

Western New York Collects:  
**Josh Iguchi**



*Crucifixion*, 1993, C-print and found objects, 20x25 in. Collection of Gerald Mead, Buffalo, NY.

**March 17-July 21, 2013**

Opening reception, with artist talk at 3:00 p.m., Sunday, March 24, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.



*Ascension of Christ, 1995, Chromogenic color print, 9½ x 7½ inches. Collection of Barbara Rowe and Peter Sowiski, Buffalo, NY.*



*St. Martha—Patron Saint of Cooks, 1995, Chromogenic color print and found objects, 27x21 in. Collection of Big Orbit Gallery, Buffalo, NY.*



*Judith and Holofernes, 1994, Chromogenic color print, 10 x 8 inches. Collection of Reine Hauser.*

### **Western New York Collects**

This exhibition is the second in an ongoing series that highlights the work of a diverse range of visual artists with Western New York connections who have gained significant national and international recognition. Selected from Western New York collections, both public and private, this ongoing series also honors the role of local collectors in creating an enduring artistic legacy for our region. Finally, we hope this new series will reveal the varied, but always vital, relationships between artists and collectors.

**Michael J. Beam Curator of Collections and Exhibitions**





## Neither Sacrilegious nor Sacred: The Religious Works of Josh Iguchi

Josh Iguchi, working between the years that saw the controversies attending Andres Serrano's *Piss Christ* (1987) and Chris Ofili's *Dung Madonna* (1996), seems to treat his religious subjects gently, if not reverently. During those years of earnest artistic blasphemy, Iguchi's figures seem almost nostalgic—harking back to scenes of the old masters—scenes of salvation and saintly sacrifice. The iconic scenes are familiar to any student of the Renaissance and Iguchi referenced Caravaggio in his statements on these works, achieving a

chiaroscuro by the light of an unearthly electric glow. They are shocking to us nonetheless because of their placement in the ordinary. Iguchi's saints haunt unpretentious places; his Jesus hangs in a Buffalo nightclub eating pizza and wings, drinking OV from a can. His martyrs are plucked from the corner bar, some adorned with the requisite drapery, some draped in the drabness of mid-nineties fashion. You can even imagine Nirvana blaring in the background of these scenes, beckoning to an audience that had already seen crucifixes profaned in the





*The Last Supper*, 1995, Ektacolor photograph, 48x96 inches. Collection of Burchfield Penney Art Center. Gift of Wade Stevenson, 1998.

most original ways—it had all been done before—here we are now, entertain us.

Yet Iguchi's religious scenes do not cross the line into a facile parody either, like the Simpsons sitting down to the Last Supper. There is a consistent mood of ethereal gravitas that invites a contemplation of what is taking place. That is not to say that this series was intended as sacred art—as seen in his *Madonna and Child* pieces—where meditation on the classic

embrace is disrupted by the placement of a creepy plastic doll. These pieces are without question the artist's perception of the iconic and not intended to be the objects of devotion. The artist's self-portrait as St. Sebastian is a particular suffering unto himself, if not an inside joke. Iguchi's work is irony, but it is awe as well—seen in the perfect facial expressions of the slackers witnessing the Ascension. Because of Andy Warhol, appropriation was not a sin, but a form of homage. In that

### Artist Statement

My work explores traditional Catholic iconography as it may appear in a contemporary context. Today, religious services can be piped in via satellite and a week of prayer is advertised in supermarket tabloids. Although this may seem to trivialize religion, it is important because it shows how religion has adapted itself to modern venues of communication. It also shows how religion may have the capacity to change to meet the needs of people today.

This work incorporates modern devices like neon lighting and contemporary objects such as furniture and clothing. These are used together with poses and gestures drawn from religious Renaissance paintings. The result is a combination of the grandeur of historical religious imagery with the new religious imagery that we receive as sound bites. Assimilating current ideas, materials and techniques to represent traditional imagery sets up an irony that plays with our conventions and expectations.

