

**ISAAC JULIEN**  
*TEN THOUSAND WAVES*

21 May ~ 20 June, 2010 | ShanghART H-Space, Shanghai, China

Nine-screen installation  
35 mm film, transferred to High Definition  
9.2 surround sound, 49'41"

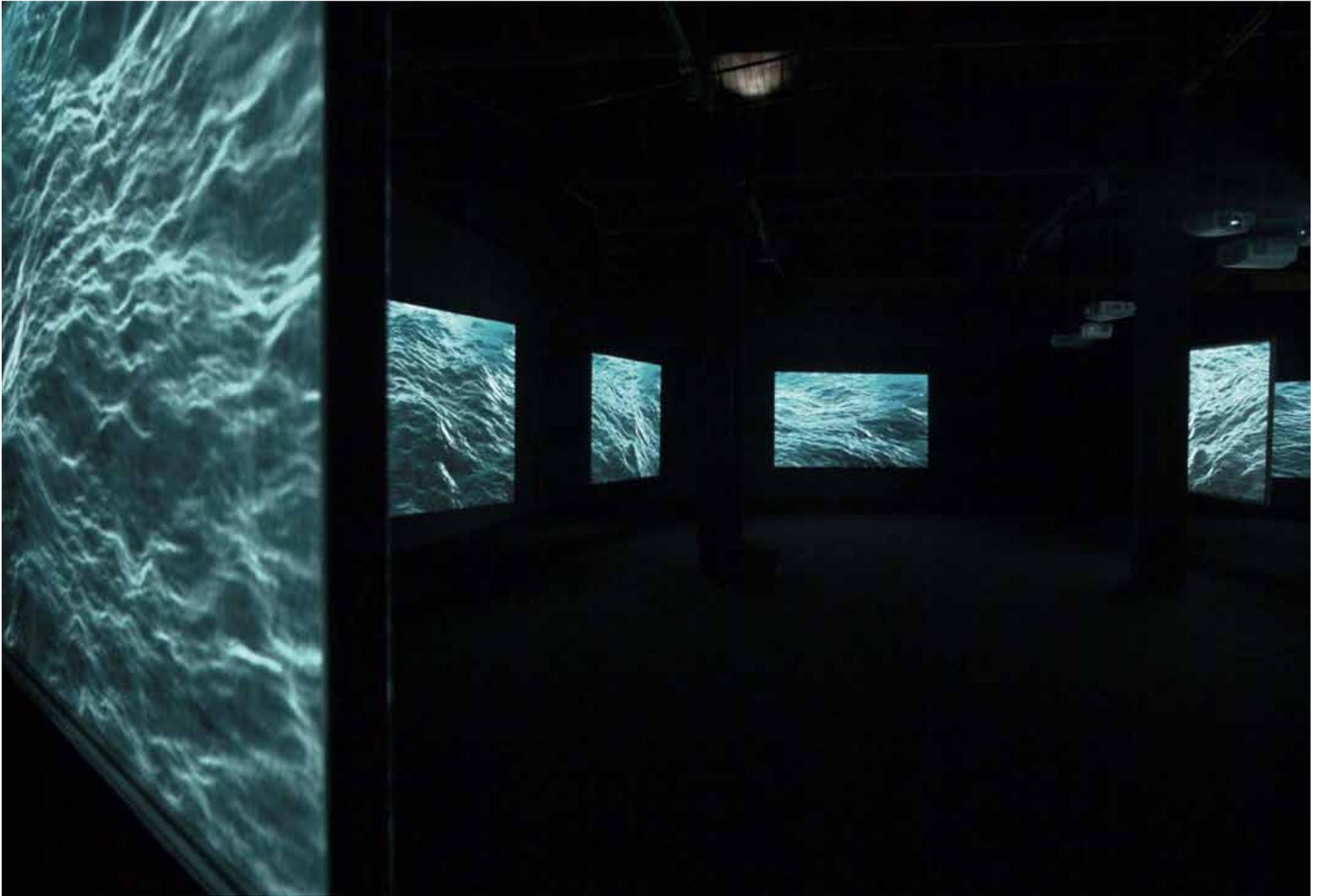
Isaac Julien's celebrated films and multi-channel video installations bridge documentary cinema and the fine arts, and bring critical analysis to issues of globalisation and transnationalism. *TEN THOUSAND WAVES* (2010) has its Chinese premiere at the ShanghART Gallery. In this major work, Julien returns once more to consideration of diaspora and globalisation and examines from a poetic and artistic standpoint the motivations of need and desire that drive people to undertake perilous journeys to achieve a better life. By tracing the migrants' culture through history and myth, Julien's nine-screen installation uses parallel montage and the image of water – the sandy waters of Lancashire, the Yangtze River and the Shanghai Bund – as a symbol of danger, trade, modernity, mystery and economic power. A ghostly protagonist leads the viewer through a story that entwines legend with modern China.











