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LYOTA YAGI  
*What Can Be Done With 4 Chairs*  
2010  
Video still.  
Courtesy Mujin-to Production, Tokyo.

2

ASLI ÇAVUŞOĞLU  
*In Diverse Estimations Little Moscow*  
2011  
Single-channel video, 12 min 45 sec.  
Courtesy BORUSAN A.Ş. and Gallery NON.

3

GAO WEIGANG  
*Don't Cry to Me*  
2010  
Wood and sound installation.  
Courtesy Magician Space, Beijing.

## JAPAN Lyota Yagi

Lacking any audio hardware or prerecorded sounds, *What Can Be Done With 4 Chairs* (2010) appears atypical in Lyota Yagi's works, which commonly use vinyl records and magnetic-cassette tape in sound or video installations. But, in fact, the piece raises issues related to Yagi's broader practice: four participants sit on chairs, forming a circle, each person leans a paper and clipboard to the ear of the person in front of them, and they draw the sound of the drawing they hear. In this analog circuit, unpredictable changes to the "signal" due to human variables are just as important as the role of transmission and reception. The resulting layered drawings are physical traces of this audio-visual chain of communication.

At the Yokohama Triennale in August, Yagi exhibited *Sound Sphere* (2010/2011), an installation of shiny blackish spheres, covered with layers of cassette tape. These sit on a three-pronged stand that functions like a cassette player: one prong has a mechanical wheel rotating the sphere, another has a cassette head that "plays" sound gleaned from layers of tape. Tapes usually fix sound into set linear time, but as a sphere sound returns to "live" chaos, its blips and scratches unable to be "replayed." Another well-known work, *Vinyl (Claire de Lune + Moon River)* (2005–09), features a record made of ice, in which the sound fades as the grooves melt, the audio passing subtly into the listener's memory.

Information has been dematerialized since the 20th century through its recording and storage. Some young artists are using common electrical appliances in performances, videos and kinetic installations, rediscovering the audio trapped in the everyday. Yet, at 31 years of age, Yagi stands out for his work's cool balance of aesthetic and conceptual concerns, focusing on the spatial and corporeal effects of sound and its media.

## TURKEY Aslı Çavuşoğlu

After Fikri Sönmez was elected mayor of Fatsa, on Turkey's Black Sea coast, in October 1979, he instituted a participatory democracy with local citizens' committees. Nearly nine months later, on July 11, 1980, the Nationalist Movement Party led a military incursion into the town, arresting Sönmez and thousands of his supporters, and killing dozens of youths who had fled into the hills.

For Aslı Çavuşoğlu, whose prior work has addressed the denial of political history—she created a hip-hop single comprised of 191 of the 205 words briefly banned from Turkish radio and television in 1985, and designed a neon sign showing the effacement of revolutionary graffiti—this idyllic-turned-brutal blip in history is rich material. Working with a professional film crew as part of a commission from Istanbul's Borusan Contemporary for its "Seven New Works" exhibition, Çavuşoğlu gathered stories from

Fatsa residents. Rather than filming a straight documentary, she restaged the episodes with local teens and adults.

In the work, history is addressed obliquely. Made up of a dozen episodes, the short film opens with dogs sniffing around an abandoned factory, then a boy ducks into a hole on the side of a steep cliff, older men fire cap guns into the air, teenagers dance before pantomining a strangling and CPR resuscitation, a woman reads from a banned book and two men re-create a mountaintop duel. Most poignantly, the final scene shows a car driving through a main square, beginning to exit on one street before reversing and trying another until all the paths are rejected and it goes back the way it came. Throughout the scene, children are heard singing "long live the resistance" and "peasants and workers walking together," the car becoming a symbol of progress deferred.

## CHINA Gao Weigang

On the basis of his exhibition with Magician Space at this year's Hong Kong International Art Fair, Chinese installation artist Gao Weigang was awarded the fair's 2011 Art Futures award for best emerging talent. Unassuming objects that desperately struggle to exert their existence are mainstays in Gao's work. Included in his Art HK exhibition, the minimalist installation *Don't Cry to Me* (2010) appears to be a simple bamboo rod leaning against a wall. However, on approach one begins to hear someone weeping, coming from a sound recording installed within the actual bamboo. In an older work, an anatomically correct heart sculpted from soap rests on a shower caddy that juts from the gallery wall, in the installation *Exhaustion* (2010), from the earlier Magician Space group show "Micro-Intervention/Celsius 36.5." If one were to use this soap sculpture in a hypothetical shower, it would visibly wear away from use like a human heart worn from old age. Elsewhere, in his *A Rock with a View* (2008), Gao transformed an inanimate rock into a conscious, seeing eye. On the surface of the rock, the artist paints a window scene of green fields and woods in the distance. In effect, we peer beyond the rock into the dream of animism.

A graduate of the Tianjin Academy of Fine Arts' oil painting department, Gao is both a persuasive conceptual artist as well as a skilled painter. This is apparent in his technically beautiful *Intuition* (2011), also exhibited at this year's Art HK, a traditional-style ink-on-silk painting depicting the splayed skin of a tiger. However, this piece is an exception among his recent works, as Gao has moved rapidly away from painting since his debut in 2006, seeing it, as he stated in a 2008 interview with Ai Weiwei, as an inadequate medium of expression. His most recent exhibition, featuring an installation of marble pedestal bases, at Li-Space in Beijing, explores man-made relics as spiritual placebos.