

MILLS

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MILLS COLLEGE ART MUSEUM
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In Between the Inside-Out
Pae White

Curated by Sandra Percival

Exhibition dates: September 2 - October 18, 2009
Opening reception: September 2, 5:30 - 7:30pm

The Mills College Art Museum is pleased to present *In Between the Inside-Out*, an exhibition of new work and an installation by internationally acclaimed artist Pae White. *In Between the Inside-Out* is an expanded show from *In Between the Outside-In* that premiered at New Langton Arts, San Francisco, earlier this year. White's exhibition, *In Between the Inside-Out*, follows her encounters with the ecology and cultures of the Sierra foothills during her residency at the For-Site Foundation in 2008. White's installation proposes new paradigms for art and landscape – from digital imaging to stoneware ceramics – that challenge the presumption of singularity in much site-specific art as encapsulated in Richard Serra's famous dictum "to remove the work is to destroy the work."

White's practice is known for blurring any boundary that may remain between site and non-site, art and design, and the iconic and the everyday. Using a noninvasive data collection and mapping procedure, White had three-dimensional scans taken of an 800 year-old massive oak tree, a wild raspberry bush and a Manzanita grove in the landscape near Nevada City, California. White uses these topographical scans as conceptual source material, working with a Dreamworks animator and visual effects artist to create a series of color-treated, morphing point-cloud animations. Viewers enter into three glass trapezoidal chambers in which they become immersed in these images, surrounded by reflected and refracted light. Viewers are thus confronted with living organisms that are at once intimately known and yet untouched.

Collections are inherently embedded in White's work – from the rarefied and artistic to the humble. According to White, collecting and collections are both a way of begetting knowledge and of keeping knowledge at bay. As a material rather than an ethereal element of the installation, White incorporates two collections: one, an extensive, eccentric collection of ceramics drawn from the collection of Nevada City's Joseph Meade; and the other, drawn from the Mills College Art Museum's Antonio Prieto collection of ceramics. Both collections represent the American studio ceramics movement, which also reflects the rich history of ceramics in California. Meade's

collection of over 1,000 ceramic vessels embraces anonymous and well-known ceramic artists, thrift store and flea market finds, shares some of the same names as the Museum's collection which also includes current and former Mills' ceramics faculty Ron Nagle, Carlton Ball and Antonio Prieto. Unlike the projected animations, these collections are resolutely physical and tactile. Displayed as massed fields on plinths, these stoneware objects deconstruct the relationship of nature to culture.

A scattering of leaves leak out from two rooms in the gallery — nature or artifice? The leaves are nature as artifice — every single leaf and its elements were crafted of fabric, metal and soot, and intimately touched by hand, echoing the transformation of clay into functional form. The poetry of the leaves lies also in their associative relationship to place: *Sick Amour* (Sycamore leaves of Los Angeles in the fall and *November Gutter Leaves, Pasadena, 2009*. Unlike the idiosyncratic nature of these works, the process of high definition 3D scanning depicts with total accuracy every pore, every crack, every leaf of the oak tree and other native species of the Sierras, yet they remain intangible in their constantly mutating digital form as *Dying Oak* and *Ballerina (Wild Raspberry Bush)*. Set within the Art Museum's Beaux Arts architecture, and outside, its own emblematic landscape, White's *In Between the Inside-Out* allows nature in its multifarious forms to invade the normally sacrosanct space of the Museum as conservatory.

Pae White was born in 1963 in Pasadena California. She received her MFA from Art Center College of Design, Pasadena, and her BFA from Scripps College, Claremont. Recent exhibitions include Point, Counterpoint, Cloud, Xavier Hufkens, Brussels; Lisa, Bright & Dark, Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Scottsdale; Too Much Night, neugerriemschneider, Berlin; Directions, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; Made in California: Art, Image, and Identity, 1900-2000, organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Pae White, Hammer Projects, UCLA Hammer Museum; and In no particular order, Milton Keynes Gallery, Milton Keynes, UK. Articles on her work have appeared in frieze, The New York Times, and Artforum, among others.

This exhibition has been organized by curator Sandra Percival who produced and organized the show at New Langton Arts, San Francisco, which was co-produced with the Mills College Art Museum. Major support has been received from the LEF Foundation for the MCAM show, and both exhibitions have been supported by the FOR-SITE Foundation, New Langton Arts and a San Francisco Arts Commission Organization Project Grant.

Mills College Art Museum's exhibition of Pae White coincides with White's participation in the 2009 Venice Biennial on view through November 22, 2009, Venice, Italy.

Image: Pae White, *Sick Amour*, 2009. Fabric, aluminum and soot. Dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist and Xavier Hufkens, Brussels.

Public Programs

Wednesday September 30, 2009 7:30pm
Lecture by artist Pae White

Danforth Lecture Hall, Art Building
Followed by a reception and tour of the exhibition in the Art Museum

Multiple *Five Black Nesting Bowls*

From her first visits to in the foothills of the Sierra Nevadas, White was struck by the historic uses of the landscape as a gathering and food preparation site. From about 4000 BCE until the Gold Rush of the mid-nineteenth century, the native Maidu people lived in settlements along the banks of the Yuba River. Five granite boulders — bedrock mortars known as grinding rocks — remain, used for centuries by the Maidu as places to grind acorns and seeds for food. White was particularly interested in the ways in which the location of these boulders acted as a natural marker for a view of the landscape, and she played with the idea that the Maidu grinding rocks acted as “the first kitchen with a bay view window,” that is, that the act of food preparation could be a meditative activity combining form with function, domestic with ritual activity. By press molding the grinding holes of one of the boulders, White (with expert assistance from Joseph Meade and Richard Hotchkiss) fabricated a set of five black nesting bowls from hand-harvested clay embedded with cattails. The bowls are raku-fired using resinous plants including Kit Kit Dizzy and pine needles.

The Mills College Art Museum, founded in 1925, is a dynamic center for art that focuses on the creative work of women as artists and curators. The museum strives to engage and inspire the diverse and distinctive cultures of the Bay Area by presenting innovative exhibitions by emerging and established national and international artists. Exhibitions are designed to challenge and invite reflection upon the profound complexities of contemporary culture.

Museum hours are Tuesday–Sunday 11:00 am–4:00 pm and Wednesday 11:00 am–7:30 pm. Admission is free for all exhibitions and programs. Docent-led tours of the exhibition are available by appointment. Please call the Museum at 510.430.2164 to schedule a tour. For more information: <http://www.mills.edu/museum/>

**Mills College Art Museum
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