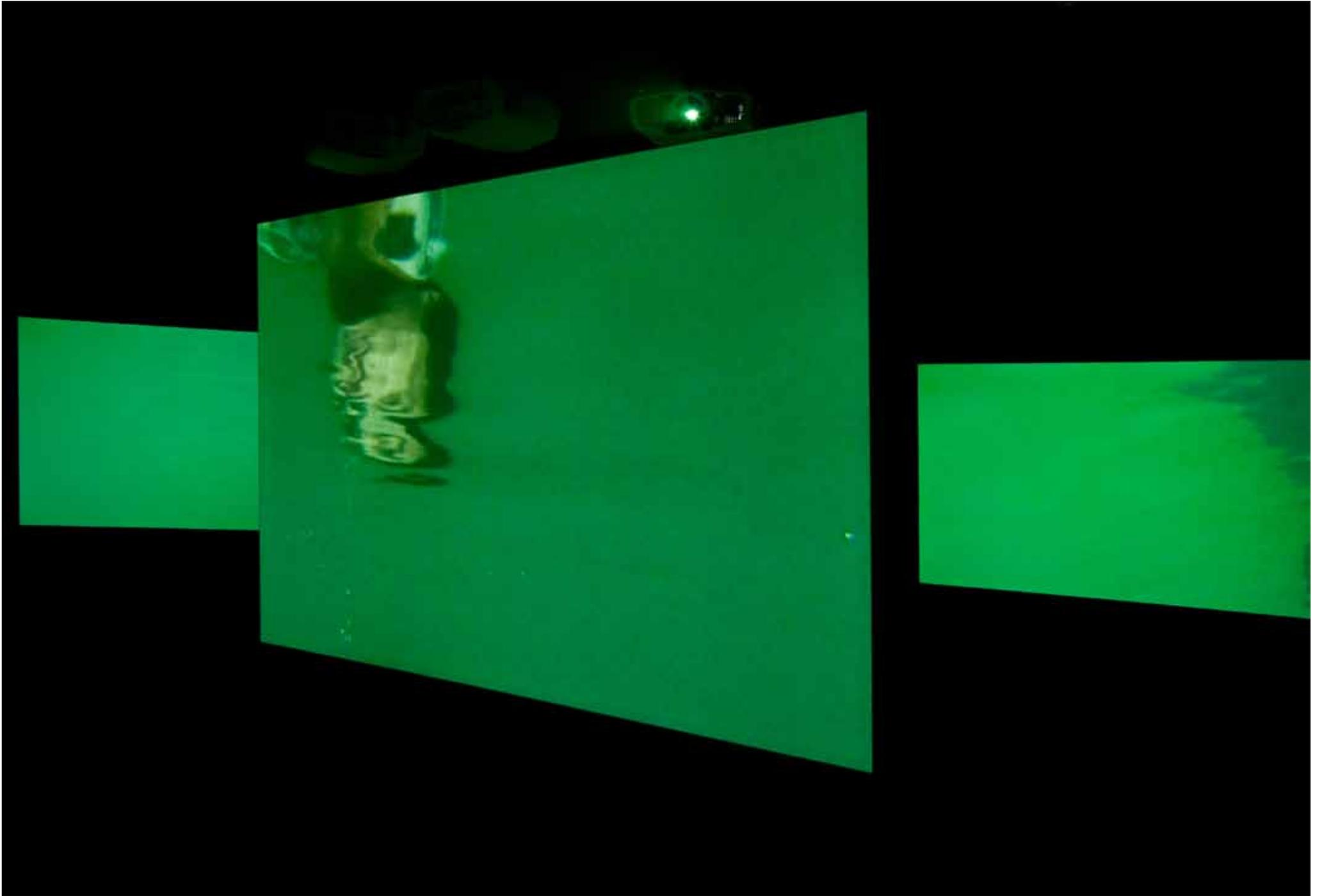


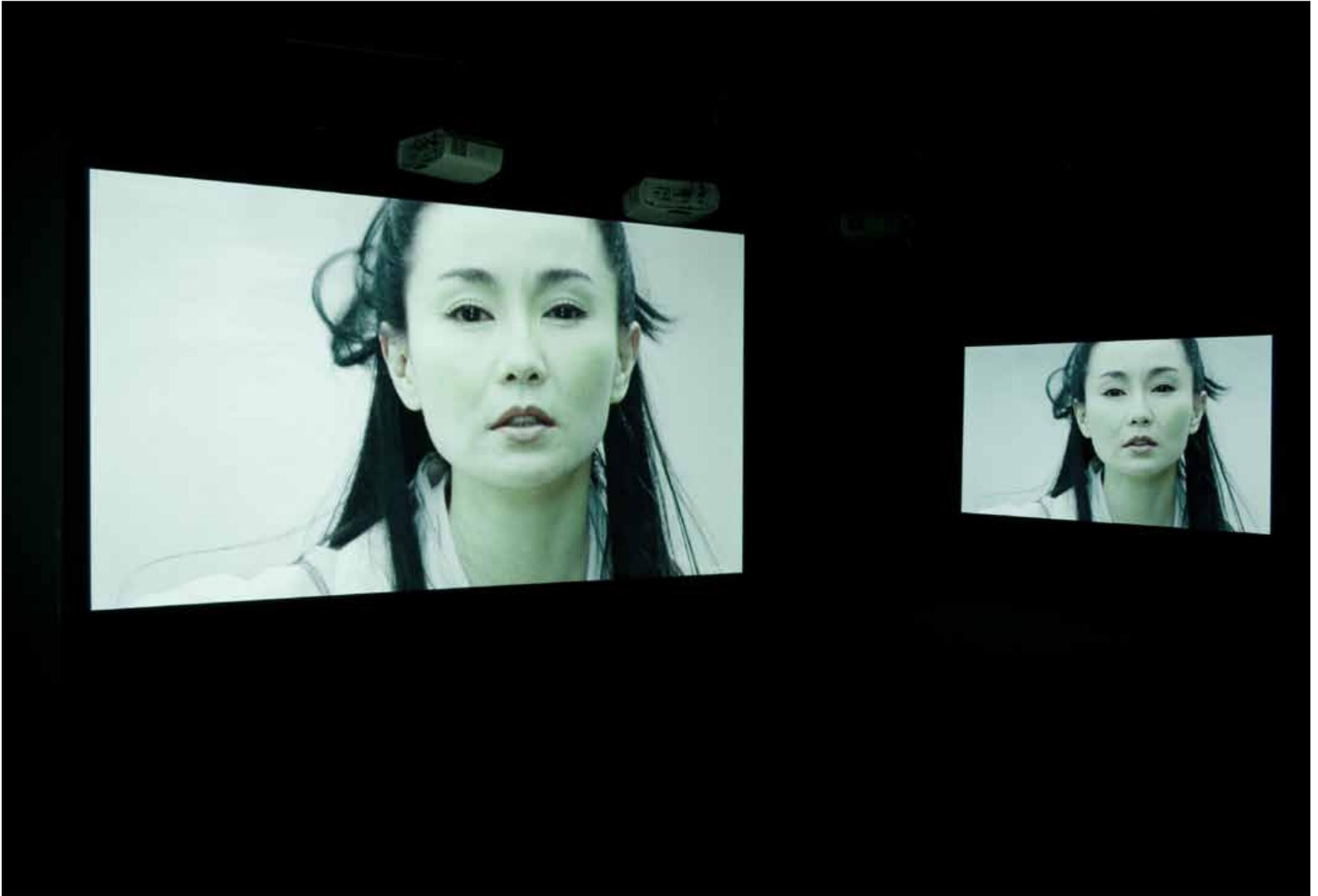




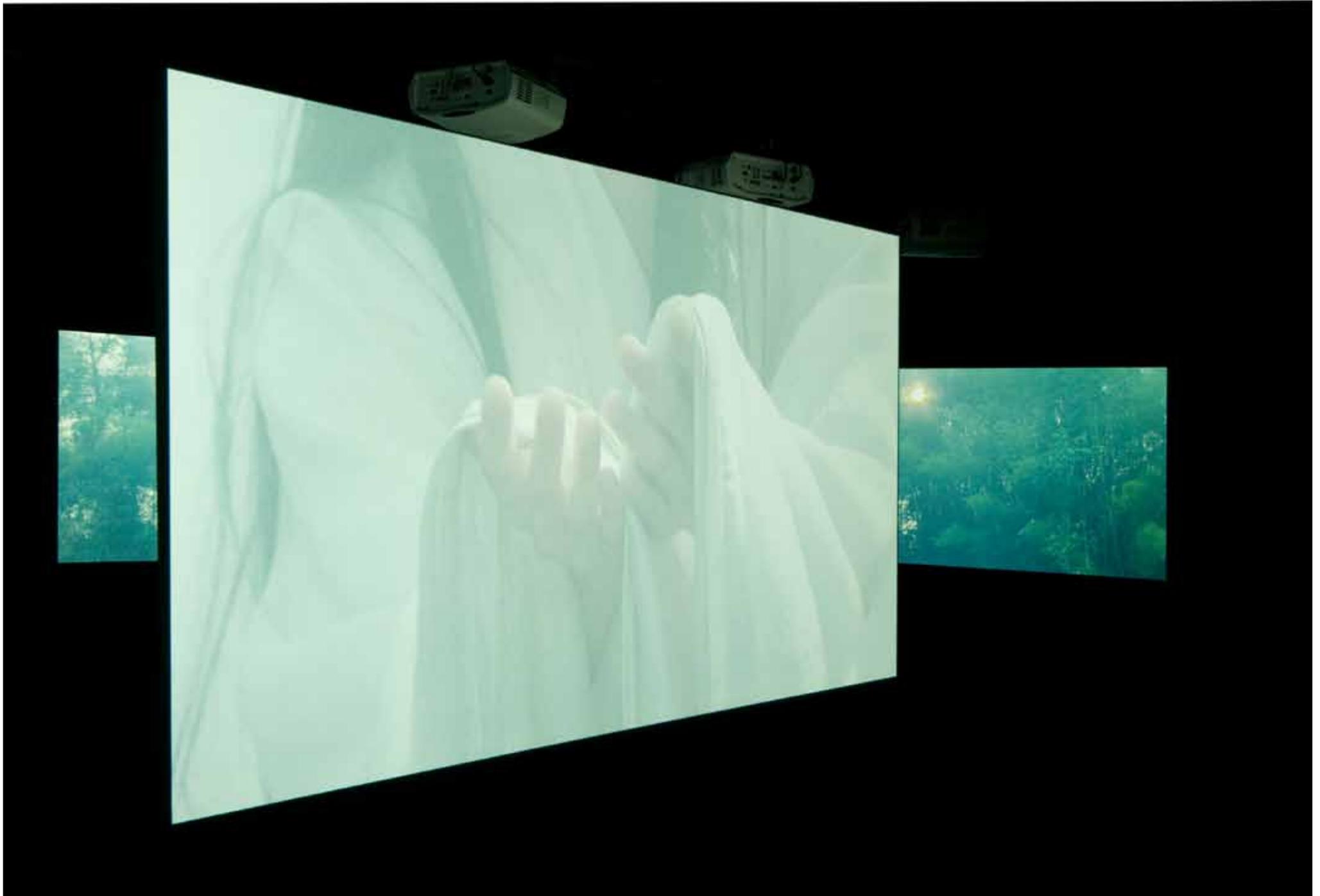
















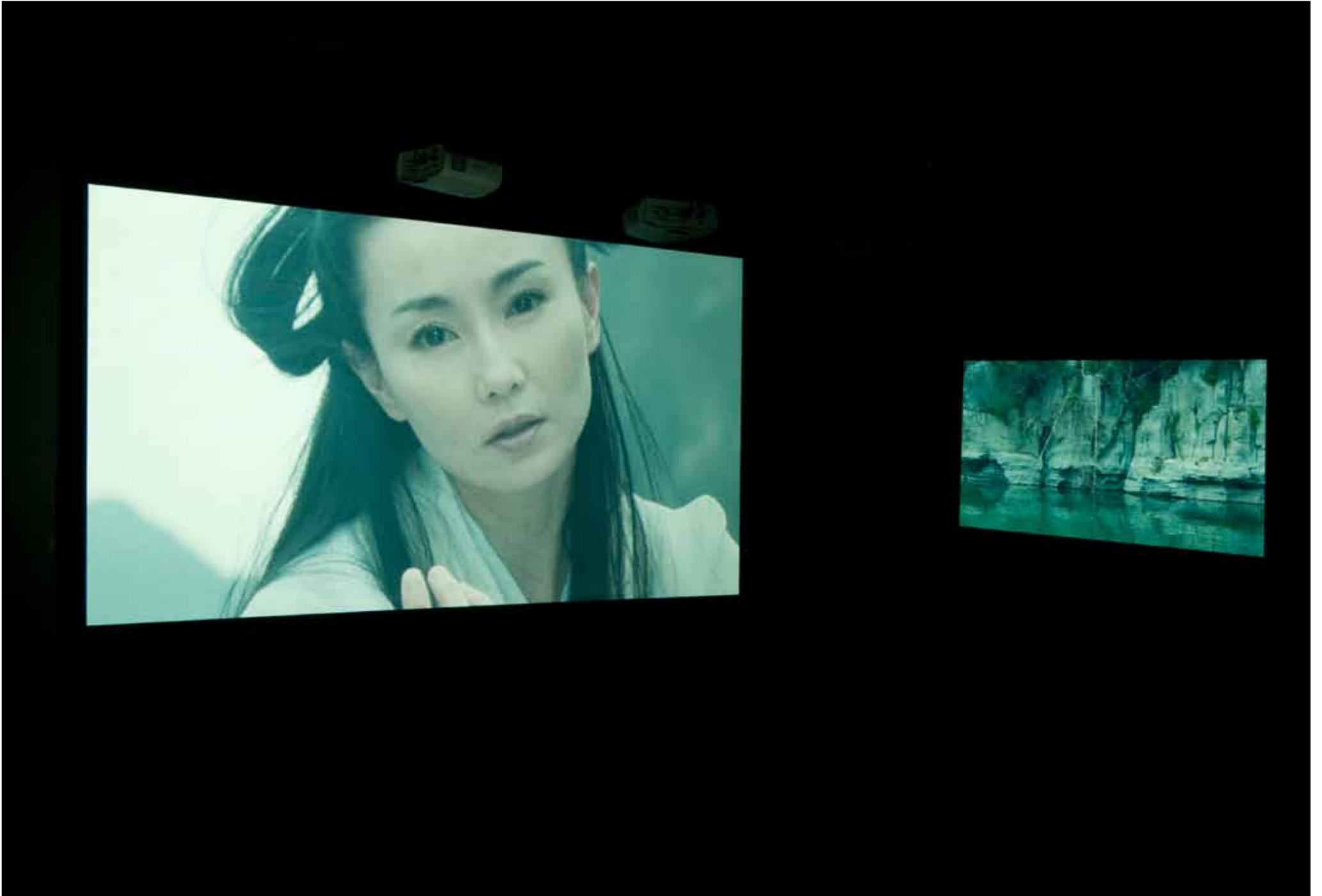








Photo: Adrian Zhou

# Isaac Julien

Isaac Julien is a British artist and filmmaker whose work incorporates different artistic disciplines, drawing from and commenting on film, dance, photography, music, theatre, painting and sculpture, and uniting them to create a unique poetic visual language in audio visual film installations. Isaac Julien lives and works in London.

Julien is represented in museum and private collections throughout the world, including the Tate, London; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Centre