

Jiro Osuga

TOKYO

25 February - 26 March 2011

Private View Thursday 24 February 6 - 8pm



In Tokyo, the Japanese painter Jiro Osuga presents a personal vision of the city of his birth. Osuga was born in Japan, but largely grew up in the UK, where he lived for over 30 years. Here Osuga revisits Tokyo in an effort to come to terms with his native culture. The exhibition will bring together all kinds of work: paintings large and small, a folding screen, freestanding cut-outs, floor pieces and interactive installations. It promises to transport the visitor on an idiosyncratic journey to the great city.



A Beef on Rice Place 2010 Oil on canvas 108x150cm



A Shopping Street 2010 Oil on canvas 180x150cm



Vending Machine 2010 Oil on canvas 180x100cm



Cherry Blossom IX 2010 Hinged, movable parts



Cherry Blossoms V 2010 Hinged, movable parts

Rejecting both the tired old clichés with which the Japanese like to represent themselves (origami, the tea ceremony, bullet trains etc), as well as the Lost in Translation exoticism that continues to colour western perception of Japan, Osuga casts a critical eye over every aspect of contemporary Japan – from manhole covers to noodle bars. The results are often humorous and exuberant, although the melancholy of his confused cultural identity is a recurrent theme.



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LONDON NOW – CITY OF HEAVEN, CITY OF HELL
A provocative Exhibition at Guildhall Art Gallery,
16 January – 9 April 2006

We all know the thrill of a perfect day in London – a single but delicious lunch in one of its million back gardens, the excitement of a new landmark building on the capital's skyline, a night out which makes you feel like dancing all the way home.

Equally, sooner or later, we all have to wrestle with the Capital's evils – the cattle truck workhouse of its over-crowded transport system, the criminals – and now the terrorists – lurking on its streets, the silt and depressing grey of its overcast skies, the panorama of 19th century, unhappy housing estates.

However, if you can't decide which is the true face of London, the exhibition *London Now – City of Heaven, City of Hell* will help. It brings together powerful works by ten artists who have lived and worked in London for all or most of their lives. They will make you see when you have overlooked, and think the unthinkable.

Is London all doom and gloom? Is London a sacred city?
Come and find out.

- The exhibition will feature the work of:
- | | | | |
|---------------|------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Shamus BEAWAN | John BARTLETT | Janet BROOKE | Mark CAZALET |
| David HEPHER | Timothy HYMAN | Magnus IRVIN | Ben JOHNSON |
| Jiro OSUGA | Arnau DE STEFANO | Alex WORSTER | |



JIRO OSUGA
THE PERSON WHO...

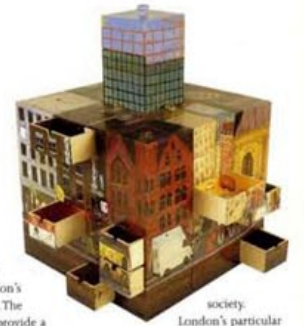
Major exhibition

Collecting 2000

Choose something that represents who or what you feel you are at the start of the 21st century.

Collecting 2000

London's groups, clubs and societies today opens Friday 29 September. In January 2000, the Museum of London began collecting items from London's groups, clubs and societies. The results are fascinating and provide a unique, often surprising, insight into the diverse interests, passions, and beliefs that bring people together in London. This display of objects and group statements allows these very different Londoners to speak for themselves about their preoccupations and activities today. Group life reflects, and sometimes creates, the dominant trends in



society. London's particular history gave rise to some of the earliest clubs and societies in the world. Amid a huge urban sprawl, we create smaller worlds for ourselves in order to make sense of city life. Groups remain an integral part of contemporary London society, and whether we participate or benefit indirectly, they impact on all our lives. Collecting 2000 reveals the many cultures and faiths that make London a world city at the start of the 21st century. The exhibition gives a privileged inside view of the lives of the people of London.

