

GAYLE CHONG KWAN

Giphantie

10.06.11 | 23.07.11

Opening Thursday June 9th 2011 6-9pm

Galerie Alberta Pane presents a new solo exhibition of Gayle Chong Kwan including two recent photographic series "**Senscape Scotland**" and "**Designated Status (ongoing)**" which play with ideas of memory, fictional landscapes and the historiography of photography.

Giphantie was an imaginative tale by Tiphaigne de la Roche published in 1760, that anticipated the development of photography long before its invention. Escaping death in a hurricane, the novel's hero, finds himself on the enchanted fertile island of Giphantia (Giphantie being an anagram of the author's name).

"**Senscape Scotland**" (2009) is a series of six photographic works created in sites of the Scottish Grand Tour and inspired by Daguerre's Dioramas and their relationship with fiction, early tourism and Scotland. Playing with scale and merging the real and the constructed, as well as using items collected whilst traveling through Scotland, such as the granulated coffee and shortbread biscuits from her stays in bed and breakfasts along the way, the six photographs all depict famous tourist landmarks in Scotland and combine photographs taken on the road with studio-based work. Edinburgh was the site of one of Daguerre's Dioramas Theatre, where visitors could witness painted scenes, using light effects and sensory elements. They created a cinematic experience, considered to be an early prototype of photography. The theatrical depiction of the landscapes in Chong Kwan's 'Senscape Scotland' reflects the way in which Daguerre used his imagination to create the Scottish sites in his dioramas, as he never actually visited Scotland. As a result his Scottish works played with scale and reality, such as Roslyn Chapel appearing more like a Cathedral rather than its actual small size.

"**Designated Status (ongoing), Portugal**" (2010) is a series of seven black and white photographic works that reference some of the earliest experiments in infrared photography. The series revisits and revises Kenneth Mees' early infrared photographs of 'romantic' landscapes in Portugal taken in 1910, but this time bringing together different landscapes concerned with the issue of 'designated status'. From UNESCO heritage awarded historic Sintra to communities such as Talud and Catujal, which were built illegally along Lisbon's Military Road and which are now involved in different processes of gaining official and legal status. The photographs are created with near infrared film, at the limit of perception of the human eye, thus combining questions of vision, designation and legality in the built environment.

Born in 1973 in Edinburgh, Gayle Chong Kwan is a London-based artist who has exhibited widely in UK and at an international level. In London, among her exhibitions, she showed at National Portrait Gallery ("Different Worlds", 2007), Tate Britain ("Conversations", 2006) and Iniva ("Whose Map is it", 2010). She has received several awards, such as European Pepinieres for young artists in 2009, Art Council England in 2004 and winner of the photography award Vauxhall Collective in 2009. Chong Kwan participated in the 10th Havana Biennial in 2009, Taiwan International Video Art in 2010 and will be present at Venice Biennial 2011, in ArtSway's New Forest Pavilion.