Pompidou, Paris; the Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington DC; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; and the Brandhorst Museum, Munich. His early work, *Looking for Langston* (1989) won several awards including the Teddy Award at the Berlin International Film Festival. In 1991 his debut feature film, *Young Soul Rebels* won the Semaine de la Critique prize at the Cannes Film Festival. Julien was nominated for the Turner Prize in 2001 for his films *The Long Road to Mazatlán* (1999) and *Vagabondia* (2000). In the same year, he received the Eugene McDermott Award from MIT in Massachusetts, USA: other recipients include artist Bill Viola.

His acclaimed 5-screen installation, *WESTERN UNION: small boats* (2007) has been shown at Metro Pictures, New York; Galería Helga de Alvear, Madrid; Centre for Contemporary Arts, Warsaw; and also opened the new Museum Brandhorst in Munich in 2009. In 2007 he made *Cast No Shadow* - a collaboration with Russell Maliphant - at Sadler's Wells, London and Brooklyn Academy of Music, New York as part of PERFORMAO7.

In 2008, Julien collaborated with Tilda Swinton on a biopic about Derek Jarman simply entitled *Derek*, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival the same year. The film received a Special Teddy at the Berlin Film Festival; the Documentary Prize at the 34th Seattle International Film Festival and Best Documentary at the Milan International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival. The