

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“Ken Kitano – Our Face”

Date: 23 Nov – 22 Dec 2012

Venue: Blindspot Gallery (24-26A, Aberdeen Street, Central)

Opening hours: Tuesday to Saturday, 11:00am to 7:00pm

Closed on public holidays



Blindspot Gallery is delighted to present Japanese conceptual photographer Ken Kitano's first solo exhibition in Hong Kong showcasing his photographic project *our face*.

At first glance images in *our face* can be deceiving. Where it appears to be an ambiguous portrait of a single person, it is in fact an accumulation and stratification of several dozen individuals. The single figure we see does not exist as an actual person, nor can it be classed as a true portrait. Instead it is far closer to the demographic whole, not only a representation of the subject but also a creation of a new signifier, questioning people's very existence.

Kitano has been working on *our face* since 1999, when he started taking photos of various social groups, divided into 6 categories: *on the road, religion, children, war, race* and *occupation*. The images ranged from Chinese laborer, to Muslim women, to world peace protesters. The project started in his motherland but

continued on to other parts of the world, making it his life's work.

Kitano's techniques are of the old school. His work is painstakingly produced and time consuming, using darkroom layering process which combines dozens of negatives, images are projected on top of one another with precise exposures to create an icon of a particular community. Kitano sees darkroom skills as a handcraft, artistry of a bygone age. Each of the life size print is unique and printed in Three Shadows Photography Art Centre (Beijing), one of the very few facilities in the world where this work can be produced on such a scale.

Kitano's images push the boundaries of social documentary photography and typological photography, breaking down hierarchies within localized groups, where all people are presented as equal. He explores the possibility of coexistence, using photography medium as a connector, a hub. Rather than establishing a sole figure to represent a certain group, (as most social documentary photography tends to do), these photographs combine together and create a psychic consciousness, and at the same time reinventing a traditional craftsmanship that is quickly fading away.

Ken Kitano will be giving a talk before the opening reception on 22 November at 6pm to discuss his concept and processes behind his work.

About Ken Kitano

Born in 1968 in Tokyo, Kitano graduated from the College of Mathematical Engineering at Nihon University in Chiba. He won the 'Society of Photography Award' in 2004 and the 'Newcomer's Award' of the Photographic Society of Japan in 2007. His work has been exhibited extensively and collected by major museums in Japan and around the world. Kitano currently lives and works in Tokyo.

About Blindspot Gallery

Blindspot Gallery is set up to bring contemporary photography, an art form that has entered the blind spot of the Hong Kong art scene, to a higher degree of visibility. We feature both established and emerging photographers and artists, mainly from the region but also beyond.

For enquiries and media interviews, please contact Ms. Lesley Kwok at 2517 6238 or by email info@blindspotgallery.com

Image captions:

Metaportrait of 30 Geikos and Maikos Dancing the Special Kyo Dance in the Spring, Miyagawa Town, Kyoto, No. 4, 2010, Gelatin silver print, 177 x 142 cm.

Metaportrait of 31 day-laborers watching a film in an open-air cinema, Beijing, China, 3 May 2009, 2009, Gelatin silver print, 177 x 142 cm / 31 x 25 cm (Edition of 7).

(Image courtesy of artist and Blindspot Gallery)

