

幕 Mu:Screen

Three generations of Chinese video art

1 June - 9 July 2010

Opening Tuesday 1 June 6-8pm

To be opened by Dr Gene Sherman

Chairman, Executive Director of Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation

Perhaps by their very choice of medium, China's video artists have been eluding the pressures of market-driven fashionability. Operating from this independent position, these artists are free to question social constructs, and use moving imagery to surpass the familiar or clichéd.

幕 **Mu:Screen - three generations of Chinese video art** showcases a group of artists whose works may be in turn amusing and unsettling. The apparent playfulness in many of the pieces belies darker lines of enquiry. Innovating with ink, printing and installation through their videos and animations, they offer a fresh perspective on their homeland - speaking with lightness, creativity and boldness.

Though **Zhang Peili** and **Wang Gongxin** have been experimenting with video art since the late 1980's, it was only in 2003 that video departments were first created in Hangzhou and Beijing art academies. From the highly influential work of those two forefathers an exciting independent field has arisen in China. This exhibition presents an overview of work by these artists alongside their protégés and recent graduates.

From the entertaining *Flowers of Chaos* (2009) by **Wu Junyong** to the cold poetry of **Ma Qiusa's** *Beautiful Film* (2007) and sophisticated take on impermanence in **Wang Gongxin's** *Dinner Table* (2006) - these artists will delight Australian audiences as they extend our perception of contemporary Chinese art.

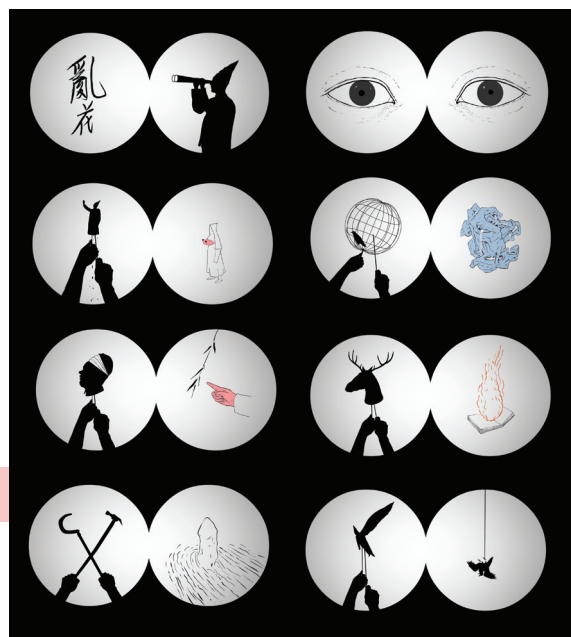
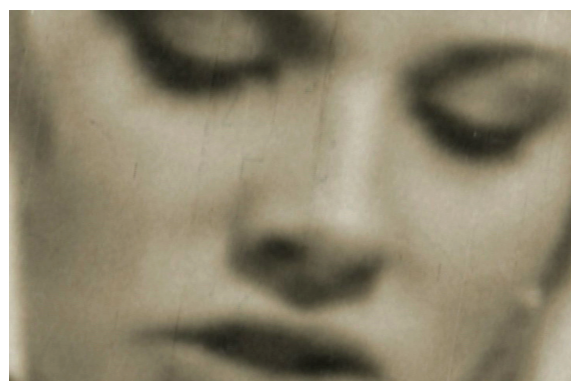
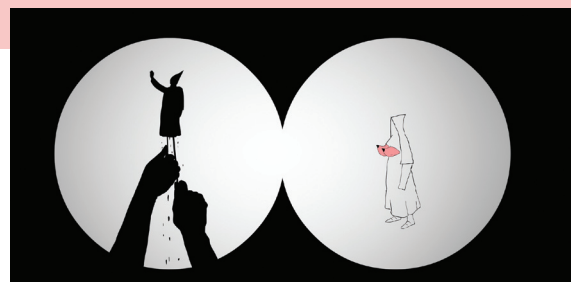
Including Wang Gongxin, Zhang Peili, Sun Xun, Chen Shaoxiong, Kan Xuan, Wu Junyong and Ma Qiusa.

Curated by Marie Terrieux

Accompanying free public event: Monday 31 May, 4-5pm

Join Wang Gongxin and Marie Terrieux in the gallery as they discuss contemporary new media practices in China.

