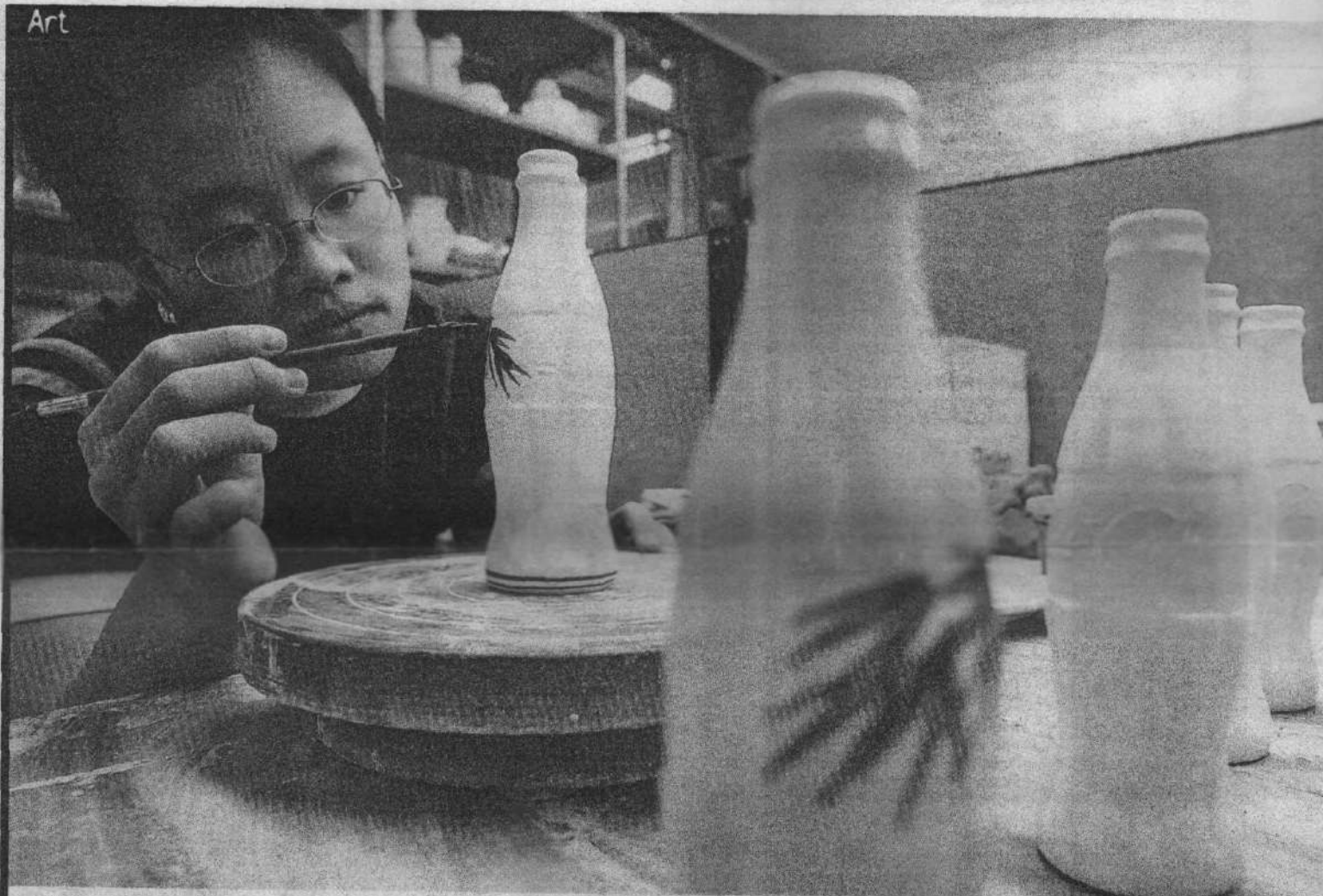


Art



Jeremy Herliczek | NOISE

Cultural intrusion

— Carlo Kucinski | NOISE

Meng-shu You feels like she's losing her culture. The revelation came to her last summer when she returned to her native country, Taiwan, after

living in the United States for the last two years, studying studio art at Michigan State University. What she saw was a landscape dominated by corporate logos — Nike, Reebok, Coca-Cola — and fast food chains — McDonald's, Wendy's, KFC. Her country looked no different than America. Even her Taiwanese friends seemed American to her.