film received nominations at the British Independent Film Awards; the Sundance Film Festival; and the Gucci Group Awards.



Photo: Jonathan Root



*GLASS HOUSE, PRISM* (Ten Thousand Waves) 2010 Fujitran in lightbox Diptych, 120 x 160 cm (x2) Courtesy of the artist





**MAZU, SILENCE** (Ten Thousand Waves) 2010 Endura Ultra photograph 180 x 240 cm Courtesy of the artist



*YISHAN ISLAND DREAMING* (Ten Thousand Waves) 2010 Endura Ultra photograph 180 x 240 cm Courtesy of the artist



*YISHAN ISLAND, MIST* (Ten Thousand Waves) 2010 Endura Ultra photograph 180 x 240 cm Courtesy of the artist



*DESPAIR* (Ten Thousand Waves) 2010 Endura Ultra photograph 180 x 240 cm Courtesy of the artist



**WAVES** (Ten Thousand Waves) 2010 Endura Ultra photograph 180 x 240 cm Courtesy of the artist



**GREEN SCREEN GODDESS** (Ten Thousand Waves) 2010 Endura Ultra photograph 180 x 240 cm Courtesy of the artist





Conceived and made over three years, TEN THOUSAND WAVES sees Julien collaborating with some of China's leading artistic voices, including: the legendary siren of Chinese cinema **Maggie Cheung**; rising star of Chinese film **Zhao Tao**; poet **Wang Ping**; master calligrapher **Gong Fagen**; artist **Yang Fudong**; acclaimed cinematographer **Zhao Xiaoshi**; and a 100-strong Chinese cast and crew. The film's original musical score is by fellow East Londoner **Jah Wobble** and **The Chinese Dub Orchestra** and contemporary classical composer **Maria de Alvear**.

