

Souvenirs of the Self

Jin-Me Yoon - Clip 17

Souvenirs of the Self from 1991 was originally a postcard project. So I'd been invited to Banff to do a work. And the theme was traveling and territories. And I had no idea what I wanted to do. And so, based on my usual way of working, my observations, just exploring the site, I noticed that people were - at that time the Japanese Yen was very high, and there were many Japanese tourists saying "Gonichi Wa" to me - and I thought that was curious, that immediately they would think I was a Japanese tourist. And assume that. And because of the connection to Japan and Korea, in terms of the colonization of Korea by Japan in 1910 to 1945, I found that kind of surface recognition, I guess, even more jarring. And then, you know, that would trigger off other things. Notably the way that the Japanese were interned in Canada after Pearl Harbour, and such. And I started to think, "What can I do to bring those questions to the fore about, in this context, how I'm literally flattened as a tourist. And so I used a very simple technique. I watched where people were photographing themselves, Japanese tourists included. And I stood at those sites, and I made a very self-conscious gesture of standing very erect, as some people did do. And I think that juxtaposition of my body - foreground, background, relationship being approximately 50-50, bringing out the kind of

way to understand the landscape, the touristic landscape in relation to that body - would allow a kind of friction which would generate certain kinds of questioning about our relationship to place, and our assumptions about citizenship and belonging.