



ART GALLERY NEWS RELEASE

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Tufts University Art Gallery

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***Silkworm Grind, 2000* by Mei-ling Hom**

Koppelman Gallery

September 8 to November 13, 2005

***Selections from the United Nations Series* by Wenda Gu**

Remis Sculpture Court

September 8 to January 8, 2006

Public Opening Reception: Thursday, September 8, 2005, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

MEDFORD, MA – This fall, the Tufts University Art Gallery will feature two unique and large-scale installations by artists Mei-ling Hom and Wenda Gu. Hom's sensory-rich sculpture offers a poetic interpretation of her cultural space as a Chinese-American and acts as a conduit of understanding between differing social groups. Chinese artist Gu's monumental installation, which intermingles ethnicities to form a 'united nation' of cultures and races, creates an ambiguous sense of both 'otherness' and social equity.

Silkworm Grind by **Mei-ling Hom** was created in collaboration with the Fabric Workshop and Museum in Philadelphia. The installation consists of three large-scale aluminum silkworms in spiral form which suspend from the ceiling. Each form is sheathed in colorful silk and finished with a transparent layer of sheer pastel fabric. A blend of five spices emits a pungent aroma as the forms slowly gyrate. From the tactile richness of the materials and the visual interest of the shifting pieces, to the olfactory effect of the spices and the quiet hum of the motor, Hom's work is a true sensory experience. The work references the patient and detailed daily work of the silkworm, similar to that of women throughout much of Asia. Through the work, the viewer is transported to the artist's cultural space as a first-generation Chinese-American woman as she and we search for a meaningful place in society.

Wenda Gu fuses traditional Chinese ink painting, seals, and furniture with the materials and notions of a new millennium in his *United Nations* series of monuments, which he began in 1993 and has installed in fifteen countries. Gu's two site-specific, 22-foot high sculptures at Tufts are totems made from the human hair of various races, formed into blocks and supporting the pseudo-calligraphic characters of an invented language. These nonsensical "un-words" (the oral expression of Mandarin Chinese words into English that are then transliterated back into Chinese) expose the misunderstanding that is rife in our attempts at translating languages and cultures. However, Gu's use of biological material (human hair) from an assortment of genders and ethnicities reveals an optimism about the possibilities of globalization and genetic development. The blending of races and cultures creates a utopian scenario which transcends the present narrow-mindedness of society towards the "other."

Mei-ling Hom's *Silkworm Grind* will be featured in the Koppelman Gallery from September 8 to November 13, 2005 and **Wenda Gu's** *United Nations* monuments will be featured in the Remis Sculpture Court from September 8 to January 8, 2006.

Press images are available for download at the Tufts University Art Gallery website at www.tufts.edu/as/gallery.

The Tufts University Art Gallery animates the intellectual life of the greater university community through exhibitions and programs exploring new, global perspectives on art and on art discourse. ■ The Gallery fosters critical dialogue through exhibitions and programs that explore fresh interpretations and scholarship on art, that provide a forum for art produced internationally by emerging and mid-career artists, and that feature new work of established artists. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Sunday, 11:00a.m. to 5:00p.m.; Thursdays open until 8:00p.m. Admission is free and the building is fully accessible. Visit www.tufts.edu/as/gallery or call **617-627-3518** for further information.

