

# sculpture

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**Installation and Collaboration**

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Above: Martha Posner, *Blonde Corset*, 2006. Wire, fabric, beeswax, synthetic hair, and pigment, 18 x 17 x 14.5 in.

Below: George Schroeder, installation view of "Escaped Silence" at Blue Star Contemporary Art Center.

reaches off balance with one arm, while *Shoes* stops in its ascent, as if suddenly abandoned by intention. The richness of interactions like these brings together material and narrative aspects—carried through by the often paradoxical associations of fragility, emotional toughness, vulnerability, and muscular volumes.

Sculptures and installations of clothing have become a large territory in the last five to 10 years. Works such as those of Maureen Connor of New York or Elizabeth Presa of Melbourne deal with the absence of the figure and with thought or social context from which the identity of a person can be evoked and constructed. Other ways of evoking an absent body, and absent narratives, are present in familiar works by Mona Hatoum, Ann Hamilton, James Croak, and Dario Robleto. Posner returns not only to 19th-century clothes, but also to 19th-century ideas of the

self, and how these continue to underlay our current ideas, through specific Romantic views of the lingering spirit of the person who inhabited the garments. At times Posner can be a bit heavy-handed in all this. Yet in the end, social context and psychological constraints are brought in to play.

The drama of Posner's gesturing garments is created not only by one's immediate recognition of the disruption of what is inside the body and what is outside it—with its implications of physical or emotional tensions and violence—but also, and more importantly, it is supported by complex narrative associations that alternately move between myth and autobiography, journalism and fairytales. Buttoned shoes, billowing gowns, and corsets are made of waxed surfaces dripped with yellow and red stains and encircled with clouds of thin, unkempt hair. But these sculptures are not just anthropological observations

of how social constraints and expectations can be observed in the conventions of women's and children's clothing. At their best, they activate a net of associations by turning each article of clothing into a character imbued with struggles, emotions, desires, and a social consciousness of its own plight.

—Tom Csaszar

#### SAN ANTONIO George Schroeder Blue Star Contemporary Art Center

Inspired by the screeching-metal sounds of a salvage yard, San Antonio sculptor George Schroeder transforms the bangs and crashes into rough-and-tumble sculptures that resemble explosions frozen in mid-air. But organic elements also creep in, suggesting black metal flowers. His "Escaped Silence" series (2006) evolved from the idea that sounds can be translated abstractly into forms. At the salvage yard, he looked for large pieces of bent metal, which he then worked on some more, hammering the pieces into abstract, floating, spherical forms. "Most of these pieces are randomly created," Schroeder said. "Working in the salvage yard is really loud, so you think about the noise, which generates all kinds of random images. My intention for this series was to create abstract forms derived from a variety of sound experiences."

Working with sheared or cut steel beams, Schroeder bends and shapes them until the metal almost seems like a living thing, curving in and out or appearing to fly off into space. Heavy marks and crude connections reflect the rough details of hand-forged





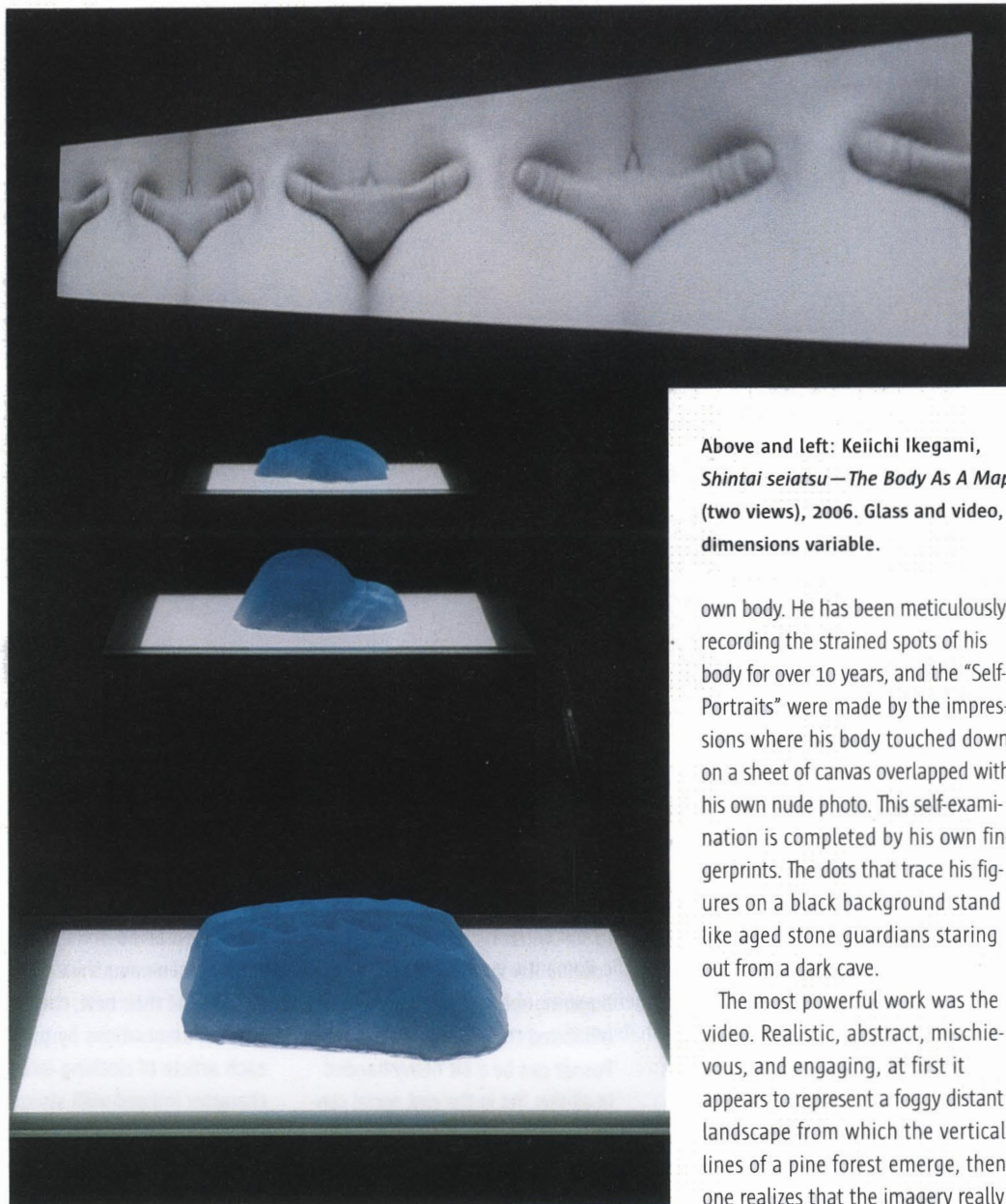
metal. In his Metalmorphosis Studio, he has restored old metal-working machinery salvaged from various factories. Although most of the equipment is obsolete, it still has the ability to mold industrial-strength metals almost like plastic.

