

# Ron Terada

Ron Terada employs various components of exhibition-making in his art, including advertising posters, interpretive brochures, and gallery signage. Increasingly, his work has addressed the underlying premises of specific art exhibitions, playing with their institutional intent and curatorial theses, as well as the expectations of the viewer. As part of this body of work, Terada has created sign works that can be interpreted through a variety of filters, be it the discourse of painting, the Duchampian engagement with the ready-mades of

popular culture, or the influence of poststructuralist thought. Ranging from a sign painter's subtle extension of an art gallery's corporate identity to neon signs serving as exhibition titles, these industrially produced artworks typically possess a performative aspect.

Always preoccupied with the importance of location, identity, and context, Terada has taken on the representation of his native city in his latest works. As a Vancouver-based artist of growing repute, Terada has been included in various group exhibitions featuring an emerging generation of artists who are beginning to supersede the "Vancouver School" (as exemplified by photo-conceptualists such as Jeff Wall, Ian Wallace, Ken Lum, and Rodney Graham). As these exhibitions are organized farther and farther from Vancouver, Terada has become interested in delivering the curatorial parameters of his selection in the very structure of his work and has adopted an obvious symbol of Vancouver—the city sign—for his content and his form.

Terada first used this image as a photograph on a poster advertising a Vancouver-based exhibition, then as an art magazine ad for his dealer's gallery; in both cases his works functioned as a representation of the exhibition while also constituting his contribution to the exhibition. In an ultimate gesture of appropriation, Terada contracted Vancouver's official signmakers to build him an exact replica of the roadside sign that announces the city limits.

When placed in galleries and museums, Terada's ten-by-ten-foot artwork, *Entering City of Vancouver*, 2002, no longer, of course, welcomes visitors to an urban centre; instead, it conjures the dubious practice of branding art by region. It also makes a conceptual nod to N.E. Thing Co., a collaborative duo whose practice through the 1960s and 1970s often involved claiming certain banal public sites as art. In a similar vein, Terada's work could be seen as conceptually claiming the entire city as his ready-made. But by recontextualizing this city sign, Terada also raises questions not only about the packaging of artists as part of a regional identity, but about the limits to our conventional representations of urban identities. DA

Ron Terada was born in Vancouver, British Columbia, in 1969 and received a diploma in fine arts from Emily Carr College of Art and Design in 1991. His solo exhibitions and projects include *Catalogue*, Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver (2003); *Defile*, Art Metropole, Toronto (2003); and *Present Tense*, Art Gallery of Ontario (1998). His work has also appeared in group exhibitions including the Prague Biennial (2003); *Art Music: Rock, Pop, Techno*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (2001); and the Melbourne International Biennial (1999).

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