Filmed on location in the ravishing and remote Guangxi province and at the famous Shanghai Film Studios and various sites around Shanghai, TEN THOUSAND WAVES combines fact, fiction and film essay genres against a background of Chinese history, legend and landscape to create a poetic meditation on global human migrations. Through formal experimentation and a series of unique collaborations, Julien seeks to engage with Chinese culture through contemporary events, ancient myths and artistic practice.

The original inspiration for TEN THOUSAND WAVES was the Morecambe Bay tragedy of 2004, in which 23 Chinese cockle-pickers died. In response to this event, Julien commissioned the poet Wang Ping to write Small Boats, a poem that is recited in the work. In the successive years, Julien has spent time in China slowly coming to understand the country and its people and developing the relationships that have enabled him to undertake this rich and multifaceted work.

Through conversations with academics, experts and artists both in China and the UK, Julien uncovered a poetically symbolic body of material which he has used to create a work that explores modern and traditional Chinese values and superstitions. These are encapsulated in a fable about the goddess Mazu (played by Maggie Cheung) that comes from Fujian Province, from where the Morecambe Bay cocklepickers originated. The Story of Yishan Island tells the tale of 16th Century fishermen lost and in danger at sea. At the heart of the legend is the goddess figure who leads the fishermen to safety. Using this fable as a starting point Julien deftly draws on this story and the poignant connection between it and the 21st Century tragedy of Chinese migrants who died struggling to survive in the North of England.

Following ideas surrounding death, spiritual displacement, and the uniquely Chinese connection with "ghosts" or "lost souls", the film links the Shanghai of the past and present, symbolising the Chinese transition towards modernity, aspiration and affluence. Mirroring the goddess of the fable, a ghostly protagonist (Zhao Tao) leads us through the world of Shanghai cinema via the Shanghai Film Studio, to a restaging by Julien of scenes from the classic Chinese film THE GODDESS (1934), and finally to the streets of Modern and Old Shanghai. Isaac Julien is as equally acclaimed for his fluent, arresting films as his vibrant and inventive gallery installations. TEN THOUSAND WAVES is his most ambitious project to date with the nine-screen installation forming a dynamic architectural structure through which the viewer navigates the multiple narratives. Julien deploys the visual and aural textures of the film to elicit a visceral response from the viewer, submerging them in the world of his making.

## TEN THOUSAND WAVES - TOUR INFORMATION WORLD

PREMIERE | Sydney Biennale, Cockatoo Island, 12 May – 1 August 2010 For the work's world premiere at the Sydney Biennale in May 2010, TEN THOUSAND WAVES will be installed on Cockatoo Island – the largest island in Sydney Harbour and Australia's most unusual urban park as a former prison and shipyard.

CHINESE PREMIERE | ShanghART Gallery, Shanghai, opening 20 May 2010

TEN THOUSAND WAVES will show in Shanghai to coincide with the Shanghai Expo.

