

# IRVINE CONTEMPORARY

## **Akemi Maegawa, *Invisible, Inc.***

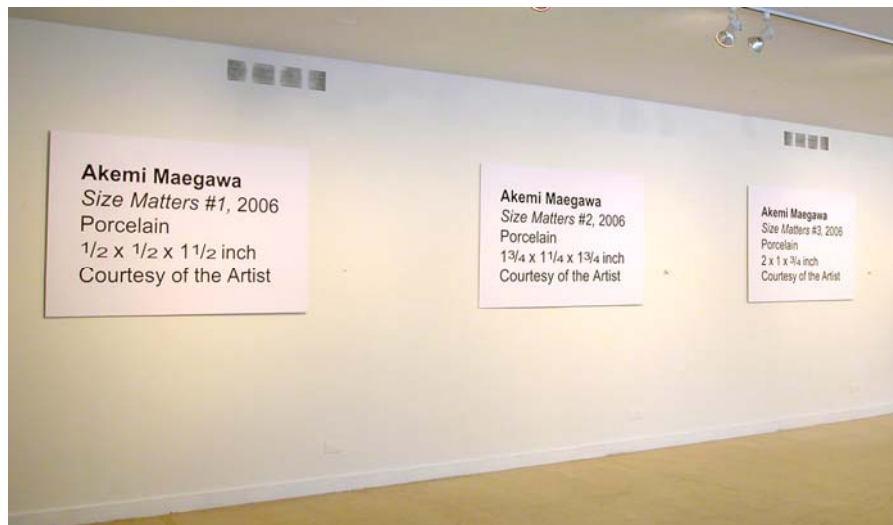
**Sculptures and Installation Works**

**Exhibition Essay by Benjamin Teague**

**February 23 - March 29, 2008**

**Opening reception with the artist: Saturday, February 23, 6-8PM**

Irvine Contemporary is pleased to present Akemi Maegawa's first solo exhibition, *Invisible, Inc.* The exhibition will feature the artist's sculptures and installation works in a wide range of media and materials, including works in ceramics and fabric. The exhibition investigates the invisible cultural values that surround art objects and the making of art value, opening up the art world's practice as *Invisible, Inc.* The works engage playfully with ongoing questions about an art work's conceptual basis, the status of the material object, and the effects of scale, size, and materials. The exhibition includes interactive and collaborative works, including a disguised woodblock print press for making artist's bank notes. Exhibition essay by Benjamin Teague. Opening reception with the artist, February 23, 6-8PM.



**Akemi Maegawa, *Size Matters*, 2008, installation view, printed museum board and porcelain.**

The debate about an art work's function as a material object circulating in a market economy and the immaterial and conceptual basis of a work created by the artist is a well-known theme in Western art and is now part of the basic vocabulary of the art world. This vocabulary about "objecthood" versus art "concepts" and the contextual "sites" where art appears extends from Marcel Duchamp's "readymades" and the performative installations of the 1960-1970s through the rise of conceptual art, appropriation art, performance art, and minimalism in the 1970s-1980s. Lucy Lippard's famous book, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972*, documented the development of conceptual art and beyond, and these ideas continue to circulate in various forms across all art genres today. The gallery space itself has become the site for artists to question the invisible and intangible values that transform an "object" into a "work of art."

Akemi Maegawa's *Invisible, Inc.* continues this important ongoing conversation in playful, humorous, and surprising ways, and she includes the issue of scale, how "size matters" in a "super-size me" world, and the effects of an artist's re-interpretation of objects by changing their scale in a gallery installation.

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Akemi Maegawa, *Counter-Foot Money*, 2008. Woodblock print on Japanese paper, AP. Paper size: 10 x 21 in.



Akemi Maegawa, *YES Bottles*, 2007. Hand painted and glazed porcelain. 2.5X1.25 in. each.

Maegawa will include collaborative and performative works that require the participation of gallery visitors in creating works that will be made "invisibly" on site during the exhibition. Gallery visitors are invited to participate in the creation of "Counter-Foot Money," an editioned woodblock print of an artist's designed bank note, a print of which will be created each day as visitors set foot in the gallery on a carpet overlaying the woodcut and paper. The editioned series of 25 signed, numbered, and dated prints will be exhibited and available in the gallery, and will be credited as "Akemi Maegawa and Irvine Gallery Collaborators."

## About the Artist

Akemi Maegawa received her BFA from the Corcoran College of Art & Design (2005) and her MFA from the Cranbrook Academy of Art (2007). Specializing in sculpture, ceramics, and fabric art, the artist has received many awards from the Corcoran College and the Cranbrook Academy, including the Ceramics Genius Award. Akemi Maegawa lives and works in Washington, DC.

**Akemi Maegawa**  
*Invisible, Inc.*  
Exhibition Essay by Benjamin Teague

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Akemi Maegawa, *Daruma Commodity Series*, 2007. High-fired stoneware & fabric. Approx. 18 X 12 X 12 inches

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