While there's a definite resemblance to cartoon explosions, the pieces also have energy and force, sparked by the kinetic ball of twisted metal and the charred, blackened surfaces. Some have long blades sticking out and resemble an agave plant. The pedestals function like narrow black stems, causing the interlaced metal spheres to look like alien flowers.

Schroeder is known for his large-scale public art. He recently unveiled three 20-foot-tall, crescent-shaped, unpainted steel pieces—evoking spirits reaching for the heavens—at the new Julia Yates Semmes Branch Library. He has created trail markers and signage in the adjacent Comanche Lookout Park and designed a pair of large floral pieces for the new entrance to the city's largest park, Brackenridge Park. Schroeder is also responsible for the decorative fence at the San Antonio Water System's downtown Water Park on Market Street. All three projects are part of the city's Design Enhancement program.

Schroeder has also done private projects, including giant torchieres and signs for the downtown Houston Street Courtyard. And he attached 3,000 pounds of curvy aluminum forms that appear to be sliding down the outside wall of the American Payroll Association, intended to suggest paychecks falling from heaven. Although he has a business degree, Schroeder gave it up after two years to apprentice with a blacksmith, eventually opening his studio for both decorative and fine art projects.

—Dan R. Goddard



Above and left: Keiichi Ikegami, *Shintai seiatsu—The Body As A Map* (two views), 2006. Glass and video, dimensions variable.

## KYOTO

### Keiichi Ikegami and Yushi Yashima

#### Kyoto Art Center

Keiichi Ikegami explores his own physical condition, together with the power of healing. In one room of this show, three different kinds of work composed his quiet and spare installation, *Shintai seiatsu*. A row of human-scale, skeletal "Self-Portraits" hung in darkness along one wall. On the opposite wall, a monochrome video showed fingers rhythmically stroking and smoothing skin. Between them, in the center of the

room, three glass sculptures of mounded body parts floated on top of lighted pedestals, uplifted like a green sky over white clouds. Tender prints of the artist's fingers traced a spinal cord on the forms.

Ikegami was one of two finalists selected from 262 applicants from all over Japan by an art critic and professor of philosophy at Osaka University, Kiyokazu Washida, for the Kyoto Art Center 2007 competition. Washida has published books dealing with the process of aging. As an artist, Ikegami has been investigating the effects of fatigue and stress on his

own body. He has been meticulously recording the strained spots of his body for over 10 years, and the "Self-Portraits" were made by the impressions where his body touched down on a sheet of canvas overlapped with his own nude photo. This self-examination is completed by his own fingerprints. The dots that trace his figures on a black background stand like aged stone guardians staring out from a dark cave.

The most powerful work was the video. Realistic, abstract, mischievous, and engaging, at first it appears to represent a foggy distant landscape from which the vertical lines of a pine forest emerge, then one realizes that the imagery really depicts the outlines of multiple legs. Several semi-abstract pairs of fingers at the root of each pair of legs caress soft skin with the rhythm of breathing, heartbeats, and lovemaking. This installation works both as a liberation and confirmation of our own natural being.

The other installation chosen for this show was *PA*, by Yushi Yashima, which replicates the artist's room in silicone rubber with the intention of capturing an ambiguous gap created by relocating a personal space in the public arena. A single color scheme for both the interior and exterior eliminates any sense of time and the