

Minja GU

b. 1977 in South Korea

Minja Gu lives and works in Seoul. Her works appear frail and intimate, and almost indistinguishable from everyday life. Gu is predominately interested in what society uses and then discards. She recycles back into presence and with grace, wit and poetry the many supposedly valueless remnants of daily consumerism, such as leftover coffee cups or plastic bags. In addition to her physical artistic production she also initiates activities that run in parallel, or could be considered parasitic to everyday participation in society. These have included running the marathon at her leisure to complete it in a day-and-a-half, a time-period too slow and also not

grandiose enough for the media to remain interested, and a 'symposium' on love that involved a quite plausible and again totally unspectacular 12 hour get-together for women of the same age on a roof-top.

Gu has recently participated in the Ssamzie Open Studio exhibition in 2007 and 2008, and in an exhibition at KNUA gallery in 2007. She will soon present a solo exhibition at the Croft Gallery, Seoul.



17.1 *The World of Job*

installation, 2008

dimensions variable

Courtesy of the Artist

Gu's second project for the biennial is *The World of Job*, an installation that is the outcome of performative, documentary actions based on the story to an aboriginal woman who arrived in Taipei 40 years ago to make a living. Without the benefits of being a local, or speaking Chinese, Gu uses the few Chinese characters she knows and proceeds to list her abilities looking for a job. The project raises questions of how it is to be an outsider or a foreigner, as well as the perception of an artist's condition as 'professional'. Does working as an artist imply an occupation? What kind of skills do artists have? How does an artist produce value in the form of a voluntaristic trivia and make meaning out of it?



17.2 *Secret Garden*

installation, 2008

dimensions variable

Courtesy of the Artist

One of the things a first-time visitor to Taipei notices are the ever-present 'anti-crime' windows that sometimes extend to the upper floors of buildings, at a height that even the most talented of thieves would find impossible to overcome. The local praxis of veiling windows and balconies upsets the standardised force of residential architecture by being 'customised' and allowing new adoptive functions. The contradictions between the original architecture and the lived-space that then takes over, are more inventive, varied and visible in non-western cultures and in buildings where people of lower economical means reside. Minja Gu transposes this vernacular tradition to the Museum which is one of the most well-regulated, institutional models in the world. Museums generally spurn additions to their architecture, but Gu undermines this rigid approach by transforming one of the bulky ubiquitous windows of the Taipei Fine Arts Museum into an 'anti-crime' window jammed with a collection of chachkas. She borrows from the everyday and gives back to it..