

Kimberley Fine Art • Durack Gallery Broome
presents
Shinju Matsuri's Guest Artist

Dallas Gold



AN OCEAN OF STORIES

17 – 28 August 1995

weekdays 10–5 weekends 10–12
other times by appointment (091) 936 114

KFA • Durack Gallery Broome
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Sailing on an Ocean of Stories

The artist transports us, we embark on a voyage, he has chosen the vessel; a ghost ship that sails unmanned through the night to the past on a sea of memory. The clear shape of the lugger above, the symmetry, an eclipse of the moon, the female, a mouth, a smile, an aquadynamic ellipse.

To the diver below, the mother ship is the distant and total focus. The diver is attached to her by hoses of air, life line, umbilical cords. What happens to the ship, affects the diver, as influences on the mother pass through her bloodstream to the child in utero. The diver floats in the warm, dark womb of the sea, silent and throbbing with life unseen. The diver surfaces and gasps for air of his own to free himself of the coiling hoses as the new born baby beats the air and bawls in the blinding light.

Tears are falling droplets. For a moment perfect spheres. Pearls are the tears of the moon, who cries every month and disappears, her phases tied to the blood cycle of women. When Aphrodite goddess of love was born from the sea, pearls sprang from the bubbling white foam, and like pearls Aphrodite had the power of setting men against each other.

The Gothic arched window of the Catholic Church surrounded by pearlshell like the teeth of a shark, guarding the gate to heaven. The Church glorifies a God unknown to the people who gathered the countless shells that decorate it. For them the shell represented food and the power to make life-giving rain.

A pearler who was a photographer, takes photographs of the lugger crew testing his invention, there are no clouds on the horizon, the weather is fair, the future sunny. A man dreams of things being better—safe and secure from the dangers of the deep, dark tide of history lapping on the shores.

The patent drawings for the divers suit look like bandaging instructions from an old first aid manual—the suit encloses the diver like bandages on the wounded or the wrappings of the mummy, a shroud for the dead. The Diving helmet is empty. The portholes are the eyes of a strange creature, the surrounding sea is reflected in the glass.

The Japanese symbol for magnetic north is a beautiful shape with hooks and curls—it might be an amulet or a *netsuke* carved from jade. The north that attracts and divines finds its right place and draws men on and out to sea to dangerous rich reefs. To get back they must turn against it, go south, as they once did on leaving Japan.

A portrait of a Japanese woman delicate as porcelain, a pearler's wife, mother of many, against a pearly mother of pearl background, white the colour of mourning for a husband lost. A man of the sea, lost not at sea, on land lost, lost far from home, far from the home sea and the adopted sea.

Suzanne Spinner, Darwin, August 1995