

Sunnyvale Creative Arts Center Gallery

in partnership with the

Euphrat Museum of Art

NEWS RELEASE

October 25, 1994

Exhibition:

Speaking Volumes:

*Photographs by Misako and Ken Akimoto
and Portraits by Yong Mao*

Sunnyvale Creative Arts Center Gallery
550 E. Remington
Sunnyvale, California

November 8 - December 23, 1994

Closed November 24, 25, and 26

Tuesday through Friday 1 - 5 pm, Saturday 10 am - noon

Three South Bay artists are featured in *Speaking Volumes* at the Sunnyvale Creative Arts Center Gallery from November 8 to December 23. Photographs by husband and wife Misako and Ken Akimoto, two Japanese-born artists living in Menlo Park, are on view along with a group of portraits in oil by Yong Mao, a San Jose artist originally from China. *Speaking Volumes* is being presented in coordination with the exhibition *Coming Across: Art by Recent Immigrants, Part 2* at the Euphrat Museum of Art through December 8. Both exhibitions were curated by the Euphrat.

Speaking Volumes presents art which communicates across cultural boundaries, including generational boundaries. The works stem from involvement in Bay Area communities and from the introspection of a newcomer. Some of the artworks evoke audible volume, such as the resonant voices in a photograph of people singing in church. Other works speak volumes by giving the viewer specific information to ponder, for example a variety of symbolic images from different cultures.

The Akimotos immigrated to the U.S. from Tokyo in 1976 and, in less than twenty years, have become knowledgeable about and involved in Bay Area communities which remain unknown to many who have lived here all their lives. Yong Mao arrived in the U.S. in 1990. Yong Mao might be called an "emerging" artist; he has been studying art in the United States, on his own and as a student at both De Anza and Foothill Colleges. Each artist's work is a mixture of East and West.

Misako and Ken Akimoto

In their series *Sunday Morning at New Sweet Home*, the Akimotos have focused their cameras on an intimate and very human side of local community life, seeking out the often-overlooked personal details of our everyday world that draw people together. *Sunday Morning at New Sweet Home* is an ongoing series of black-and-white photographs taken at New Sweet Home Church of God in Christ in East Palo Alto. On display are selections,

Sunnyvale Creative Arts Center Gallery, 550 E. Remington, Box 3707, Sunnyvale, CA 94088-3707
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including portraits of parishioners and church leaders and aspects of church life and the active, intergenerational community — from moments of quiet prayer to exuberant worship, weddings, Sunday School, rehearsing a play, and organizing a church dinner.

Quiet Light, a series of Ken Akimoto's time-elapsed landscapes, displays his knowledge and love of local sites. A seminary in Menlo Park and a community garden in Palo Alto are places where Ken Akimoto has worked to develop literally one-of-a-kind prints. With color positive paper, he has used long exposures on days when hardly a leaf rustles to capture the intricacies and moods of nearby natural settings.

Misako Akimoto, in a series entitled *Other Spaces: Chaos to Zeus*, reveals additional knowledge of the Bay Area cultural community, a love of dance, and a penchant for combining imagery from different traditions. In this work with the Tamano Dance Company, she combines images of dancers with landscape imagery to create color photographs suggestive of Greek mythology. The Tamano Dance Company, based in Berkeley, also came to the U.S. from Japan within the last twenty years. Their dance form is one of very slow movements, performed to muted sounds — murmuring streams, insects buzzing, breathing.

Misako Akimoto worked as a photojournalist in Japan and her current work is published in Japanese-language publications in the U.S. Ken Akimoto is a former commercial photographer. They have exhibited at many venues on the Peninsula.

Yong Mao

Five oil paintings by Yong Mao, including a group of self-portraits, are on view. Mao paints in reds, greens, and blues, with many symbolic elements in each piece. In *Self-Portrait I*, a young pensive Mao — ponytail in the air, wearing earmuffs and dark glasses — sits near a bamboo-framed window, which opens onto a view of oh-so-familiar cypress trees; a group of objects (egg, grapes, yellow ribbon) are spread out on his table. In another self-portrait, Mao envisions himself as an old man, reflecting, with one leaf left on his tree of life. Two self-portraits show a heart painted on his shirt; Mao sees this flaming heart as passion and energy. Eastern and Western influences combine in a portrait of the artist's grandmother in China, looking at us from a Van Gogh field of yellow blossoms.

Sponsored by City of Sunnyvale, Department of Parks and Recreation, Cultural Arts Division, in collaboration with the Euphrat Museum of Art, De Anza College, Cupertino.

Contact:

For further information about the exhibition, call the Euphrat Museum of Art at (408) 864-8836.

To schedule tours or for gallery information, call the Creative Arts Center Gallery at (408) 730-7336.

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