

Galleries

Almanac, 2018 | HGM

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SULLIVAN + STRUMPF

Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran

SYDNEY

Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran's exuberantly wild ceramic sculptures—which look like figures from Hindu mythology that were emoji-fied, bounced through a succession of online meme boards and then reinterpreted by a new-age pottery workshop—are having a moment. Compared to the towering, totemic forms dwelling in the darkened environment of *The Cave* (2017), created for "The National: New Australian Art," Nithiyendran's solo show "R@mesh" brought these demiurges into the light. Sitting on pedestals—some tagged with graffiti, others made from painted cardboard—figures such as *Head with Many Piercings #1* and *#2* (both 2017) looked distinctly ill-at-ease with their gold-plated teeth and paint-splattered heads, each spanning miniature red heads from their own. Similarly adorned in splattered rivulets of color and poop-emoji stickers, *Creator* (2017) has three black-painted phalli for a nose and a black-leather dog collar, bespeaking proclivities very much of this world. **HGM**



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TAKA ISHII GALLERY

Japanese Surrealist Photography

TOKYO

Japan's postwar artistic rebirth frequently belies its roots in an earlier modernist moment. Surrealism in Japanese photography arrived in the country with the translation of André Breton's 1924 manifesto and became intertwined with the rising anti-naturalism of the *Shinko Shashin* ("New Photography") tendency. "Japanese Surrealist Photography" surveyed five pivotal figures that bridged the two eras, beginning with Iwata Nakayama, whose aim was "to create beautiful things, even if they are fabricated." Osamu Shiihara combines photography and painting, while French poetry inspired Kansuke Yamamoto, whose favored motif of the bird cage appears in *Buddhist Temple's Bird Cage* (1940), which depicts a telephone trapped within the rattan structure, suggesting a rather brutal inversion of modernization's paradigm. In the 1950s, the show's lone female figure, Toshiko Okanou, made collages from fashion magazines left behind by occupation forces, before disappearing from the art world. **HGM**



2

KUKJE GALLERY

Park Chan-kyong

SEOUL

The fissures caused by rapid modernization are evident everywhere in Korea but often little articulated. Park Chan-kyong's exhibition "Farewell" ("Annyeong," in Korean) connected the pains of recent events to still-unresolved 20th-century traumas. The panoramic, three-channel video *Citizen's Forest* (2016) was presented like a *sansu* landscape painting, and depicts various ritual acts occurring on a forested hillside. Shamans attempt to appease the demons and spirits of unresolved tragedies—evoking processions of soldiers in skull masks and school children in uniform, recalling the many teenaged victims of the *Sewol* ferry disaster—but the restlessness of a brass band dispels that possibility. Park similarly attempts to fuse the modernist and the occult in the "Bright Stars" (2017) series of pigment-stained birchwood panels dotted with round, brass spirit mirrors, which are used by mystics to commune with the dead. **HGM**



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