

THE NIGHTMAN COMETH

YANG FUDONG SOLO EXHIBITION

Selected Articles

Opening: Mar. 16, 2013, Sat., 6.00PM-9.30PM

Artists: Yang Fudong

Duration: Mar.16, 2013 – Apr.16, 2013

Visiting Hours: Tue.- Sat. 11AM- 7PM, Sun. 11AM- 6PM

Venue: ShanghART Gallery (Singapore), 9 Lock Road, Gillman Barracks, #02-22, 108937, Singapore

T: +65 6734 9537 | F: +65 6734 9037 | infosg@shanghartgallery.com

www.shanghartgallery.com



Yang's film, *Yejiang/The Night Man Cometh* (2011), comes across as the star of 'Waterworks'. Executed in the artist's signature black and white, surrealist style, the film features a cast of ghostly, forlorn characters in a snowy landscape. Yang is increasingly making the kind of art films that are so near feature-length quality that one wishes he were making feature films instead. Fans of Yang's epic *Seven Intellectuals in a Bamboo Forest* (2003–7) will miss the slow pacing, precision and attention to historic detail of that earlier work. *The Night Man* more closely resembles Yang's recent slick advertisement for Prada, *First Spring* (2010), as a highly seductive film that consciously manipulates its audience through old-fashioned special effects, enchanting visual juxtapositions and sweeping references to Chinese fables. The film is presented with related materials, including oil paintings and other inspirational research props. These materials' strange display in glass casings resembling those of natural history and Chinese state-run museums marks one of the show's more interesting curatorial decisions.

From

Frieze, by Jenny Lin

Published on 23/09/11

A second video, the single-channel "*Ye Jiang (The Nightman Cometh)*" (2011), is a more stylized exploration of China's cinematic history, though it still focuses on the meanderings of several different characters. It stars a soldier fully decked out in ancient Chinese battle armor, a woman in classical regal dress, and another pair clad in the dapper fashion of pre-revolutionary Shanghai. Scattered action takes place, but the characters again wander through their strange frozen landscape scarcely interacting. Here, another cinematic reference comes to mind: The physical isolation and psychological distress of this forbidding panorama is familiar from the freighted setting of "*Spring in a Small Town*," Fei Mu's 1948 exploration of China's ailing traditional upper class in the aftermath of the Second Sino-Japanese war. Recently named the greatest Chinese movie ever made, the film's empty grasslands and silent, shell-shocked figures are spiritual predecessors for Yang's introverted protagonists.

From

ARTINFO:

<http://www.artinfo.com/news/story/799535/yang-fudong-invokes-the-specters-of-pre-revolutionary-china-at-marian-goodman>

A creeping feeling of familiarity

The second film is presented on a single screen, but is no less surreal. *The Nightman Cometh* (2011), takes place on a single scene of desolation that Samuel Beckett might have designed. There is a dead tree, a broken cart, a makeshift fire, and a rock pile. It is winter, snow falls, and in the deep space a jagged mountain range pokes into a darkened sky. Like *Fifth Night*, the set is clearly artificial and the past and present mingle as if in some liminal space. A warrior in ancient armor is both the first to arrive on the scene and last to leave it. Three figures—two women and a man—dressed in modern suits and gowns wander on and off the set. Animals figure prominently: a family of spotted deer nuzzles around for food, wild chickens perch on the rocks, an eagle spreads its wings and screeches silently, the warrior's dark horse whinnies. One gets the impression the three figures (all dressed in white to contrast the warrior's dark armor and black steed) may be figments of the warrior's imagination, perhaps ghosts of his past, or future. They don't suffer the harsh weather as the warrior seems to. In the end the warrior mounts his horse and heads towards the mountains, alone, as night falls. What he's riding into, or off from, almost begs to be read symbolically, but the feeling the situation generates need not be: a melancholy mixture of hopefulness and desperation.

