

## RALF ZIERVOGEL

CARBON 12 - DUBAI



Above: RALF ZIERVOGEL, GRGQ, 2010 (detail). Ink on paper, (32 x 425 cm. Right: RALF ZIERVOGEL, In Decay, 2010. Installation view at Carbon 12, Dubai. All courtesy Carbon 12, Dubai.

From a distance, German artist Ralf Ziervogel's huge ink drawings can look like intricate patterns swooshing from one corner to the other. But on closer inspection the viewer is exposed to a meticulous movement of violence and carnage as syringe-encrusted characters self-destruct all over the paper. Of course they are not alive, but the intricacies and depth of the drawings make them look like

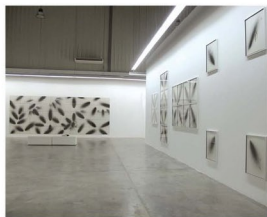
a freeze frame from an explosion.

Ziervogel's solo exhibition "In Decay" at Carbon 12 begins calmly enough, if you move clockwise from the gallery's reception, with four small 41 x 61 cm drawings called *Crown* (1 to 4). From afar, the many small ink illustrations look like a crown of thorns: close up each individual pattern could resemble the "kapow puff" from a cartoon when a character gets hit (think Batman & Robin). Moving on to the next wall is the series "Every Adidas Got Its Story," a collection of postcard-sized dip-pen drawings set on wooden supports with Ziervogel's characters caught in horrifying situations.

"I use imagery that other people create like a dance: the movement of destruction one sees in movies is like a symphony; to hit someone in the face is like a dance, to kill someone is like an opera — like a Tarantino movie or *Fight Club*," says Ziervogel. "The bodies are in prime condition, their muscles, their energy, but they don't know what to do with them [...] Everything is so perfect, like a cliché. So what else can one do? You do nothing or get violent."

Through a temporary industrial sheet, you can see exactly what Ziervogel means as the 132 x 425 cm works *GRGQ* (2010) and *RF* (2010) show bodies pumped with steroids finding no alternative but to rip themselves (genitals and all) apart. This unconventional and subversive content is a first for the region and is a glimpse in to Ziervogel's unhinged perspective of a society pre-conditioned to annihilation.

Adrian Murphy



## TAKAHIRO IWASAKI

ARATANIURANO - TOKYO



Above: TAKAHIRO IWASAKI, Phenotypic Remodeling (Newspaper), 2010. Newspaper, 19 x 32 x 26 cm. Right: TAKAHIRO IWASAKI, Phenotypic Remodeling, 2010. Installation view at ARATANIURANO, Tokyo. All courtesy the artist and ARATANIURANO, Tokyo. Photos: Keizo Kioko.

The first impression of the exhibition, titled "Phenotypic Remodeling," is that what's there is a heap of detritus. Crouching down on the floor, the viewer may perceive that it's just another example of painstaking miniature. But a careful look reveals that what's there is a rather ambitious "remodeling" of the world, done through the finest manipulation of the smallest, and cheapest, materials.

Standing on the gallery floor, painted in asphalt gray at the artist's request, are micro signboards of globally consumed fast food, coffee, a convenience store chain and a world-renowned fashion house: They are cutouts from flyers, bags and packages of respective goods or brands. Another work appropriates real uniforms of workers for a global beverage brand. Parts of the uniform's cloth are unraveled, and utility towers, about 10 cm high, are erected on the uniform — made from threads pulled out of the cloth. Several works consist of split branches. Drawn on their surfaces are traffic signs of some existing roads; the artist found road patterns on Google Earth that match the forms of each branch. Takahiro Iwasaki's fragile miniatures of signboards, power transmission towers and pedestrian overpasses, all made from commodities found in modern life, delicately satirize ubiquitous and monotonous landscapes of the world today. The miniatures could be seen as dwarfed "phenotypes" of civilization and globalization.

Iwasaki, born in 1975, reminds us of another Japanese artist of the same generation, Yuken Teruya, also known for using commodities to

create delicate objects. But Teruya's works are tinged with an anti-establishment sentiment of the artist born in the war-ravaged Okinawa province.

Meanwhile, Iwasaki, who was born and is based in Hiroshima, chose a less partisan way of expression, except for one work, seen in this show, featuring a newspaper photo of the city before the atomic bombing: an omen of an artist's singular skill fading in front of commonplace antinuclear politicking?

Satoru Nagoya