Above: Jiro Osuga, *Drawer city: a cabinet of urban curiosities*. Donated by the London Arts Café



Right: Gold plated statue of the Buddha. Donated by the London Buddhist Vihara

Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund



It might seem obvious why this exhibition is called Jiro Osuga - the Person who... I am just all over the gallery! Self-portraits or slightly better looking alter egos seem to show up in every other picture, sometimes several times over in a single painting. There I am, sitting on a tube train, at work in the studio, cooking my lunch, or just looking miserable.

But self-obsession is not the only reason for the naming of the show. The title is actually taken from a series of paintings I have been making since the late 1990s, such as *The Person who... on the Tokyo Subway*, where the eyes of everyone in the picture are fixed on you - the viewer standing in front of the canvas. In these paintings, it is the viewer who is placed in my shoes and becomes 'the Person who has just done Something Unspeakable', the cause behind the commotion depicted.

My other paintings are also 'person who...' paintings in a way, as they demand audience participation - although thankfully, not always in embarrassing situations. In some paintings, the perspective is contrived to give the impression that you are actually entering the space depicted. Others take the form of double-sided screens or cubes painted on all six sides that need to be walked around for the different sides to be seen. With the hinged paintings, you are even more closely involved, as you are invited to open and close the moveable panels.

For all their intensely personal quality, my paintings are, paradoxically, very open at the same time. In fact, 'the person who...' in the title refers as much to the viewer as it does to me. So, welcome to my painted world!

JIRO OSUGA

CAFÉ JIRO

29 APRIL - 23 MAY 2009

Flowers
21 Cork Street
London, W1S 3LZ

In an ambitious site-specific installation, Jiro Osuga has covered the walls of Flowers Cork Street with a life-sized mural cycle that transforms the gallery into an idiosyncratic café. On entering the space, the viewer steps into another world – a microcosm teeming with incidental incidents, peopled by an unlikely clientele that includes Shakespeare, Osama Bin Laden and the Grim Reaper. The walls of Café Jiro are decorated with an equally absurd assortment of objects: a stuffed unicorn, the Rosetta stone and doctored Japanese print, to name but a few. Playful spatial invention (and intervention) abounds; a window is painted looking outwards on one wall, and inwards on another.

The artist sees the café as a metaphor for the city, the world, and for life itself: For Shakespeare, all the world was a stage, and Liza Minnelli sang about life being a Cabaret, but couldn't life, in fact, be a café? After all, we are born, we enter a café, we make and lose friends and lovers, think, work, dream, despair, intoxicate ourselves and finally leave after paying what is due.

Osuga encourages the viewer's eyes to wander across the 360 degree painting and allow their minds to drift as they might when seated in a real café.

Painted by the artist over a six-month period, the mural scheme – which is over three meters high and thirty meters long in total – is his largest work to date. Café Jiro is the fulfilment of a life-long ambition to create 'a painting that is a place: a complete world in and of itself'.





Contemporary artists are always exploring their identities, but rarely to such good effect as Jiro Osuga. The bespectacled figure of this young Japanese-born artist bestrides his new show, *Jiro Osuga: The Person Who...*, at Flowers East, 82 Kingsland Road, London E2 (until 18 March), like a colossus of self-consciousness, edging awkwardly into almost every frame, sometimes under several aliases at once. Osuga could teach a masterclass in self-deprecation. His work is funny, touching and peculiarly painterly, the product of the sort of artistic drive that needs must cover every surface in paint, from double-sided screens — including a six-panelled panorama of Japan and England — to wooden blocks and recycled tins. Hinged before-and-after paintings are a speciality. His energy is infectious, and his show is a tonic, see ‘The Person Who... at a Concert IV’, 2005 (above). Definitely worth the detour.

Laura Gascoigne

Where to buy...