From

ArtSlant by Charlie Schultz

<http://www.artslant.com/ny/articles/show/30437?print=1>

Transitional Cinema-- Yang Fudong's One half of August

It is important to note that the semiological displacement in Yang's films occurs not on the level of language, but that of "myth", which is defined by Barthes as a "second-order semiological system" that is built upon that of language, the first. What is the final term (sign) in language becomes the first term (signifier) in myth. In this transformation, the linguistic sign "empties itself", its history evaporated as it prepares itself to "receive its signified" in its new function as the mythical signifier. The difference between the two semiological systems is illustrated in Barthes' famous example of an image of a young Negro saluting in a French uniform on the cover of a copy of *Paris-Match*. As a linguistic sign, its signified is immediately apparent: a young Negro saluting in French uniform. But myth recasts this sign as a signifier to embed within it a second mythic signified: "that France is a great Empire, that all her sons, without any colour discrimination, faithfully serve under her flag". By this reasoning, the image of the Chinese damsel, by itself, operates on the level of language, but that of the Chinese damsel as the embodiment of Chineseness belongs firmly to the realm of myth. In the films of Yang, what is novel is the seeming suspension of the semiological chain in the very moment of the linguistic sign's transition into the mythical signifier. This is seen most evidently in another of Yang's work on show, *Ye Jiang* (*The night man cometh*) (Fig. 2), a single-channel video set in a snowy landscape with a bizarre ensemble consisting of a vanquished warlord, a pensive-looking maiden, a white-suited man, another maiden in white, a hawk and a family of deers. As signs, these are images already laden with meaning, "a whole system of values: a history, a geography, a morality, a zoology, a Literature" – values that are, however, slowly eroded by the careful, passing eye of the camera that transforms the images into form. They become impoverished, their signified contents replaced with an anticipatory void. But this void is never filled, for the mythical signified never arrives to fill it: the film reads like a prologue that never ends. Notably, Yang achieves this deferral of the mythic signified through the language of existentialism – existentialism figured as a means rather than an end. The movements, for one, are deliberately kept to the clichéd and quotidian – walking, looking, pausing – for after all, it was the salute in the young Negro that brought in the myth of nationalism. The film unsettles us when it ends, for all the anticipation amounted to naught. Unlike *Fifth Night*, this single-channel work, from the outset, presents itself as narrative cinema, thus necessitating closure. The rolling credits, itself a cinematic staple, appear to taunt us, the bewildered spectator, with its declared posteriority, as if was us who missed the conclusive moment of the narrative. We rewatch the film as it repeats, this time attempting to reread it, to reterritorialise it, further urged by the arbitrary relations created by the *mise-en-scène*: Could the man and the lady be lovers? Is the hawk a harbinger of doom? But the attempt is likely futile; the film invites reterritorialisation only to frustrate it. In place of myth, all we have is pure *mise-en-scène* – a stage devoid of narrative, Chinese characters of their Chineseness.

From

Ho Rui An (2013)

Beijing-born artist Yang Fudong, known for his painter's approach to the mediums of film and photography, is now on display at Marian Goodman Gallery. The exhibition features two films, *The Fifth Night* and *The Nightman Cometh*, which explore the relationship between time, place, reality, and fantasy. Yang stated that the characters in his productions leave "a trace in the way a brush leaves a stroke on a long-roll painting."

An additional photo exhibition pays homage to the Chinese "Modern Woman," and was shot at the International Hotel in Shanghai.

From

<http://guestofaguest.com/new-york/art/everything-you-need-to-know-this-week-on-new-yorks-art-scene-23&slide=1>

Born in 1971 in Beijing, Yang Fudong lives and works in Shanghai.

In this exhibition he presents three works: *Fifth Night*, 2010; *One half of August*, 2011; and *Yejiang (The night man cometh)*, 2011.

Shown here for the first time in the UK, *Fifth Night* is a video-installation composed of seven synchronized projections. Filmed supposedly in the night-time streets of Shanghai's old town, it portrays a sequence of arcane activity. People move around silently and aimlessly with no apparent interaction between them, while others pass through the scene riding in carriages, rickshaws or vintage cars. A stage has been constructed and, finally, a tramway is being frantically repaired. Everything remains enigmatically inconclusive and open to interpretation.

From

<http://rollingplinth.com/2011/09/parasol-unit-yang-fudong/>

Yejiang/ The nightman cometh (Yang Fudong, 2011, 19m 21s) : a strange fantasy set in a bleak, snowy landscape, in which a wounded warrior is visited by three people who might be spirits or facets of himself or strangers who've accidentally wandered in from another time - Mr Monkey couldn't tell, as none of them said anything. This was Mr Monkey's favourite video of the evening.

From

<http://www.houseoftheorangemonkey.co.uk/monkey/events/event86.htm>

The single-screen work, *Ye Jiang (The night man cometh)* unfolds in a frozen winter landscape. At first one might try to read the film as a linear narrative, but as images succeed one another it becomes clear that Yang Fudong is once more questioning the destiny of man. In it a wounded and forlorn warrior is seen after a battle, apparently now questioning his path in life. In this dramatic and hyper-realist film, three ghost-like characters appear to personify the chaos of feelings and thoughts that surface and clash within the warrior's heart and mind as he swings from enthusiasm and happiness to disappointment, grief and despair, thus revealing what takes place in a man who is required to demonstrate strength and courage in times of war and crisis.

