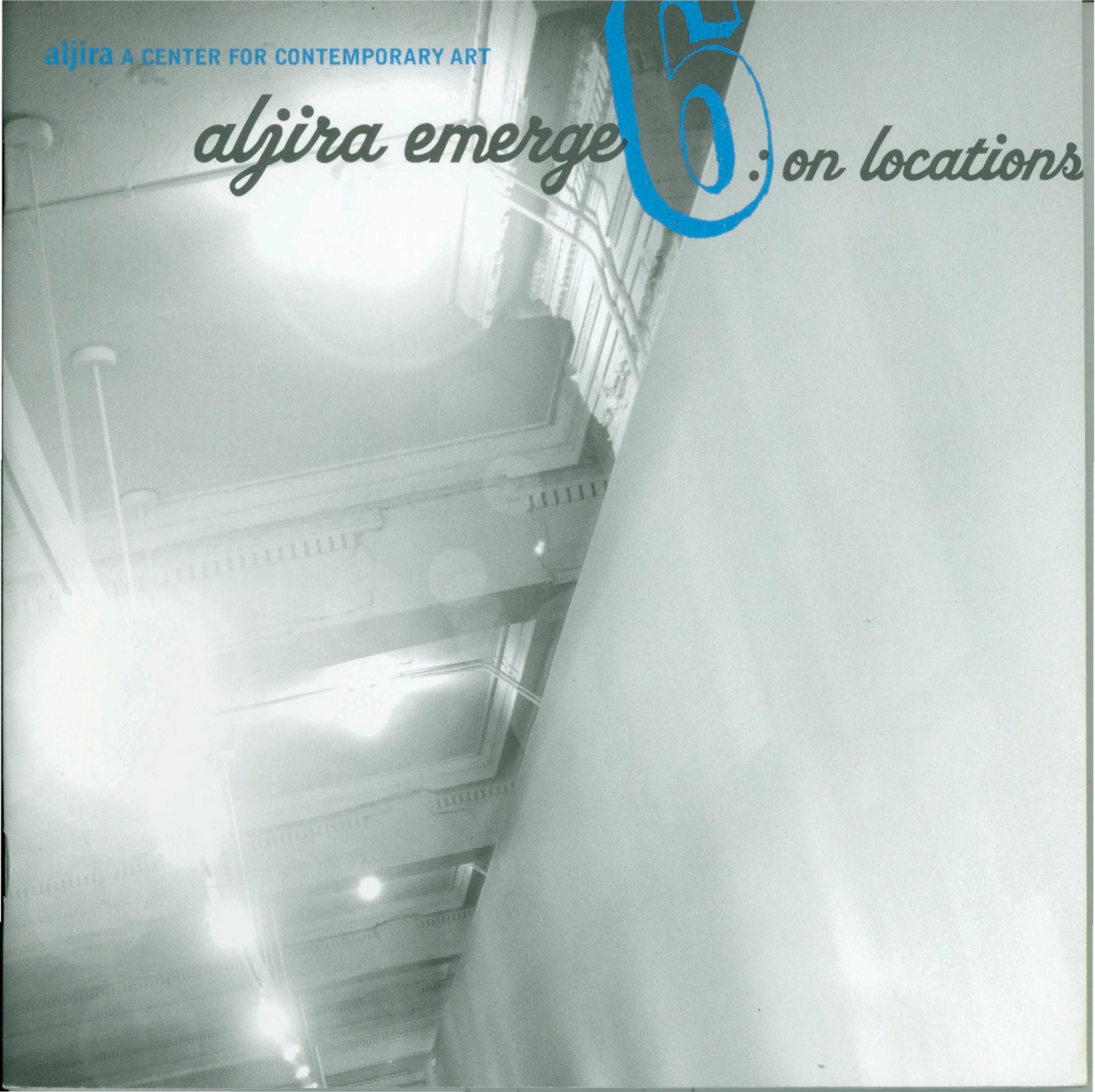


aljira A CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

aljira emerge **6** : *on locations*



Joseph Gerard Sabatino
Kigelia Pinnata, 2005
Mixed media sculpture
102 x 66 x 78 in.



: on loca

*participating
artists*

Brandon Ballengée

Don Christensen

Yukari Edamitsu

Dahlia Elsayed

Scherezade Garcia

Ben Goldman

Susan Hamburger

Shih-Chieh Huang

Joonhyun Kim

Hiroshi Kumagai

Sebastian Patané Masuelli

Chee Wang Ng

Tara Parsons

Deborah Reichard

Joseph Gerard Sabatino

Gregg Stanger

Tattfoo Tan

Alicia Wargo

a new identity in a playful transformation that is similar to the strategies of several of the artists in this show and part of the current discourse on materiality.

