

CHINA

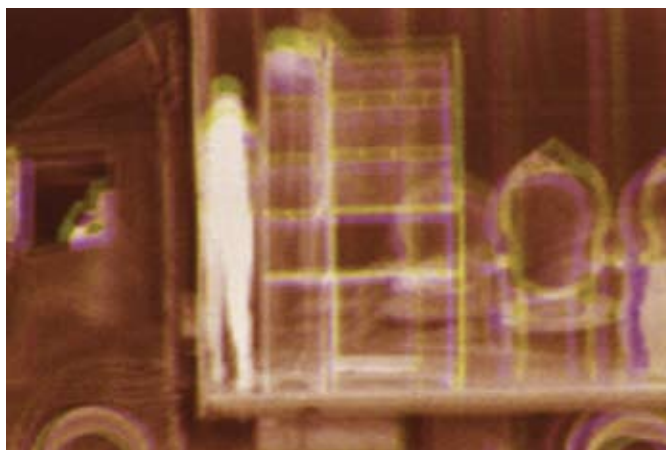
Shanghai

Tatu Tuominen and
Tuomas Laitinen
at Art + Shanghai

The *Museum of Oblivion* is a collaboration between two Finnish artists who commemorate the end of existing ways of living and contemplating. Tatu Tuominen provides a series of paper cutouts suspended in thick epoxy. The result is an image submerged in the process of being or understanding. The anonymous, yet personal subjects recall hastily fired snapshots with their slanted perspective and mundaneness.

In *Unrecognizable*, a figure to the right of the composition speaks to someone directly out of frame. At the center is a void of snow. What is unrecognizable is not what is happening (a conversation) or the location (a park, early spring) but to whom this memory belongs. Such is the tragedy of the artifact. It is caught between private and public and, as such, belongs to none.

In *Still Diggin'*, we are in a dusty record store. Stacks of vintage vinyl confront the viewer, a wall of nostalgia waiting to be flipped through. The record is still riding the wave of cult appreciation before it is inevitably made obsolete by newer, less cumbersome models. More interesting here is not the disappearance of the record, but what happens to the act of flipping. The physical process of browsing, which is closely linked to modern notions of the archive, the library, or the museum, is also in a transitory period. In the next room is a series of collaborative dioramas. The wall text links them to the architectural models of the new residential compounds surrounding global metropolises, but they are equally close to science projects from grade school. Taken from iconic photos of natural disaster, they are altered by the inclusion of leisure activities. Water-skiers ply the flooded streets in a post-Katrina Ninth



Tuomas Laitinen, *Living Room*, 2010, aluminum light box and UV print, 40.5 x 60.5 cm.

Above: Tuomas Laitinen/Tatu Tuominen, *Museum of Oblivion II*, 2010, mixed material dioramas, 62 x 40 x 100 cm.
Left: Tatu Tuominen, *Still Diggin'*, 2010, acrylic, enamel, cut paper, and epoxy on aluminum composite, 116 x 77 cm.

Ward. Sunbathers catch rays in a desertified Namibia. A stock car kicks up dust in the Aral Sea, which was drained by the Soviet Union in an attempt to irrigate some cotton fields. The absurdity of these dioramas quickly slides into acceptance. They represent the trappings of our will to subjugate. If Victorian museums were filled with the taxidermied carcasses of beasts killed for sport, it isn't too much of a stretch to assume that the museum of the future will have an exhibit on waterskiing.

The spirit of gallows-humor continues upstairs with the work from Tuomas Laitinen. The artist has fashioned two series of handmade lightboxes. Using actual images from X-ray cameras set up at border-crossings in the United States, Laitinen's revolves around the border and the boundary as a taxonomical device. We are better able to categorize, and thus to control, the heterogeneity of life on earth if we can build fences along lines in the sand. This is too effective, as the pictures of people smuggled like another illicit product attest.

These pieces don't blame NAFTA or reactionary immigration policy, but rather a dated system of classifying information. Using the backlit photograph, a pre-cinematic relic, to show a dystopic image from the future, hems in the failed project of modernism. *Living Room*, which shows the presence of a person being smuggled in a trailer cramped with furniture, is a perfect, if not cynical, example. Laitinen neglects society entirely with his *Construction* series, in which spiders' webs connect shoots of foliage. These delicate compositions, which resemble Jeff Wall's *The Destroyed Room*, exist in the interstices of creation and obliteration.

Hunter Braithwaite

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The Birth of a Myth at Yongkang Lu Art

On November 15, 2010, the construction scaffolding on an apartment building in Shanghai's