

Melissa Ichiuji: *Lesser Madonnas*

February 28 - March 28

Opening Reception: Saturday, February 28, 6-8PM

Irvine Contemporary is pleased to present Melissa Ichiuji's second solo exhibition, *Lesser Madonnas*. Opening reception with the artist, Saturday February 28th, 6-8PM.

In her new body of work, Melissa Ichiuji explores new themes that challenge our cultural messages about motherhood, the mother's body, domestic space, and sexual identities. *Lesser Madonnas* exposes age-old tensions and dualisms in our cultural symbols of the feminine—Madonna/Mother versus Aphrodite/Venus, the mystery of procreation versus the power of the erotic, the mother in the limited confines of domestic space versus the unlimited sexuality of woman as agent of desire. Ichiuji also continues her challenges to simplistic demarcations of sexual and gender identity in children, adolescents, and adults, often with wry humor and striking visual puns.



Melissa Ichiuji, *Lesser Madonna No. 1*, 2009. Fabric, nylon, wooden chair, mixed materials. Variable dimensions.

Melissa Ichiuji's works are performative sculptures presented as staged fantasies about innocence, power, sexuality, and identity. Her works often explore the boundaries between childhood innocence, with its playful curiosity about the body, and adult self-awareness and repressions. Her range of materials—from nylon stockings and antique fabric to metal machine parts—also reveal Ichiuji's ongoing dialog with artists like Louise Bourgeois, Sarah Lucas, and Hans Bellmer, who have explored similar themes. Each sculpture is hand sewn and assembled from many materials, including nylon, fabric, leather, wood, bones, fur, hair, and metallic found objects.

Melissa Ichiuji graduated from the Corcoran College of Art + Design, and now lives and works near Washington, DC. Her work has recently been acquired for private collections in New York, London, Brussels, Switzerland, and Washington, DC.

For further information, exhibition images, and available works, contact Lauren Gentile, Assistant Director and Director of Sales (202-332-8767, lauren@irvinecontemporary.com).

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Melissa Ichiuji, *Lesser Madonnas*



Happy Cat, 2009

Mixed materials, panty hose, stitching, fabric and found objects, 21 x 22 x 15 inches.



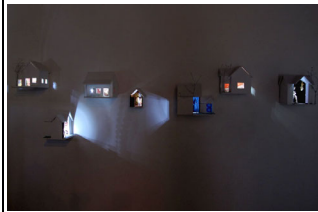
Mother Sucker, 2009

Mixed materials, baby bottle nipples, panty hose, stitching, fabric and found objects, 20 x 17 x 17 inches.



Shape Sorter, 2009

Mixed materials, panty hose, high-chair, stitching, fabric and found objects, 51 x 32 x 39 inches.



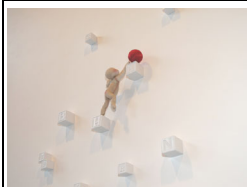
Hoods, 2009

Mixed materials, panty hose, lights, stitching, fabric and found objects, 6 – 12 inches square each.



Lesser Madonna, 2009

Mixed materials, panty hose, curlers, stitching, beads, fabric and found objects, 41 x 48 x 36 inches (mother) 17 ½ x 16 x 12 inches (child).



Dirt Ball, 2009

Mixed materials, panty hose, stitching, fabric, baby blocks and found objects, 64 x 29 inches approx. dimensions variable.



Parallel Play, 2009

Mixed materials, panty hose, stitching, fabric and found objects, 35 ½ x 100 x 192 inches (16 feet).

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