detail, with a dented roof and gaps in the siding where the wooden panels have come away from the frame. The permanence of the material is heightened by the solidity of the work itself— all doors and windows have been closed off, affording no transparency or view of the interior.

By implementing distinctly European methods of construction, both with her embroidery and marble sculpture, Yamamoto makes reference to a western identity, and perhaps her current positioning as an immigrant. Interested in the visual signifiers that constitute cultural identity, Yamamoto highlights the very slips and contradictions that contribute to the plurality of the self.