



Chang Jia: **OMERTA**

January 25 - March 1, 2008
opening reception January 25, 5 - 8 pm

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Seoul-based artist Chang Jia's recent works present nuanced statements on gender through shocking subject matter. Her series, *Standing Up Peeing*, encompasses both a photographic series as well as a video work in which six young Korean women stand up urinating. Walsh Gallery is pleased to present *OMERTA*, Chang Jia's first solo exhibition. The show runs Friday, January 25, 2008 through March 1, 2008. The artist will be present at the opening reception on Friday, January 25th from 5 to 8 pm.

Although the subject matter may initially shock the viewer, Chang's works break the boundaries of the expected roles of women and gives them expanded possibilities in the realms usually reserved for men. She claims the upright stance—one traditionally assumed by men—for women. This idea of broken boundaries is reinforced by the show's title, *OMERTA*, which references the code of silence taken by the men of the mafia.

Chang Jia's reclamation of new territories for women does not end with her physical stance. Instead, Chang's work asserts her role as a female artist in a historical tradition of the female nude dominated by male artists. Chang Jia's works evoke this motif through a contemporary lens; her standing figures recall William Bouguereau's *Bathers* or Paul Cezanne's *The Bathers*. Whereas the canonical images generalize the female form into a perfect composite, Chang individualizes her models through their laughter or awkward stances—despite not revealing the women's faces.

The history of the female nude is a private one; works moved between male artists and male patrons. Chang Jia subverts the art historical canon by publicly bringing attention to previously private space. The photographs remove the curtain of male patronage and catapult the most intimate moments into the public sphere.

Chang Jia received her BFA and her MA at the Korean National University of the Arts, in Seoul, South Korea. Chang's work has been shown at the Sorak International Biennale (Sorak, Korea), the Gwangju Biennale, the Museum of Contemporary Art (Basel), the British Museum (London), the Seoul Museum of Art (South Korea) and will be included in the video show "Out of Touch" at Kunstahle Wien (Austria) in February 2008.