

TAKASHI HORISAKI'S 'SOCIAL DRESS NEW ORLEANS' AT THE SOCRATES SCULPTURE PARK, LONG ISLAND CITY, NEW YORK

Rendering of Takashi Horisaki's 'Social dress New Orleans - 730 days later', 2007.



Inside of the original house before casting.



As you read this Takashi Horisaki is probably in the midst of setting up his thin rubber cast of a condemned shotgun-style house from the Lower Ninth Ward on site at the Socrates Sculpture Park, and the house itself being demolished - the inevitable culmination of the artist's three-month project to call attention to the politics of ongoing recovery efforts and historical effacement in the devastated Louisiana community. Catch the opening this Sunday 29 July from 2 to 6.



THE SAATCHI GALLERY

Horisaki (b. 1974, Japan), who was originally trained in his native Japan and subsequently in the art department at New Orleans' Loyola University, has created a full-scale latex replica of the building at 1941 Caffin Avenue, the latest in a series he has termed 'Social Dress' in which he twins soft architectural castings with their original sites, letting the cast drape over a structure as a peeled layer of skin, emphasising the relationship between the aesthetic and corporeal resonance of his subjects. Conceptually sharing ideas with the architectural castings of Rachel Whiteread, the demolition interventions of Gordon Matta-Clark, and the land art of Robert Smithson, Horisaki's project for a temporary tribute was necessarily followed by quick planning, gathering a troupe of volunteering Louisiana artists to collaborate in the mold casting before the house would collapse, applying layers of latex mixed with paint to create a textured 3-D print. The project faced a setback when, having secured permission by former residents to use the property, the Army Corps informed him of plans to demolish the house. With the help of volunteer lawyer Bruce G. Whittaker, Horisaki was able to negotiate for the timely completion of the casting. In a community still being devastated by the aftermath of the storm, this kind of physical archiving (including anything and everything on the surface of the house, including fish that got stuck on windows) is an essential reminder for those outside the effects of the destruction. 'A former professor told me how difficult it is for him to make his own artwork still, and so I wondered if I- a neutral observer, not exactly an outsider, but with some distance and perspective on the situation -could express their feelings through my sculpture,' Horisaki has said of the spirit behind the whole process, which he's documented in a project blog.

Horisaki's ode to New Orleans' continuing plight is currently being set up on a custom-made structure which will mimic the original building's proportions, except that this one, instead of being in one of the most destroyed neighbourhoods in that city, will face the East River and overlook the New York skyline, a dramatic, truncated arrival into a kind of visual afterlife the artist hopes will be a tangible call to arms to anyone who still would like to become involved with Louisiana's recovery efforts.

Check out the NEW ORLEANS 'ART IN ACTION' BLOG, a long-term, collaborative art project documenting New Orleans community artists public art projects.

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