

# PearlLam Galleries

Shanghai

## Sayaka Ishizuka: Life Threads

The artist's first solo exhibition outside of Japan, featuring a walk-in monumental installation constructed from rice, alongside a new series created especially for the show



Top: **Waiting #1** (2014), Rice, thread, old bobbins, 13 x  $\varnothing$ 9 cm (x 5 pieces)  
Bottom: **Genetic** (detail) (2014), Wooden boards, chopsticks, 45 x 453 x 4.5 cm

### Exhibition Dates

12 May–23 August 2014

Monday–Sunday, 10:30am–7pm

**Opening reception:** Sunday, 11 May 4–6pm

Pearl Lam Galleries, 181 Middle Jiangxi Road, G/F, Shanghai, China 200002

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**SHANGHAI**—Pearl Lam Galleries is delighted to present **Sayaka Ishizuka: Life Threads**, the emerging Japanese artist's first solo exhibition in China and outside Japan, featuring 11 new pieces especially created for the show. Works will include a site-specific installation, for which the artist is most known, as well as mixed media on canvas, collages consisting of various coloured chopsticks mounted on wooden boards, a collage created from rice on an acrylic light box, and a new video.

Sayaka Ishizuka's works explore the interconnectedness of humankind, focusing on the stories of everyday objects and those who use them. In Japanese tradition, inanimate objects contain traces of the holders' spirit, as well as their personal emotions and memories. The artist takes common overlooked items in daily life as her materials, such as grains of rice,

broken plates or bowls, worn-out kimonos, photos of cherry blossoms and household items, which are often connected with threads and suspended in the space of her site-specific installation works, Ishizuka tacitly transforms these mundane objects into simple yet profound spatial configurations, in which she believes the objects' lives are linked and woven together into the 'thread' of human life. In Japanese, the exhibition title literally means 'connecting lives together'.

*Rice Deity* (2014), a walk-in installation newly produced for this exhibition encompassing a third of the gallery space, consists of 4,200 handmade strings of rice grains hung from the ceiling, as well as used utensils and an old table collected from antique markets in Shanghai. Ishizuka spent 18 months developing the work, which was first conceived for a 2009 project in Echigo-Tsumari, an area known for its top quality rice production in Japan, and exhibited in an old deserted Japanese house. The artist immersed herself in researching rice production, living and working with rice farmers for six months. She views rice as the seeds of life, representing warmth, nourishment and sustenance, with the threads of rice symbolising the link between the past and the present in an infinite chain of life.

By presenting *Rice Deity* in Shanghai, a modern environment with its own rice culture, Ishizuka mentioned the human affinity with rice and its centrality to lived culture in Asia are mutual in both Japan and China, and by collecting used utensils in Shanghai, the artist creates the connection between her work and the city's past and history.

*Waiting #1* (2014) consists of five old bobbins sourced in Japan spooled with handmade threads of rice. The artist uses silver and gold threads to connect the grains, representing the radiance of life. Other works which utilise rice and thread include a light box collage entitled *Journey* (2014), as well as mixed media paintings *Sleeping* (2014) and *The Rain Pours* (2014), in which cotton threads or threads of rice are attached to the canvas and covered in layers of red, green and gold acrylic paint before being enshrouded in black oil paint. After the paint has dried, Ishizuka carefully sands the area where the threads are, so delicate white lines emerge from the darkness to represent the light of vitality and what the artist calls 'life ties'.

A new series of multi-coloured collages *Connection, For the Future* and *Genetic* have also been newly created for the exhibition. They consist of well-used chopsticks acquired from friends and acquaintances in Japan, which are also rolled with gold and silver thread to suggest people's aspirations and the light of life. In these works, Ishizuka refers to an old Japanese custom of burning chopsticks at Shinto shrines. Chopsticks were believed to contain their owner's soul, and it was thought that an offering would cleanse the holder spiritually. Ishizuka refers to the notion of inner spirituality in these works. By using colour gradation and shaping her composition, she also refers to traditional scrolls.

## About Sayaka Ishizuka

Sayaka Ishizuka (b. 1980, Shizuoka, Japan) graduated from the Painting Department of Joshibi University of Art and Design in 2004. Her quietly arresting installation and mixed media works are matched by an attentiveness to the lived histories, cultural associations and evocative potential of the commonplace, found objects that are frequently her chosen medium. The idea that the universal can be accessed and expressed in art by way of the personal is one that is realised with striking clarity and a humbling lack of self-consciousness in the artist's works. Taking as their medium objects unremarkable in their ready availability or often-overlooked presence in daily life—rice, thread, used articles of clothing, utensils and household items—and paying heed to the social and cultural associations they carry, Ishizuka's artwork subtly transform these items into leitmotifs for interconnectedness in the broader sphere of human existence.

Ishizuka participated in the Wellington Asia Residency Exchange artist-in-residence programme in New Zealand in 2009, and has exhibited in solo shows in Tokyo and Kanagawa. Her installations have been shown widely around Japan in group exhibitions, including at the Setouchi Triennial and Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennial. The artist currently resides in Oiso, Kanagawa, Japan.

## About Pearl Lam Galleries

Founded by Pearl Lam, Pearl Lam Galleries is a driving force within Asia's contemporary art scene. With over 20 years of experience exhibiting Asian and Western art and design, it is one of the leading and most established contemporary art galleries to be launched out of China.

Playing a vital role in stimulating international dialogue on Chinese and Asian contemporary art, the Galleries is dedicated to championing artists who re-evaluate and challenge perceptions of cultural practice from the region. The Galleries in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Singapore collaborate with renowned curators, each presenting distinct programming from major solo exhibitions, special projects and installations to conceptually rigorous group shows. Based on the philosophy of Chinese Literati where art forms have no hierarchy, Pearl Lam Galleries is dedicated to breaking down boundaries between different disciplines, with a unique gallery model committed to encouraging cross-cultural exchange.

Contemporary Chinese Abstract art is heavily represented in the Galleries roster. Influential Chinese artists Zhu Jinshi and Su Xiaobai, who synthesise Chinese sensibilities with an international visual language, are presented internationally with work now included in major private and public collections worldwide. The Galleries have also introduced leading international artists such as Jenny Holzer, Jim Lambie and Yinka Shonibare MBE (RA) to markets in the region, providing opportunities for new audiences in Asia to encounter their work. Pearl Lam Galleries encourages international artists to create new work which engages specifically with the region—collaborating to produce thought-provoking and culturally relevant work.

Pearl Lam Design shows works by established and emerging international designers, including Maarten Baas; Mattia Bonetti; André Dubreuil; and Studio Makkink & Bey, in exhibitions and design fairs around the world. They are invited to push the boundaries of traditional Chinese art and craft techniques and create new works that reflect their experiences in China. A fourth gallery and concept store devoted solely to design will open shortly in Shanghai.

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## Press Enquiries

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