

PROJECT 19

Tatzu Nishi

2009

War and peace and in between

2 October 2009 – 14 February 2010

Art Gallery Road, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

BIOGRAPHY

Since the late 1990's Tatzu Nishi has been decontextualising monuments and architectural landmarks across the globe. Nishi's artistic practice involves spatial and social interventions in which familiar, often unnoticed, public artworks are enclosed and displaced in foreign, temporary domestic settings, allowing visitors to experience them anew. For the first time, we find ourselves in intimate private settings with an overlooked public artwork; the surreal encounter altering our perceptions of public and private. Born Tazro Niscino, the Japanese artist works under a variety of names, including Tatzu Nishi, Tatzu Oozu, and Taturou Bashi.

FACTS

- After moving from Japan to Germany, Nishi was struck by the number of public monuments and statues in Europe.
- The artist decided to reimagine these monuments as spaces for social interventions.
- In Sydney, Nishi reinvented two sculptures positioned at the entrance of the Art Gallery of NSW, *The offerings of peace* and *The offerings of war*, created in 1923 by English sculptor Gilbert Bayes.
- *The offerings of peace* was enclosed within a domestic living room and *The offerings of war* within a bedroom.
- The constructions were wrapped in plastic sheeting and temporary building materials resembling the scaffolding that encases sculptures during restoration.
- *The main role of public sculpture is at the inauguration, but people forget the story and the reason for it very quickly... When the sculpture is surrounded by my project, people notice it again and they remember its story.*
– Tatzu Nishi

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

Born Tazro Niscino, but working under a variety of names – Tatzu Nishi, Tatzu Oozu, and Tatsuroou Bashi – in Sydney, using the name Tatzu Nishi, the artist reinvented two sculptures for Project 19, titled *War and peace and in between*. Standing on Art Gallery Road outside the entrance to the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Gilbert Bayes' equestrian monuments were transformed. Visitors climbed ramps to enter rooms that Nishi had constructed around the giant bronze figures. Bayes' *The offerings of peace* was reset within a domestic living room and *The offerings of war* within a bedroom setting, making the sculptures appear unexpected and astonishing.

After moving from Japan to Germany in 1987, Nishi was struck by the number of public monuments and statues that populate the streets of European cities. Often so familiar that they go unnoticed by city residents, he began to use them as the basis for spatial and social interventions, enclosing them in incongruous settings where visitors could experience them anew. Since the late 1990s, Nishi has been creating out-of-scale and out-of-place encounters in public spaces around the world. He has transformed street-lights, parked cars and monuments into outsized objects within domestic environments. Public statues are reimagined as coffee table ornaments or are perched improbably in bedrooms and living rooms. As markers, symbols and monuments, each of the objects Nishi reinvents reflects the social fabric of its setting. By altering their scale and context, he reinvigorates them, changing the way we view them and their function in public space.

From the outside, *War and peace and in between*, 2009, wrapped in plastic sheeting and temporary building materials, resembled the scaffolding that encased the sculptures during restoration; but inside, a different revitalisation had occurred. The public entered via ramps and, after passing through a lobby, found themselves in a beautifully decorated living room in the case of *The offerings of peace* and a bedroom for *The offerings of war*. The elevated rooms allowed visitors to see the sculptures at close hand, resituated in familiar environments. The giant horse and rider appeared as if wading through the bedsheets or emerging triumphant from the coffee table. Created to be viewed from a distance, from plinths that raise them above our heads, these monuments could now be encountered face to face.

Kaldor Public Art Project 19: Tatzu Nishi, *War and peace and in between*, 2009, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2 October 2009 - 14 February 2010

Photo: Carley Wright



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