

## TORONTO

### Ron Terada

Justina M. Barnicke Gallery // January 20–March 20

“Who I Think I Am,” a survey of the Vancouver-based Conceptualist Ron Terada’s work, while not comprehensive, conveys a sense of his wide-ranging practice by bringing together paintings, videos, prints, and sculpture from the past 18 years. Terada’s pieces, which reference street signs, pop music, and advertising, recall the detached, text-based formalism of Lawrence Weiner and the early John Baldessari. Despite the exhibition’s title, viewers learn very little about Terada from looking at his art; however, they are prompted to consider how artists and their work are assessed, categorized, and included (or not) in art history. The question of how perceptions of the places where artists work affect how they themselves are perceived is raised by a selection of prints from 2003 to ’06 that document the first Vancouver exhibitions of Terada’s 2002 *Entering City of Vancouver*, a large replica of highway signs marking the city’s boundaries that subsequently traveled to exhibitions in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

The “Ad” and “Jack” series suggest a strong affinity for the artists whose names and words Terada appropriates. The former, paintings from 1993–94, consists of blowups of gallery cards for shows by Mike Kelley, Vito Acconci, and Matt Mullican. The latter, from 2010, comprises 16 text paintings drawn from the autobiography of the Canadian-born, California-based artist Jack Goldstein, who after achieving success in the 1970s and ’80s, spent the ’90s in heroin-addicted obscurity before committing suicide in 2003, just as his oeuvre was being rediscovered. At once self-pitying and pompous, Goldstein in these excerpts begrudges other artists of his generation their success while expressing pride in his own body of work.

The 2010 video *Soundtrack for an Exhibition* shows a turntable playing vinyl records by such alt-rock bands as Vampire Weekend, Pavement, Magnetic Fields, and Galaxie 500. Here viewers find themselves judging the artist not on his work but on his taste in music. A photo of stacked cardboard boxes, their sides stamped with the artist’s name and publication shipping information, has the same title as the show. But does Terada really think of himself and his art as neatly packaged commodities? —**Bill Clarke**