*This artist statement accompanied Iguchi's 1993 exhibition at Big Orbit Gallery, Buffalo, NY.*



*St. Sebastian, 1993, C-prints and found objects, 10x7 1/2 in. Collection of Gerald Mead, Buffalo, NY.*



*The Last Supper, 1993, photograph with artist-made frame, 23 1/4 x 55 1/2 inches. Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University. Gift of Wade and Lori Stevenson.*

way, Iguchi's religious scenes are more in the tradition of Warhol's series on the *Last Supper after Da Vinci*. Iguchi came from the same sort of industrial place as Warhol, factories and warehouses bespeckled with the gleaming marble statues and icons of the ethnic churches.

Iguchi's religious art can be a revelation for us to see scenes of creation, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension without all the fuss—come as you are. So perhaps unintentionally, Iguchi hit

upon a new and original thing during a decade in which new things were trying too hard to be original. Maybe the most avant-garde place to turn is to the traditional and its weighty history of meaning. And so through his ordinary people passing through salvation history, Iguchi chides, goads, teases and charms us into a meek kind of subversion.

**Dr. Amelia Gallagher**

Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Niagara University



## Biography

Josh Iguchi was Co-Director (in conjunction with AnJanette Brush) of Big Orbit Gallery in Buffalo, NY from 1993 to 1996. They successfully implemented a number of important goals during their tenure including financial stabilization and securing new grant awards for expanded programming and employment opportunities. With a number of well received and supported landmark exhibitions, Iguchi and Brush transformed Big Orbit into a reputable Buffalo arts institution. In 1996, Sean Donaher, designer and printmaker, took over for Iguchi, permitting Iguchi to dedicate more time to his artwork and pursuit of a professional career beyond the boundaries of Buffalo.

After leaving Buffalo in 1996, Josh Iguchi (b. 1964) moved to

Chicago, Illinois where he established his career in custom photographic printing—working in a downtown lab for clients including major fashion companies and the Chicago Bulls basketball franchise. After a year and a half in Chicago, he relocated to New York City to manage Ralph Lauren's in-house photo lab. After several years in this role, Iguchi moved, within Ralph Lauren, to a position outsourcing production for in-store and showroom artwork. With fifteen years experience within the Ralph Lauren Corporation, his current title is Director of Photographic and Graphic Services. Iguchi currently resides in Stamford, Connecticut with his wife Laura Di Gioia and their daughter Josephine.

## Education

**1986** Bachelor of Fine Arts, Alfred University, NY

**1994** Master of Fine Arts, State University of New York at Buffalo, NY

## Selected Exhibitions

Solo exhibitions are indicated with an asterisk (\*).

**2011** *Public/Private: Pairings with Works from the Gerald Mead Collection*, Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, Niagara Falls, NY

**2009** *UB Art Alumni and Faculty: Selected Works from the Gerald Mead Collection*, Department of Visual Studies Gallery, University at Buffalo, Amherst, NY

**2008** *Full Spectrum: WNY Artworks from the Gerald Mead Collection*, Buffalo Museum of Science, Buffalo, NY

**2007** *About Face: Portraits from the Gerald Mead Collection*, Fanette Goldman/Carolyn Greenfield Gallery, Daemen College, Amherst, NY

**2004** *Small Works by WNY Artists: Selections from the Collection of Gerald Mead*, Peter & Mary Lou Vogt Gallery, Canisius College, Buffalo, NY

**2003** *A Big Orbit Survey: Selections from the Gerald Mead Collection*, Big Orbit Gallery, Buffalo, NY

**2002** *Big Orbit Gallery: Ten Years of Spin on Western New York Art*, Anderson Gallery, Buffalo, NY

*Selections from the Collection of Gerald Mead—Part 1*, Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center, Buffalo, NY

**1997** *Altered Egos*, Hallwalls Contemporary Art Center, Buffalo, NY

*Small Wonders*, Anderson Gallery, Buffalo, NY

**1996** *Alert Aesthetics*, Big Orbit Gallery, Buffalo, NY, American Center for Culture and Commerce, Prague; Gallery Emila Filly, Usti nad Labem, Czech Republic (formerly Czechoslovakia)

**1995** *New Work*, CEPA Gallery, Buffalo, NY\*

*ARE-WNY (Artist Residency Exchange: Western New York)*, Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center, Buffalo, NY

**1994** *Artist Residency Exchange: Western New York, Artist Residency*, Pyramid Arts Center, Rochester, NY\*

*45th Annual Western New York Exhibition*, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY