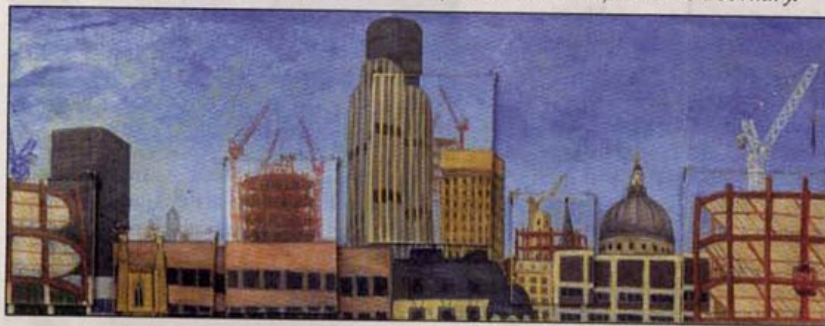
The Week reviews an exhibition in a private gallery

Timothy Hyman, Henry Kondracki, Jiro Osuga at Flowers East

Henry Kondracki (born 1953) and Jiro Osuga (born 1968) both studied under Timothy Hyman (born 1946), and the work of all three artists is linked by the theme of the city. Hyman's view is the most personal: in one picture, for

instance, he depicts himself stepping through a London landscape of both familiar and private landmarks like a medieval pilgrim. Osuga, a more detached and playful observer, makes ingenious diptychs and triptychs. In *Changing Skyline*, hinged flaps depict modern city landmarks — such as the Gherkin — as they rise up from among the old buildings. Kondracki is the most traditional of the three. He excels at conveying that moment at twilight in a city when the sky comes into its own. Prices from £250 to £9,000.

82 Kingsland Rd, London E2 (020-7920 7777). Until 6 February.



Changing Skyline by Jiro Osuga, 2002 (£3,000)

THE WEEK, WHERE TO BUY 22 JAN 2005

>> art round-up

David Hockney: Drawing in a Printing Machine

The pop art pioneer has thrown another artistic curveball, swapping paintbrushes for a computer mouse to create portraits and landscapes in this new exhibition. The limited-edition prints, made using Photoshop and Graphics Tablet, are on show in Europe for the first time and the new technology hasn't dampened Hockney's eye for colour or attention to detail.

Annelly Juda Fine Art, Fri-11 July, 23 Dering St, W1, 020 7629 7578

Friedemann Hahn

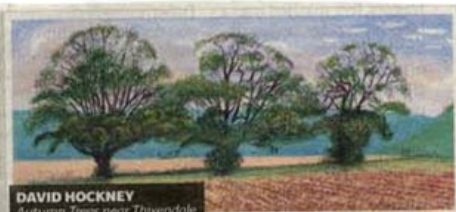
German expressionist Hahn will be showing off her bold, splashy oils inspired by stories from the Silver Screen. *Flowers East, to 23 May, 82 Kingsland Rd, E2, 020 7920 7777*



FRIEDEMANN HAHN
Out of the Past

Jiro Osuga: Café Jiro

Shakespeare, Osama bin Laden and the Grim Reaper sip coffee on a mural covering the walls of the



DAVID HOCKNEY
Autumn Trees near Thixendale

central London gallery which transforms it into a bustling café. The piece is 30m by 3m and took Japanese artist Osuga, who trained at the RCA, six months to paint. *Flowers, tomorrow-23 May, 21 Cork St, W1, 020 7439 7766*

Al Braithwaite: Museum No. 1 - Hizbollah's Caviar

Six years spent travelling in the Middle East were the inspiration for the work

in this solo show, which combines Western and Eastern imagery: cigarettes, prayer beads, feather dusters and guns. *Rose Issa Projects, to 16 May, 269 Kensington High St, W8, 020 7602 7700*

Buddhist Sculpture Gallery

Meditating on hefty stone renderings of Buddha in the V&A's sunlit galleries sounds like a pleasant way to pass an afternoon. This new gallery combines