From

e-flux

<http://www.e-flux.com/announcements/yang-fudongs-one-half-of-august/>

In fact, there is something self-negating in Yang's act of reducing his entire oeuvre to literal surfaces, which results in the collapse of figure and ground and by extension, that of cinema as a signifying system. While in *Fifth Night* and *Ye Jiang*, there is still an effort to reel the audience in with the promise of a world, a myth, the surfaces here cannot even accommodate the illusion of penetration. All we are left with is a pure materiality, the skin of

film: figures brushing across the contours of a classical statue, warping as they pass over the edge of a shelf...

From

<http://opencontours.com/2012/01/12/foreign-surfaces/>
by Ho Rui An January 12, 2012 at 18:50

MARIAN GOODMAN GALLERY PRESS RELEASE

Ye Jiang (The Nightman Cometh), a single screen work which is presented in the South Gallery, unfolds in the realm of historical fantasy. An ancient warrior is seen wounded and forlorn after battle: he is in conflict about his path in life. Three ghost-like characters appear as emblems of feelings and thoughts that surface and clash within the warrior's heart and mind as he has to decide whether to disappear or continue fighting. Yang has preferred to describe the film as 'neo-realistic' rather than historical and allegorical:

"Neo-realism" is a history theater where current and contemporary societal conditions come to play. Who exists realistically, the warrior baron in his period costume or the ghost in a modern outfit? When the ancient battlefield scene and other historical events appear and reappear, where do they belong, in the past, the present or the night-falling future? How impossible it seems to make up your mind, when there is no easy answer to get from the narration! It is getting dark. The warrior has to decide whether to disappear/escape (die) or to continue fighting, which of course might lead to the same fate – death. There is hope nonetheless. The body is desirable whereas the soul is more precious. His spirit is what backs him up in life. How should we live our lives now? How do we identify ourselves with neo-realistic historical events and continue to search for spiritual meanings? What do we really want?

From

http://www.mariangoodman.com/exhibitions/2012-03-28_yang-fudong/

WATERWORKS

Yang Fudong's film THE NIGHTMAN COMETH unfolds inside a movie-lot snowstorm, using the simulacral devices of an earlier era, when soap flakes and fans created the climatic illusions now so often left to digital manipulation. A single-channel, nineteen-minute production, works, like much of Yang's film, on the axis of character and (lack of) narrative, with a woman, a general, and two ghost-like spirits wandering forlornly in the winter night. Its Chinese title plays on the double-meaning of "the general at nighttime" and "nightfall imminent." For the first time, he presents alongside the film a selection of documentary material, including still photos, drawings, and other sources of inspiration, installed in glass cases evoking an old, encyclopedic museum.

From

Philip Tinari, 2011-09-04

水厂

杨福东的影片《夜将》在影棚内部制造的雪中展开。制造手段属于上个时代，风扇加上肥皂屑，模拟现实中的风雪天气，而如今这种场景一般都由数码合成。这件十九分钟长的单屏录像和杨福东大部分影片一样，围绕人物和叙事（的缺失）进行。故事中，一个“可能是公主”的古装女人、一位将军、两个“现代版的幽灵”在冬夜里孤独地四处游荡。作品中文标题暗含双关，一方面指“夜色中的将军”，另一方面又有“黑夜将至”之意。杨福东首度在影片放映的同时展出了一系列文献记录材料，包括剧照、草图、绘画以及他的其他灵感来源。这些材料全部放在玻璃展柜里，令人想起老式的博物馆。

田霏宇，2011年9月4日

杨福东：八月的二分之一

在《夜将》中，一位中国古代的将军现身于一片冰天雪地的蛮荒之境，同时一位女神般的人物以深情的目光暗中守望着他。与之相并置的是一对外表较为现代装扮的男女：男人一身白色西服，化着舞台妆的眼圈发黑，他亦步亦趋地跟随着一位身着西式裙装的神情疏远的女人。《夜将》让人想起帕索里尼的电影《猪圈》，片中那对为保守主义和阶级意识这样的话题而争论不休的年轻的资产阶级情侣，以及一个浪迹荒野的中世纪战士。饥饿和绝望让他对吃人习以为常，当食人者被抓住，受到折磨并被处死之际，他表达出了曾食亲父之肉的快乐满足。看着杨福东的武士骑着马行至远处，女神在影片结尾展现最后的微笑，那位失踪的被吃掉的父亲似乎可以成为观者思考《第五夜》中的人物的线索：一切自在其中。