**1993** *Rochester Finger Lakes Exhibition*, Memorial Art Gallery, Rochester, NY

*Two-Person Show*, Big Orbit Gallery, Buffalo, NY (Josh Iguchi and Eduardo Caspers' Master of Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition)

**1992** *44th Annual Western New York Exhibition*, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY

*Modern/Postmodern*, Bethune Gallery, State University of New York at Buffalo, NY

*Members Show*, Big Orbit Gallery, Buffalo, NY

**1986** *Two Person Show*, Binns Merrill Hall, Alfred University, NY  
*Members Show*, Big Orbit Gallery, Buffalo, NY

## Activities

**1993-1996** Co-Director (with AnJanette Brush), Big Orbit Gallery, Buffalo, NY

**1992** Graduate Student Senator, State University of New York at Buffalo, NY

**1985-1987** Staff Photographer, Fiat Lux, Alfred State University Newspaper, NY

**1985-1986** Sound and Light Technician, Alfred State University Performing Arts Program, NY

## Exhibition Checklist

*Ascension of Christ*, 1995, Chromogenic color print, 9½ x 7½ inches. Collection of Barbara Rowe and Peter Sowiski, Buffalo, NY.

*Crucifix*, 1993, Color transparency, found objects, 24 x 24 inches. Collection of Wade and Lori Stevenson, Buffalo, NY.

*Crucifixion*, 1993, C-print and found objects, 20 x 25 inches. Collection of Gerald Mead, Buffalo, NY.

*(The Flagellation of Christ) FJMFJHBD96*, 1996, Color transparency in found frame, 25½ x 19¼ inches. Collection of Gerald Mead, Buffalo, NY.

*Judith and Holofernes*, 1994, Chromogenic color print, 10 x 8 inches. Collection of Reine Hauser.

*The Last Supper*, 1993, photograph with artist-made frame, 23¼ x 55¼ inches. Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University Collection. Gift of Wade and Lori Stevenson.

*The Last Supper*, 1995, Ektacolor photograph, 48 x 96 inches. Collection of Burchfield Penney Art Center. Gift of Wade Stevenson, 1998.

*Madonna and Child*, 1993, Photograph with found objects, 20½ x 14½ x 4 inches. Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University Collection. Purchased from Wade Stevenson International, Inc.

*Merry Christmas—Santa Descending a Staircase*, 1995, Chromogenic color print, 10 x 8 inches. Collection of Gerald Mead, Buffalo, NY.

*Mother and Child*, circa 1991/92, Chromogenic color print, mounted in tin relief frame, 1¾ x 1¾ inches. Collection of Robert Hirsch & Adele Henderson, Buffalo, NY.

*St. Martha—Patron Saint of Cooks*, 1995, Chromogenic color print and found objects, 27 x 21 inches. Collection of Big Orbit Gallery, Buffalo, NY.

*St. Sebastian*, 1993, C-prints and found objects, 10 x 7¾ inches. Collection of Gerald Mead, Buffalo, NY.

*Untitled (Broken Bread)*, 1994, Polaroid photograph in handmade frame, 7 x 7 inches. Collection of Gerald Mead, Buffalo, NY.

*Untitled (Maquette)*, 1993, Polaroid photographs, 14 x 11 inches. Collection of Gerald Mead, Buffalo, NY.

*Untitled II*, 1997, Chromogenic color print, 14 x 11 inches. Collection of Gerald Mead, Buffalo, NY.

*Untitled III*, 1997, chromogenic color print, 14 x 11 inches. Collection of Laura A. Snyder.

*Whore's Breakfast*, 1994, photography collage, 17 x 15½ inches. Collection of Lillian Méndez.



Western New York Collects: Josh Iguchi is made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.



**CASTELLANI  
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[CastellaniArtMuseum.org](http://CastellaniArtMuseum.org)

### Museum and Shop

Niagara University, NY 14109-1938  
716.286.8200 fax: 716.286.8289  
Tuesday to Saturday 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Sunday, 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.  
Docent tours available upon request. Call 716.286.8200 for additional information.

### Castellani Art Museum at the Falls

Conference Center Niagara Falls  
101 Old Falls Street  
Niagara Falls, NY 14303  
716.286.8200 fax: 716.286.8289  
Monday to Friday, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.