UK PREMIERE | Hayward Gallery, London, 13 October 2010 – 9 January 2011

## CAST

**MAZU** *Maggie Cheung***BLUE GODDESS** *Zhao Tao***LOVER** *Yang Fudong***CALLIGRAPHER** *Gong Fagen***NARRATORS** *Wang Ping, Benedict Wong, Jennifer Lim***POEM** *Wang Ping*

## CREW

Director *Isaac Julien*Producer *Maggie Still, Xanadu Productions*Executive Producer *Virginia Ibbott*Director of Photography *Zhao Xiaoshi*Editor *Adam Finch, the Offline Editing Company*Composers *Maria de Alvear, Jah Wobble*Associate Producer *China Huang Fan*Associate Producer *UK Mark Nash, JN Films Limited*Art Director *Tu Xinran*Costume Design *Li Yuan*Makeup Design *Li Hui*Production Accountant *China Zheng Xiao*Production Coordinator *Li Qiao*Production Assistant *Kyle Johnson*Translation *Huang Fan, Kyle Johnson*Sound Recordist *Xu Hong*Stunt Coordinator *Yang Chongyu*Equipment Rental Company *Cinerent Beijing*Laboratory *Cinelab Beijing*Stills Technician *Thorsten Henn*Colourist *Jean Clement, Moving Picture Company*Casting *UK Gary Davy*Sound Design *Mukul Patel*Sound Recording *Mixers Karl Mainzer, Rowan Jennings, United Audio Project.**Sound recorded at real World, Box, Wiltshire, UK*Additional Shooting *UK Nina Kellgren*Post-Production Visual Effects *Ben Raven, Nick D'Aguiar, Steve Miller, Paul**Ingram, Act Two/Hogarth*Post-Production Retouching *Paul Ingram, Amber Webster, Act2-Um*Archivist *Sam Dwyer*Legal Advisor *Libby Savill, Olswang*Production Accountant *UK Mustafa Goksel, Jeffreys Henry*Post Production Supervisor *Molly Taylor**Tamsin Wright* Post Production Coordinator

## ISAAC JULIEN STUDIO

Exhibitions Manager

*Molly Taylor*

Studio Coordinator

*Tamsin Wright*

Artist's Assistant

*Jacqueline Hoang Nguyen*

Production Company

*JN Films Limited/Xanadu Productions*

Installation

*Tom Cullen, John Hirschhorn-Smith, ArtAV*

## ARCHIVE COURTESY OF

BFI National Archive

Channel 4/Screenocean Ltd.

Lancashire Constabulary

Nick Broomfield, Lafayette Film RTHK

Thought Equity Motion

## MUSIC COURTESY OF

*Beaconing* by Mukul Patel*Chop Vol I*, live Part I by ChoP: Zen Lu (China) and Grzegorz Bojanek (Poland) [www.myspace.com/chopart/](http://www.myspace.com/chopart/)*LI Dub and Walking the Horse* by Jah Wobble & the Chinese Dub Orchestra, licensed by kind permission of 30 Hertz Records*Poem of the Chinese Drum* by Hok-Man Yim licensed by kind permission of Naxos rights International Ltd.*P.pa* by FM3, licensed by kind permission of Christiaan Virant & Zhang Jian*Shambhala Gateway* by Frank Perry taken from the album *Tibetan Singing Bowls Volume 5*, Legend of Shambhala, licensed by kind permission of

Mountain Bell Music

Made with the co-operation of the China Film Co-Production Corporation

## THE ARTIST WOULD LIKE TO THANK

Colin MacCabe

Simon Kirby

Martin Jacques

Roslyn and Tony Oxley

Kathryn Weir

Amanda Love

Paul Ingram, Act Two

Nick Broomfield

John Hirschhorn-Smith

Hsiao-Hung Pai

Lorenz Helbling, Helen Zhu, Adrian Zhou, ShanghART Gallery

Pearl Lam

Mark Coetzee, puma.creative

Glenn Scott Wright

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Supported by the National Lottery through Arts Council England.

The artist would also like to thank Toby Devan Lewis, puma.creative and those who wish to remain anonymous for their kind support.

The artist is represented by Galeria Helga de Alvear, Madrid; Two Rooms, Auckland; Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney; ShanghART Gallery, Shanghai; Victoria Miro Gallery, London; and Metro Pictures, New York.

