

I N M A N G A L L E R Y

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 4, 2014

Inman Gallery is pleased to present two exhibitions:

Shimon Minamikawa

Play, Play

and in the south gallery

Jamal Cyrus

Melizmatik

April 11 – May 24, 2014

Opening Reception:
Friday April 11th, 6 – 8pm

*Gallery hours: Tues. – Sat., 11 – 6
and by appointment*



Shimon Minamikawa, *Play*, 2014
acrylic on canvas, paper collage, 14 x 11 inches

Inman Gallery is pleased to present two concurrent exhibitions: *Play, Play* by **Shimon Minamikawa** and, in the south gallery, *Melizmatik* by **Jamal Cyrus**. This will be both artists' inaugural solo show with Inman. Both shows open Friday, April 11th with a reception from 6 to 8, and continue through May 24th.

Shimon Minamikawa has cited Japanese Noh theater as a touchstone for his own work, which at first feels counterintuitive. Noh is a traditional, codified performance featuring dances, masks and mythical archetypes. The slow, stately dramas subordinate naturalism and emotion to historical continuity and strict aesthetic criteria. Minamikawa's loose paintings and painted collages display the stylish dispassion of a flâneur. On their surface the two practices aren't similar. But their attention to those surfaces - to the conventions and history of their craft, to cultivated identities, to the compact energy in a prescribed set of gestures - unites them. The façades that most interest Minamikawa are the multifarious storefronts, objects and passersby of his native Tokyo. He translates the city's shifting tableaux into his own shorthand of pattern and gesture that draws equally from art history (Warhol's multiples, Johns' iconography, Halley's geometry), design, and pop culture.

The ruptures and contrasts of collage, the pastiche of styles and interpenetration of meanings are fundamental to city life and obvious throughout Minamikawa's earlier paintings, but his most recent series makes that sensibility explicit. Two photographs of the same woman are the only figurative elements in this body of work. The images, taken from a vintage fashion magazine, are reduplicated, cropped, and pasted into spare painterly compositions of black, white and gray. In one collage, the model's frilly dress floats upside down like a plume of smoke. In another, an outcropping of shadow and a sliver of hat are our only landmarks in a silver field. Anachronism, repetition, and Minamikawa's unpredictable formal inventions almost empty these pictures of their original significance, but not entirely. The spirit of that gamely smiling model and the whiff of ferocity in Minamikawa's cuts linger around the edges of these photographs and save them from becoming just another mark in his formal vocabulary. The resulting compositions hover between abstraction and haunted, fragmentary narratives.

Jamal Cyrus takes melisma, the musical technique of singing one extended syllable across several notes, as a point of departure for his show in the South Gallery. The range of tonalities assumed by a single word acts as a metaphor for the many interpretations that can surround a single event. More than that, melisma is an established way for singers covering standards to both reenergize familiar sentiments and express their own personality and virtuosity. Sometimes exhilarating, sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes ostentatious, it can signify an unsettling subjectivity that blurs even the recent past, as well as the more hopeful prospect that any story can be resuscitated.

In 1970 the Houston police shot and killed Carl Hampton. Almost any further descriptions of the incident (Was Hampton an activist? A militant?) carry connotations that suggest an agenda on the speaker's part. Even the word "killed" (as opposed to murdered, or assassinated) might be seen as an overly generous interpretation of events. Cyrus addresses these tonal variations around the central tragedy in four works collectively titled *Eroding Witness*. Four politically divergent newspaper covers from the time are laser-cut into thin papyrus sheets, creating precise but only partially legible artifacts of a confrontation that risks falling into obscurity with the passing years. Cyrus' choice of papyrus, one of the earliest known writing materials, suggests the sad possibility that this comparatively recent event is as opaque as ancient history, and at the same time frames Hampton's killing as an age-old story of resistance and violence, subject to perpetual recurrence.

Hampton's story accentuates language's capacity to undermine certainty, but that ambiguity doesn't always have to be corrosive or misleading. A phrase repeated under different circumstances can elicit different associations, and that multiplicity of reference can be generative. Cyrus has worked with the veteran Houston sign-painter Walter Stanciell to transcribe two quotations - one from a painting by Jean-Michel Basquiat and one from a poem by K Curtis Lyle - onto faux-brick reliefs that mimic Stanciell's traditional surfaces. The words are spoken in triplicate: by the source, by Stanciell, and by Cyrus. Invigorated by these melismatic overtones and the commercial pop of Stanciell's lettering, the excerpts bridge time and demographics, asserting a communal affinity and a slightly more optimistic notion of historical repetition.



Jamal Cyrus, *Lemon's New World Blues*, 2014
Latex on Masonite, 40-1/4 x 30-1/2 inches

Shimon Minamikawa (born 1972, Tokyo) is a resident artist in New York under the aegis of the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs. He studied Graphic Design at Tama Art University in Tokyo from 1991 to 1994. He has exhibited internationally, including solo shows at 47 Canal in New York (2012), The Vanity East in Los Angeles (2013), Shane Campbell Gallery in Chicago (2014), Misako & Rosen in Tokyo (2007, 2008, 2011, 2013), and group exhibitions at The National Museum of Art in Osaka (2012), Robert Miller Gallery in New York (2013) and Galerie Meyer Kainer in Vienna (2013). In 2010 Hikotaro Kenehira of Tokyo published his illustrated "ABC Book" and in 2012 Capsule, Tokyo published a set of playing cards he designed. His performance with Ei Arakawa was reviewed in the December 2013 issue of *Artforum*.

Jamal Cyrus (born 1973, Houston, TX) lives and works in Houston. He received his BFA from the University of Houston in 2004 and his MFA from the University of Pennsylvania in 2008. In 2005 he attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. He was an Artist in Residence at Artpace San Antonio and has won several awards, including the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Award, the Artadia Houston Award, and the Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship. He has participated in national and international exhibitions, including Day for Night, the 2006 Whitney Biennial at the Whitney Museum of American Art, and shows at the Station Museum in Houston (2004), The Office Baroque Gallery in Antwerp (2007), the Menil Collection in Houston (2007), The High Museum of Art, Atlanta, The Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington DC, The California African American Museum, Los Angeles (all 2008), The Kitchen in New York (2009) the Museum of London Docklands, London (2009), The New Museum, New York (2011), The Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston (2012), and the Studio Museum, Harlem (2013). His work has been reviewed in *Arties*, *The Houston Chronicle*, *Houston Magazine*, and *The New York Times*.

For more information, please contact the gallery at 713.526.7800 or info@inmangallery.com.