

# Fleshlight

photographers here, art model Tomoko Asano hopes to correct misconceptions about nudity in art, she tells  
ASHLEIGH SIM

**JAPANESE** model Tomoko Asano, 32, is no stranger to the art world.

Modelling for paintings and sculptures for more than 10 years, she has recently taken up the challenge of nude modelling for exhibitions right here in Singapore.

She is the muse and catalyst behind two recent individual exhibitions on nude photography.

One by her husband Thierry Delarue, 34, a Frenchman, was held from June 25 to July 21 at The Photographer's Gallery ([www.tpgallery.com.sg](http://www.tpgallery.com.sg)) at the Mita building at Hill Street.

The other by local photographer Tan Ngap Heng, 38, was held at visual arts centre Objectifs ([www.objectifs.com.sg](http://www.objectifs.com.sg)) at Liang Seah Street from June 25 to July 17.

Both are among the handful who have had entire exhibitions on nude art in Singapore.

Having worked with mostly painters and sculptors, Asano asked her photographer husband, who has a full-time job as a banker, to explore photographic nudes, concentrating on sensuality and form.

The couple, who have been married for 10 years, have been living in Singapore for the last seven years.

Asano had also seen one of Tan's photo exhibitions last year. His evocative images of London had caught her eye and she approached him to collaborate on a series of nudes with photographs projected on her skin.

Said Asano, who also has a full-time job here: "I wanted to be more engaged in the creative process, rather

than being just the still life model for paintings or sculptures. Photography allows that and is more dynamic and liberating."

Asano comes from a family of artists. Her father is a retired stained glass artist and her mother is a Japanese tea ceremony master. Her ancestors were kimono designers for the Shogunate (military rulers in Kyoto).

Describing her role in the two recent exhibitions, Asano said: "Sometimes, I am a muse to them (artists), the chemistry between artists and their models is important. It is extremely gratifying to be a source of visual and intellectual inspiration."

Added Tan: "The concept of using Tomoko's family portraits for projection on her body was uniquely hers. It was exciting and interesting to work with her as her experiences were very rich."

Having lived in Tokyo, London and Paris – the world's three art meccas – Asano is keen to correct misconceptions about nudity in art.

"I want people to understand what is art and what is not art. 'Nude' does not mean 'porn'. Porn has something to do with intercourse, whereas nude art seeks to express beauty through the human form.

"Even if it is not beautiful, there is always something to find beneath the skin – the person's life: history, culture, emotions."

Asano is hoping to work with female photographers for her next project.

"Women perceive the female body differently from men. It would be interesting to see what they see."



Lensman Thierry Delarue (left) and Tan Ngap Heng holding a photo of Asano