

## **Pagodenburg, the Men's Pavillion**

One of many imagined spaces. And, in fact, not really about men, but rather perhaps about certain products of the collective imagination, the phantasmagoria of identity.

The idea was begotten at the meeting of a memorably absurd textile print and a photograph from a promotional gift book donated by a friend who worked at one time in a Toyota showroom.

The central work, from which all the others spring, is an installation. A tent in the style of Rudolph Valentino's Sheikh, made of vaporous cloth printed with the diminutive heads of male public figures of the twentieth century, mostly military (also ecclesiastical one case). My interest was in creating a divertimento rather than a denunciation. I was looking for cloth with a man pattern, and this was what I found. But, as I had no aim of reflecting on eternal truths or deep and final identities, but rather on image-making and story-telling (although with half an eye on their insidious power to direct our lives), I saw no reason to reject what turned up. From the veiled pagoda floats, in Morse (the language of absence, romantic even before its disappearance from the instrumental world), the message: "Mr. Okubo dusts his pagoda carefully every day". A blurred photograph documents this real but long-gone action. The pagoda/pavilion, with the jade-coloured glass discs and the round, hollow bones that accompany it, create a hermaphrodite space.

The works surrounding the installation all have, I think, a certain flavour of absence, farness and ghostliness. But, in spite of this touch of melancholy, I feel confident that they lack the "gravitas" of tragedy. They keep a strong hold on their absurdity. And they are insubstantial.