

MIKA TAJIMA
Born Los Angeles, California, 1975



The Double, 2008
Acrylic, silkscreen, wood,
polished aluminum, paper, gold leaf
Dimensions variable

Proceeding from an interest in Modernist design and history, Mika Tajima has over the last number of years created installation-style exhibitions that function as a staging ground for a multiplicity of media, discursive events, and performances. However, it is the interaction of all of these elements—including her ongoing collaboration as a founding member of the Brooklyn-based noise collective *New Humans*—that defines her practice. Objects serve a variety of functions in Tajima's set-ups; they operate as mobile partitions within a space, surfaces for serigraphic icons denoting aspects of architectural history, bulletin boards for posters by other artists, projection screens for film and video, or even mirrors for self-

observation. Frequently performing within her own installations, Tajima has invited such collaborators as Charles Atlas, Judith Butler, Vito Acconci, and Sylvère Lotringer to animate her inquisitive revisions of design history. The combination of destabilized spatial, sonic, and authorial procedures that result provides a model of political exchange privileging the incommensurable over resolution.

A recent solo exhibition inaugurating the year-long non-profit X Initiative gallery in New York in 2009 exemplified Tajima's multifaceted approach. Taking place during the financial crisis, with multiple galleries closing as a result of the art market's downturn, Tajima's sculptural works populated an entire floor of the building that formerly housed Dia:Chelsea, creating partitioned zones of concentration and interaction that intimated empty sites not unlike a greenroom, soundstage, or film set. Large paper photo-shoot style backdrops in orange and yellow were hung from scaffolding and rolled across a floor surrounded by freestanding lamps, ladders, and other props, creating a space that was pregnant with production. Titled *The Extras*, the exhibition gave the objects on display the air of bystanders awaiting the main

act, implying a state of excess and disuse. In a more overt acknowledgement of this surfeit, Tajima created a painting rack that stored a sampling of past works left over from an intensive exhibition schedule. In this way, the ground floor of X Initiative might be said to have become an inventory of the just past, except that the transitional status of Tajima's structures refused to align neatly with such readily symbolic functions, not quite reducible to art commodities because they are too occupied with other restless pursuits.

—Bartholomew Ryan