JIRO OSUGA

1968 Born, Tokyo

1986–87 St Martin's School of Art, Foundation Course

1987–90 Chelsea School of Art, BA Fine Art Painting

1990–92 Royal College of Art, MA Fine Art Painting

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

1997 / 1998 Gallery M, London

1999 LA International, Flowers West, Santa Monica, California

2001 Flowers East, London

2002 Flowers West, Santa Monica

2003 'Jiro Osuga – Monoprints', Flowers Graphics, London

2006 'Opening Worlds – Jiro Osuga's Hinged Paintings', Flowers East, London

2007 'The Person Who...', Flowers East, London

2009 'Café Jiro', Flowers 21 Cork Street, London

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

1991 'On Sight', Tower Bridge Piazza, London

1992 'In Sight', Royal College of Art, London

'Off Site', Cooling Gallery, London

'East and South', Kent Institute of Art and Design, Canterbury

'Just Art '92', Crypt Gallery, London

'Artists of Promise', Bonhams, London

1993 'Leicestershire Exhibition for Schools and Colleges', Beaumanor Hall, Leicestershire

1995 Portobello Open, Tabernacle Gallery, London

Timothy Hyman, Henry Kondracki and Jiro Osuga, Flowers East, London

John Moores 19, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool

'Small is Beautiful, part XIII: Food and Drink', Flowers East, London

1996 'Wheels on Fire – Cars in British Painting', Wolverhampton Art Gallery

'Seven for Seven – Figure it Out', Gallery 7, Hong Kong

1997 'The City Beautiful', London Arts Cafe, London

'Small is Beautiful, part XV: Death', Flowers East at London Fields, London

1998 Angela Flowers Gallery at Riverside Studios, London

'Twin Images II', Fine Art Society, London

'Urban Stories', Egon von Kameke Potsdam, Germany

'London–Hackney im Prenzlauer Berg,' Galerie Blickensdorff, Berlin

'Small is Beautiful, part XVI: Music', Flowers East, London

1999 'Mountain', Wolverhampton Art Gallery

'Tower Blocks', Museum of London

'Contemporary British Landscape', Flowers East, London

Morgan Stanley Dean Witter Exhibition

'Small is Beautiful, part XVII: Millennium'

2000 30th Anniversary Exhibition, Flowers East, London

Milton Keynes Hospital

30th Anniversary Exhibition, Flowers West, Santa Monica

Flowers Three, Flowers Central, London

'Small is Beautiful, part XVIII: Self Portrait', Flowers East, London

2001 Twelve British Painters, Flowers West, Santa Monica

Flowers Graphics, Flowers Central, London

'Small is Beautiful, part XIX: Still Life', Flowers East, London

2002 'Small Is Beautiful, part XX: Voyage', Flowers East, London

2003 5th Anniversary Exhibition: Flowers West, Santa Monica

Flowers Graphics 2003, London

'Small is Beautiful, part XXI: War and Peace', Flowers Central, London

2004 'Outside In', Sotheby's London

'Visions of London', Artspace Gallery, London

Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, London

Flowers West at Keller & Green, Los Angeles

2005 'Hyman, Kondracki, Osuga', Flowers East, London

Hunting Art Prizes Exhibition, Royal College of Art, London

35th Anniversary Exhibition, Flowers East, London

'Café Life', Shoreditch Gallery, London

'Small is Beautiful XXIII', Flowers Central, London

'Face Value', Chelsea Art Gallery, Palo Alto, California

2006 'London Now – City of Heaven, City of Hell', Guildhall Art Gallery, London

Summer Exhibition, Leinster Gallery, Dublin

'The Discerning Eye', Mall Galleries, London

'The River', Shoreditch Gallery, London

'Small is Beautiful XXIV Portraits' Flowers Central, London

2007 Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, London

'City People', Shoreditch Gallery, London

'Home and Garden' Geffrye Museum, London

'The Discerning Eye', Mall Galleries, London

'Small is Beautiful XXV' Flowers Central, London

'Small is Beautiful', Flowers Madison Avenue, New York

2008 'Mono', Flowers 82 Kingsland Road

Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, London

'Small is Beautiful XXVI', Flowers 82 Kingsland Road, London

2009 'Small is Beautiful XXVII', Flowers 82 Kingsland Road, London

2010 '40 Years On', Flowers 82 Kingsland Road, London

'Standing Room Only', Flowers 82 Kingsland Road, London

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Deutsche Bank AG, London

Museum of London

Paintings in Hospitals, London

COMMISSIONS

1994 Large painting for the foyer of Communication Building, Tokyo