《艺术界》2012年第01期

文：斯蒂芬妮·贝里 戴伟平

In *Ye Jiang*, a warrior from the annals of China's imperial history is cast into the cold, unforgiving wilderness, while a goddess-like character, unseen, watches over him lovingly. Juxtaposed is a more modern, post-war pair: a man in a white suit, his eyes blackened and contoured by stage makeup, who follows an aloof woman in Western dress tentatively, clearly uncomfortable with the wilderness. The modern pair recalls the young bourgeois lovers who argue over issues of conformism and class-consciousness in Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Porcile* while a starved medieval soldier wanders the desert, having developed a cannibalistic habit out of desperation. When he is caught, tortured and sentenced to death, the soldier expresses his joy of having eaten his own father. Watching Yang Fudong's warrior ride off on his black horse and the goddess smile one last smile at the film's end, the notion of the missing, cannibalized father feels like a clue directed at the audience, here cast like the characters of *Fifth Night*: right in the middle of it all.

From

Leap, Issue 1, 2012

关于《夜将》二三事

2009年以来电影剧场化的变化，以及后来几年创作上的倾向，几乎让观众忽略了杨福东之前工作的线索和特征。《夜将》（2011年）确是有些突兀的出现抽离了现实场景，完全在影棚拍摄的新风格，让那些熟悉了杨福东作品的观众，有些难于接受。而杨福东影像空间之外的装置，却被这些经验所忽略。在连续的展览空间中无论是监视器拍摄的纪录片，还是手工的绘画，都为作品创造了一个外部时间上的联系，实时纪录下来的影像，为完美影像作品《夜将》提供了一个发生在当下的时间和经验，绘画如他所说呈现了另外的一个版本的《夜将》。

《夜将》完全不会回归短片时代，也不同于2009年以来的艺术实践，我想这是杨福东再次打破录像艺术家身份上的限制和制约，将作品中所探讨的文人精神生活、叙事方法、暗喻和画面、时间所构成的复杂性，再次置于一个被挑战的现场所致。

也许在《夜将》影片的内部还存在的寓言，并非杨福东所期待的寓言式的影片，却真实隐含在作品的名称之中，黑夜将至——你我都是现实幻景中的幽灵。

李振华

写于2012年3月11日 苏黎世工作室

杨福东 夜将

电影更接近与自己的理想与想象，它存在于虚拟与真实之间，让你发现了自由，快乐。

我开始利用分离的屏幕因为我希望尝试另外一种电影，或许称它为空间电影。观众也许是第二个导演，在观看时重新组织一部属于他自己的电影。

ARTFORUM

2012年9月

怎么让“你”和“我”的眼球说话——对话杨福东

《艺术银行》：谈谈你去年的作品《夜将》。

杨福东：它是单个屏幕的作品，使用了人工造景，加入了具有社会意识思考的历史性题材，我希望它像个现代式的剧场。《夜将》的名字有两层意思：一层是“夜将至”，就是黑夜即将来临；另一层是“战斗到最后的将军”，在黎明来临的时候，他是选择继续战斗，还是消失或放弃。影片拍的是一个古代英雄斗士，将军象征着战争精神，另外有两个身着现代戏服的男孩和女孩，像是现代版的幽灵，还有个古代公主的角色，影片中人物的设定都具有象征意味，并有些错位。在拍摄时，潜意识里我会思考如何面对残酷的现实，影片属于具有纵深层次的叙事结构。

采访撰文 / 翁志娟

《艺术银行》2012年5-6月合刊

【雅昌带你观展览】断章取义：杨福东影像艺术

《夜将》确是有些突兀的出现抽离了现实场景，完全在影棚拍摄的新风格，让那些熟悉了杨福东作品的观众，有些难于接受。而杨福东影像空间之外的装置，却被这些经验所忽略。在连续的展览空间中无论是监视器拍摄的纪录片，还是手工的绘画，都为作品创造了一个外部时间上的联系，实时纪录下来的影像，为完美影像作品《夜将》提供了一个发生在当下的时间和经验，绘画如他所说呈现了另外的一个版本的《夜将》。

作品制造手段属于上个时代，风扇加上肥皂屑，模拟现实中的风雪天气，而如今这种场景一般都由数码合成。这件十九分钟长的单屏录像和杨福东大部分影片一样，围绕人物和叙事（的缺失）进行。故事中，一个“可能是公主”的古装女人、一位将军、两个“现代版的幽灵”在冬夜里孤独地四处游荡。作品中文标题暗含双关，一方面指“夜色中的将军”，另一方面又有“黑夜将至”之意。杨福东首度在影片放映的同时展出了一系列文献记录材料，包括剧照、草图、绘画以及他的其他灵感来源。这些材料全部放在玻璃展柜里，令人想起老式的博物馆。

http://huadong.artron.net/show_news.php?newid=270116&p=3