Images from top:
Wu Junyong *Flowers of Chaos*
2009 (detail), 1-channel video
Ma Qiusa *Beautiful Film*
2007, 2-channel video, **Wang Gongxin** *Dinner table* 2006
1-channel video Installation,
projector, wooden table stereo



UTS: GALLERY

Level 4, 702 Harris St Ultimo NSW 2007

+61 2 9514 1652 | utsgallery@uts.edu.au

Monday - Friday 12-6pm

www.utsgallery.uts.edu.au

UTS GALLERY

WANG GONGXIN (b. 1960, China) was an early innovator with video art in the 1990s and, along with Zhang Peili, is largely credited as establishing it as a genuine art form in China. His work is concerned with the interface between Chinese and Western culture, in terms of content and of his transmission of 'Western' artistic ideas to his peers; as well as the relations between children and parents, and the frontiers between the real and unreal. Wang's art is not usually narrative but describes a point in time. Wang is subtle in his critique of society, deeply personal in his expression, and is often read outside a Chinese context. His work goes beyond the question of 'Chineseness' and in doing so contributes not only to Chinese art practice, but to the integration of video into the history of art in the broadest sense.

ZHANG PEILI (b. 1957, China) was the very first to use video in China in 1988 and is widely considered to be the 'father' of Chinese contemporary video, he remains one of China's foremost video artists. His work has been shown in galleries throughout the world, including the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York and the Venice Biennale. Known for his clean, incisive style, Zhang uses both video and photography to challenge contemporary Chinese social constraints while playfully targeting traditional authoritative roles. His work also plays on more universal themes of progress and time, and the human perception of both. Zhang primarily works in video, a medium he deftly uses to bridge the mental and physical, while subtly addressing the viewer.

WU JUNYONG (b. 1978, China) The animation DVD works of Wu Junyong are among the most exciting creations to come from the younger generation of contemporary Chinese artists. His combination of image, sound and text combine to give a pulsating vision of newly rich, urban Chinese society, just as the great contemporary painters of the previous generation of the Chinese avant garde captured the zeitgeist of China in the 1990s. Wu Junyong's recent work, the Opera series, features small burlesque characters who cross oceans and time periods. It is also a satirical comment on politics: politicians (like actors or characters in a DVD), performing on a stage and their platform for expression and self-promotion serving to expose all the ridicule and human frailties of their situation.

MA QIUSHA (b.1982) As an artist born in the early eighties, Ma Qiusha creates an atmosphere quite unlike that of her predecessors. Prevalent themes such as China's rapid economic development and its resulting effect of cultural dislocation, or the impact of globalisation on Chinese society are not so acutely reflected in her works. Her creations are much more private, attuned for the expression of personal opinion. Ma does not deliberate or criticise, but rather, interacts sincerely with her audience to express her experiences. These experiences – which include confusion over relationships, the dilemma of whether to approach or deny intimacy, and her memories of difficult childhood experiences – carry tender but cruel and anxious undertones. Her highly individualised narratives represent those of a younger generation that have been brought up in a relatively steady, affluent and material contemporary society.

CHEN SHAOXIONG 's conceptual work employs a variety of media, including photography, video, installation and ink painting, to investigate the dynamics of China's rapidly changing cityscapes. Often set against the background of an imaginative or imaginary skyline, the artist records the hectic pace and absurdity of everyday existence: fragments from family life, political issues, rumors from the entertainment industry, restaurants, nightlife, and prostitution. Chen is a founding member of the Big Tail Elephant Collective, one of the most important artistic collectives in the history of contemporary Chinese art.

SUN XUN creates animations that combine hand-drawn renderings and traditional materials with new media. He studied printmaking at the China Academy of Fine Arts, but a burgeoning interest in moving images led him to found his own animation studio in 2006. To create his meticulous animations, Sun Xun produces a multitude of drawings that incorporate text within the image. His subjects range from elements found in world history and politics, to natural organisms. He then films the drawings, sequentially one at a time, to create a sense of movement and suggest the passing of time, the machinations of history, and the beauty inherent in simple forms.

KAN XUAN's works are characterized by humour, lightness, and grace, running alongside a deep sense of critical irony. Born in 1972 in Anhui and having practiced intensively in the Netherlands, she is simultaneously one of the most worldly and distinctively local artists currently working in China and abroad. Kan Xuan's recent work has involved body-oriented performance and image manipulation. The themes appear strikingly simple, but, for Kan Xuan, simplicity and naiveté are a form of freedom. This quest for directness is ultimately a search for an origin that could provide an easier understanding of life.

MARIE TERRIEUX Curator

With a specialisation in Vietnamese and Chinese contemporary art, Marie Terrieux established herself in Beijing in 2005, working for Thinking Hands, a pioneer cultural organisation, that curates exhibitions and had been organising the Dashanzi International Art festival. She joined ifa gallery (Shanghai) as Artistic Director and Curator and is now a free lance consultant, advising collectors or institutions, on working with established or emerging artists from China and the region, with her own cultural company Shuang Culture Ltd.

UTS: GALLERY

Level 4, 702 Harris St Ultimo NSW 2007
+61 2 9514 1652 | utsgallery@uts.edu.au
Monday - Friday 12-6pm
www.utsgallery.uts.edu.au

