JAMES COHAN GALLERY

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TABAIMO, *public conVENience*, 2006, three screen video installation with sound, 6 minutes, 5 second loop

TABAIMO   Opens March 14 through April 12, 2008

James Cohan Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of works by Japanese artist, **Tabaimo**, opening March 14 and running through April 12, 2008. This second gallery exhibition follows the artist's highly acclaimed commission, **dolefullhouse**, for Robert Storr's Venice Biennale 2007, *Think With the Senses—Feel With the Mind*. Well known for her *Ukiyo-e*, wood-block style animations that depict scenes of everyday Japanese life set in family homes, commuter trains, and public bathhouses, Tabaimo twists quotidian realities with darker visions of violence, sex and death, rendered in an unemotional, matter-of-fact way. The resulting tensions in the artist's work - between traditional and contemporary, hand drawn and digitally manipulated, public and private, social advances and societal ills – are at the crux of Tabaimo's artistic practice, and have garnered her international attention.

The central work in this exhibition is **public conVENience,** (2006) a three-channel work of floor-to-ceiling images installed around a raked floor, creating an interactive space. The emphasized *VEN* in the title is the Japanese word for "public"; a play on words significant to the artist for its reference to the idea of the "collective body." As setting, Tabaimo has chosen the kind of vast public toilets found in train stations, with which she has drawn a parallel to today's Internet society. Tabaimo explains, "Both venues seem free and open though they are essentially quite exclusive. Anything can happen, criminal or otherwise, behind those thin doors." Using the mirror as a vehicle of the voyeur, Tabaimo's characters go about their intimate activities with detachment and anonymity. We observe the unsettling behaviour of a woman obsessively washing, the humorous mishap of a cell phone dropping down a toilet, the pathology of a woman's self-abuse, and the surreal sequence of a baby born through its mother's nostril.

In commentary on Tabaimo's work, Kazuko Aono, curator at the Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, has written, "We find ourselves holding our breath and gazing wide-eyed, anxiously watching to see what becomes of these characters; we become voyeurs peeping via hidden cameras, flitting back and forth between this world and the world beyond the looking glass, unknowingly drawn into the fantastic realm of Tabaimo's creation."

Also included in this exhibition, **Haunted House** (2003) is a single-channel animation with a jazz sound track in which the camera scans the city much like a passenger looking out from an elevated train. Each apartment window becomes a frame from its own film; the dramas of life playing out side-by-side and yet as if from a world apart.

Tabaimo was born in Kobe, Japan in 1975. Her work has been exhibited widely in over 15 countries and has been included in important international group exhibitions including; the Yokohama Triennale, 2001; the Sao Paolo Biennale, 2002; the 15th Biennale of Sydney, Australia, 2006; and the 52nd International Venice Biennale, 2007. Recent solo exhibitions include; *Yoroyoron* at the Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo in 2006 and *Tabaimo* at the Fondation Cartier, Paris 2006. Solo exhibitions are scheduled at Japan's Yokohama Museum in 2009 and Parasol Unit Foundation for Contemporary Art, London, in 2010. Tabaimo's work is included in many important public collections such as the Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; the Israel Museum, Jerusalem; MUSAC Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León, León, Spain; and the Fondation Cartier, Paris.
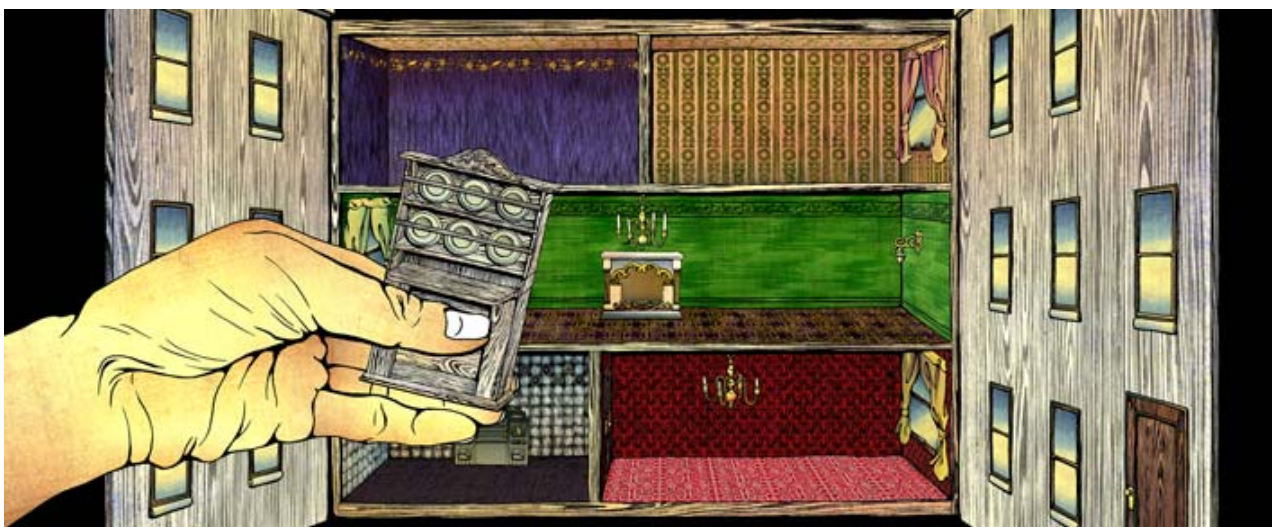
TABAIMO, *dolefullhouse*, 2007, single channel video installation, 6 minutes, 21 second loop

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