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Ron Terada

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05.23.08-06.28.08 *Catrina Jeffries*

In Vancouver, they're called eggs: Caucasians who are wannabe Asians. They're manga-reading, anime-watching, dim-sum-eating whites who want to get down with the large Asian population in this Pacific Rim metropolis. In his new exhibition, Ron Terada adds a retro twist to this ethnic simulation. Three white women made up as *maikos* (apprentice geisha) are depicted smoking, drinking sake, and popping pills in a short video loop (on a large, nine-screen video wall). The camera zooms in on their eyes, as if looking for epicanthic folds. Three large-scale photographs complete Terada's acerbic take on these figures, whose masquerade fools no one. Complementing, but also deconstructing, the pretty poseurs is one of Terada's trademark neon-sign works, in two parts: One repeats former Vancouver Canucks hockey goon Todd Bertuzzi's comment after almost killing Steve Moore in 2004, IT IS WHAT IT IS, to which Terada adds IT WAS WHAT IT WAS. Like Lawrence Wiener's text works and Roy Arden's video of hockey-fan violence, Terada's art puts the viewer squarely in the center of the action—and the action is the put-on, what Lacan calls the *passage à l'acte*. Thus the puerile grandeur of large-scale video means that the content militates against the form. Are the girls really as dumb, in an Orientalist *Sex in the City* kind of way, as their looming images suggest, or is Terada having a joke on us, using seductive images to con us into falling for nothing?