"I was shocked," You said. "When I went back to Taiwan, I saw people change. I saw lots of products everywhere. It was all about the United States. It was a really weird environment for me."

You felt disenchanted. The image of the United States she was fed growing up fell apart once she came

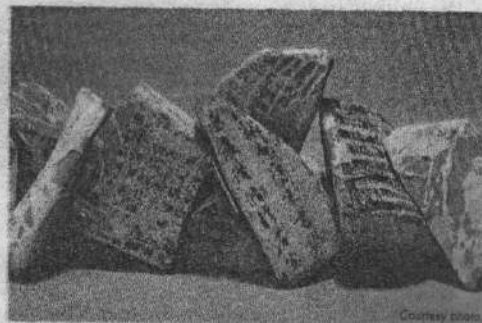
Student works out frustrations with U.S. influence through art

to America three years ago. In Taiwan, she was taught that the United States is a powerful country built on freedom, human rights and diversity of races and cultures. All of You's friends, even herself, wanted to act like Americans.

"In Taiwan, they drink Coca-Cola because Coca-Cola means American. They eat McDonald's because McDonald's means United States," she said. "They like to be Americanized. That was me. I was like that until I came here."

But now You feels obligated to protect herself and her culture.

"I changed myself. I changed because the environment here (United States) changed me," she said. "In Asia, we want to learn English because we want



Courtesy photo

Top, Meng-shu You paints bamboo on Coca-Cola bottles as part of her display in the MSU's Master of Fine Arts Exhibition. Above, You's "Bricks" will also be shown.

to be tough because we want to have a connection with the United States. What I feel and what I was taught are totally different."

In her latest work featured in the MFA exhibition, the 26-year-old artist explores globalization, U.S. imperialism and "Coca-colonization" and how they transform the landscapes of foreign countries and their natives.

You's exhibition consists of four parts, each expressing her ideas about the United States: language privilege, militaristic power, culture and economic

MFA STUDENTS SHOW WORK

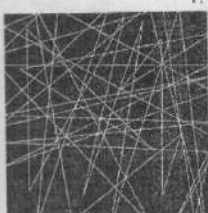
MSU Department of Art & Art History MFA Exhibition

- Opening reception is 7 to 9 p.m. Friday, March 25. Exhibit runs March 28 to April 10.
- Kresge Art Museum, near the corner of Farm Lane and Auditorium Road on MSU's campus. Museum hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Friday, until 8 p.m. Thursday, noon to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.
- www.artmuseum.msu.edu 355-7633

2. *Untitled* (graphic design) - Anger



1.



3.



Courtesy photos

4.



5.

THE ARTISTS

1. Katherine Krcmarik (graphic design) - *Anger* (Still from 30 second movie)
2. Mara Jevera Fulmer (graphic design) - from *Crossings...Time in the Midst of the Pressures of Chaos*
3. Renee Robbins (painting) - *Below the Surface*
4. Lisa Simon (painting) - *Coccus Arabesque; Half asleep in a circus; Concealed by vapor*
5. Michelle Word (painting, collage and mixed media) - *Substratum*
- Meng-shu You (ceramics) - *Bricks* (previous page)

influence. The first part is a sidewalk of ceramic tiles with different languages printed on them; the second is a set of cages containing clay bricks that resemble rubble from a bombed building; the third is a collection of 700 ceramic Coca-Cola bottles on metal grocery shelves; and lastly, a red, white and blue shopping cart filled with bricks.

This series is a departure from You's traditional functional pottery; her ideas are more contemporary now. But You rejects being labeled a political artist. She doesn't find her work political or controversial. She sees it as a way to start a dialogue and get people to think.

Part of that dialogue contains You's perspective on how corporations such as Coca-Cola have permeated Taiwan. She made 700 ceramic Coca-Cola bottles and painted bamboo on them with traditional blue and white glazes.

"The Coca-Cola bottle is an American icon for me," she said. "I used to be a big Coca-Cola fan, when I came here. But lately I realized how they intrude on other country's cultures and I started to get sick of it." ■

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