Gregg Stanger's three monochromatic C-prints, *Gray Horizon* (2004), are characteristic of his projects. His images are stark, elegant and reminiscent of Hiroshi Sugimoto's stunning horizon photographs. Stanger's subjects, however, are contrived landscapes or not-landscapes. Studio-made constructions, the sets, when photographed, resemble minimalist paintings or might be dawn over another solar system. The main event is the luminous line that traverses the triptych, bending slightly—or so it seems—like the curvature of the horizon, the shift due to the slight shading at the end of the piece. His work strips photography of its documentary function and its objectivity, its acclaimed veracity, revealed as an illusion, one that subverts perception.

Pattfoo Tan was trained as a graphic designer but taught himself how to paint, although his work is informed by both practices. A Malaysian, his work refers to his Asian background, particularly his love of traditional Chinese and Japanese painting, and to contemporary western art. The passages that look like ink painting, for instance, are created by diluted oil paint, and he uses canvas-like rice paper. His big, beautiful bouquet of a painting, *Spring Fever* (2004), is a pastel candy box of colors dusted with glitter, sequins and other materials, a deft

mix of Asian brushwork with abstract expressionist lyricism, its creamy surface bursting with an all-over pattern of stems, buds and petals.

Alicia Wargo's Lilliputian drawings of invented worlds have much to do with both a sense of place (in this instance, Brooklyn) and its displacement into the fictive. Drawing and fantasy figure in many younger artists' works and Wargo's imagined cities are part of that impulse. Delicately, precisely rendered, somewhat resembling medieval town plans with a dreamy surrealistic twist, these urban centers float on an expanse of white or pale paper, as if on air or underwater. Things and objects proliferate and shift into other things and objects: small ships become eyeballs, chandeliers turn into parachutes, air planes and balloons, all of which might be on the verge of text or a secret language. Using sepia or black ink, Wargo's taut, suspended landscapes hover between multiple modes of existence.

Lilly Wei

Lilly Wei is a New York-based independent curator, essayist and critic who writes for several publications in the United States and abroad. A frequent contributor to *Art in America*, she is also a contributing editor at *ARTnews* and *Art Asia Pacific*.

Chee Wang Ng also works in a variety of modes. For this exhibition, he will show a diptych of two large digital C-prints, from 1999–2000. As richly colored as old master paintings, Ng uses the tradition of the Northern Renaissance still life in combination with high production shelter magazine layouts to which Ng adds an Asian accent: his signature bowls of perfectly mounded, blindingly white rice verge on the platonic. *The Great Laughter* (1999) is a pun on the word for shrimp in Cantonese which sounds like the English word, ha, and *Fulfillment of All Desire* (2000) introduces persimmons, the symbol of joy and wish fulfillment, and Ling chih mushrooms, believed to confer immortality, as Chinese emblems in a Western composition.

Tara Parsons has been scanning the skies since the tragedy of September 11. Parsons lost a friend in the collapse of the World Trade Center and ever after, she has been haunted by the thrum of airplanes as she tries to pinpoint their location. She began to take photos of airplanes, once considered symbols of adventure and now transformed into terrorists' weapons, making them thumb-nail size, as if to diminish the magnitude of the event and make it more bearable. *Luminaris* is the result, a series of variable dimensions made in 2003, each unit a small, cropped photograph on wall board. She sometimes thinks of them as little windows into the sky, like the windows of the World Trade Center or airplane windows. The space seen through these windows signifies to Parsons the space where people and objects disappear.

Deborah Reichard takes familiar objects and cobbles them together to make something new and unexpected. In *Portrait of Dick Law* (2004), she finishes the end of a section of cedar molding to approximate the profile of Law which she has also cast in porcelain. For this installation, Reichard made a shelf trimmed by her Law molding and displayed several other works derived from his profile. She likes to discover overlooked, unremarkable items and give them a makeover, transforming the practical into the impractical. Reichard's domestic surrealism is a whimsical exchange and metamorphosis that is part of an ongoing Duchampian practice in modern and contemporary art.

Joseph Gerard Sabatino also works with a variety of materials. For this show, he has re-created the *Kigelia Pinnata*, the African Sausage tree found in South and Central Africa, notable for its curiously shaped fruit which resembles a sausage. Sabatino's handsome sculpture is made from rebars of various gauges twisted together to form the trunk and branches and textured by the heat of the welding process. The rebars resemble the ropey striations of the *Kigelia Pinnata*, and Sabatino reproduced the fruit by encasing concrete shapes in pig intestine. Sabatino, without altering the look of his industrial, commonplace materials, nonetheless gives them