

*The Chocolate Geisha work for this exhibition is to do with the Floating World as a commercial secular bastardisation of a Buddhist theological concept; the idea that the material world of the senses is fundamentally illusory.*

*I want to compare this Buddhist idea with Umberto Eco's idea of simulacra as well as Plato's Cave allegory and other philosophical origins. The point is that our senses only perceive the PACKAGING of the world - not its essence. The world we experience is all surface and our contemporary culture (like ukiyo-e) but negates seeing this as a problem and embraces the superficiality. That's my link to Japan in the work.*

***The chocolate courtesan is a representation of a culture obsessed with material and sensual fulfillment. they are the closest equivalent to Paris Hilton that I can bare to paint. They are all surface - all package.***

*The works are based directly on Utamaro's bingjin-ga (portraits of beautiful women) and from this context of course, they have a relationship to advertising. The fact that this 'a la mode' world of advertising, life-style supplements and manufactured celebrity may in a way be a kind of packaging without product gives the work a moral cautionary dimension -hence the canaries (as in a coal mine) and the Geese (as in "Goose!" and more ambivalently the golden goose and wild goose chase)*

*The relationship to Utamaro's concern is made critically manifest whereas Utamaro just celebrated this world. In a way these works aim to show that ukiyo-e WAS the beginning of cheap mass produced images and the world that we live in is a image saturated result.*

*These paintings also refer to the three wise monkeys idea as a lose moral framework. **The courtesans are shown modeling sense altering 'safely' apparel which in turn blinds and deafens them and removes their power of speech the result of to much focus on the world on the material now. But they look SO glamorous!***

*The work is in threes in many ways. There are three 'Icon' paintings. Three wise monkeys, a triptych and the religious significance of this should be apparent - Utamaro was parodying Buddhist religious pictorial traditions too.*

*Some works deal directly with images as icons. The aim is to mix Japanese and classic western iconography. These i see as is a similar vein to Shakaru's famous portraits of Kabuki theatre actors and again the Paris Hilton /Celebrity tie in. These classic ukiyo-e show famous actors in famous roles but it are hard to see the actor behind the mask or any real sense of personal portrait in the prints. So there is the chocolate courtesan as Che Guevara, as the Queen, and as Marilyn Monroe. These are kind of like a painting wearing the mask of another painting and again aim to question the truth or relationship that these images have with the world. In what way does the Australian flag represent Australian ness.*

*The works you have images of are of billboard size for a reason and were initially exhibited in a street front window of a commercial space. All works are collage and acrylic /charcoal on linen with a substantial collection of chocolate wrappers making up the collage, some incorporate gold leaf as well.*