

Chi-Wen Gallery

Art Stage Singapore 2014 《WE ARE ASIA》

Booth: B28

**ART STAGE
SINGAPORE
16-19 JAN '14
WE ARE ASIA.**

Date: 16th -19th January, 2014

Private View: 15th January 2014

Venue: Marina Bay Sands, Singapore.

Represent Artists:

Chang Chien-Chi

James T. Hong

Yin-Ju Chen

Noritoshi Hirakawa

Chi-Wen Gallery is delighted to announce its participation in Art Stage Singapore 2014. Now in its fourth year, it has proven to be one of Southeast Asia's most dynamic art fairs, featuring many leading international contemporary art galleries and art professionals.

In the edition of this year, Chi-Wen Gallery is showcasing works by Chang Chien-Chi, James T. Hong, Yin-Ju Chen and Noritoshi Hirakawa.

In the *Escape from North Korea* (2005-2011), the Magnum photographer Chang Chien-Chi traveled with North Korean defectors to document their 2000 perilous miles crossing China, Laos and Thailand. As a contemporary historical story, some of the defectors face the other challenge of starting a new life in South Korea.

James T. Hong and Yin-Ju Chen present a powerful documentary film, *Lessons of the blood*, which focus on the history of Japanese biological warfare in World War II, reveals the suffering still remaining in some remote areas of China. In contrast, the Japanese artist Noritoshi provided an extraordinary aesthetic of death in the photography series entitled *S*, which record ten sites of infamous suicides in Switzerland, assume the gravity of a post-mortem documentary photograph.

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Escape from North Korea

By Chang Chien-Chi

The exodus of North Korean defectors into China began in late 1990s after a severe famine that destroyed at least one million of its 23 million people. Once they cross the border to China, they'll be in hiding and waiting to embark on an extremely secretive, dangerous escape route, known as *Asia's Underground Railroad* from northern China all the way to Laos, crossing Mekong River, to Thailand and finally to South Korea.

The unpredictable journey can take weeks, months or even years. Chinese police routinely hunt for North Koreans attempting to escape cross-country. Police crackdowns can net hundreds of victims. If they are caught while escaping in China and Laos, they will be repatriated to Communist North Korea, facing severe labor camps or capital punishment. Magnum photographer Chien-Chi Chang traveled with the defectors to document the darkest journey in 2007 and 2008. To date, He has continued to document the plight of North Korean defectors.

Chang Chien-Chi

Primarily using photography as his artistic medium, Chang Chien-Chi, (b.1961) explores alienation and connection between people in contemporary society by developing long-term, interactive relationships with the subjects. In his earlier, well-known series *The Chain* which was exhibited at the Taiwan Pavilion of the Venice Biennale in 2001 and the Bienal de São Paulo in 2002, Chang creates life-sized portraits of patients at Taiwan's Long Fa Temple psychiatric hospital. His 2001 series *I do I do I do* exposes subtle societal factors that underpin marriage using a photo album format. In his 2005 series *Double Happiness*, Chang uses a straight-forward format to document the marriage brokerage process used by Vietnamese brides and Taiwanese grooms.

Starting in 1992, Chang became interested in themes related to the dispersion of individuals or families from their homeland, and in the 19 years hence, followed the lives of illegal immigrants in New York City's Chinatown who left China as a matter of survival. Entitled *China Town* and still in progress, the series was exhibited in the artist's mid-career survey *Doubleness* at the National Museum of Singapore in 2008,

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and at the Taiwan Pavilion of the Venice Biennale in 2009. In 2007, Chang traveled with North Korean defectors from Northeast China to Thailand, documenting their lives for his work *Escape from North Korea* (2005-2011), which won the Canadian AnthroGraphia Award for Human Rights in 2011. In recent years Chang has expanded his medium to include sound and the moving images, which has enriched his image based narratives with additional, multiple elements.

Chang received his bachelor's degree from Soochow University in 1984, and his master's from Indiana University in 1990. He began a professional career as a photojournalist in 1991, and has worked for both the *Seattle Times* and the *Baltimore Sun*. He joined the world famous photographic cooperative Magnum Photos in 1995.



Escape from North Korea.

Single-channel Video / 5min 40sec / 2009 / Courtesy of Chi-Wen Gallery

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Lessons of the Blood

By James T. Hong and Yin-Ju Chen

Focusing on the history and victims of Japanese biological warfare, "*Lessons of the Blood*" is a meditation on propaganda, historical revisionism, and the legacy of World War II in China.

In 2005, Chinese author, Lee Xiao-Fang, published a book called "*Blood-Weeping Accusations*" which featured elderly Chinese victims of contagions and diseases spread by secret units of the Imperial Japanese military during World War II. Inspired by the shocking photographs and the history of Japan's "Unit 731," filmmaker James T. Hong and artist Yin-Ju Chen embarked on a 6-year research trip to China and Japan to collect historical documents, interviews with the victims, and other documentary evidence. Their powerful documentary series not only reveals the horrors and suffering that still exist in some small, remote areas of China, it also addresses how governments, ideology, and propaganda affect the reception and perception of "historical truth."

Directors

James T. Hong

Born in the USA, Hong discontinued his Ph.D. program in philosophy at the University of Illinois and studied filmmaking at the University of Southern California. He has recently participated in many important international exhibitions and film festivals, such as "A Journal of the Plague Year" (Para/Site, HK, 2013), The Berlin International Film Festival (Germany, 2013), The Online Biennial (2013), Taipei Biennial (2012), International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (NL, 2008, 2012), and the International Film Festival Rotterdam (NL, 2001, 2007, 2008, and 2011), Taipei Golden Horse Film Festival (2005), Taiwan International Documentary Festival (2004). Several of his films have received awards and grants, including *Behold the Asian: How One Becomes What One Is* (2000), *Die Entnazifizierung des MH* (2006), and *Lessons of the Blood* (2010). In 2008, Hong was a guest of the Berliner Künstlerprogramm des DAAD. His recent articles are published in *e-flux Journal* and the *Taipei Times*. Hong currently lives and works in the USA and Taiwan.

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Yin-Ju Chen

Chen studied video and performance art at the San Francisco Art Institute in the New Genres Department. She has participated in many important international exhibitions and film festivals, such as “A Journal of the Plague Year.” (Para Site, HK, 2013), Taipei Biennial (2012), International Film Festival Rotterdam (2011), EMAF - European Media Art Festival (2011), “Multitud Singular” Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia (Spain, 2009), the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (NL, 2008), and San Francisco International Film Festival (USA, 2006). From 2010-2011, Chen was a resident artist at the Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. She currently lives and works in Taiwan.



Lessons of the Blood.

DVCPRO HD, 16mm. 106 minutes. 2004-2010

Language: English, multiple Chinese dialects, Japanese, and Korean.

Courtesy of Chi-Wen Gallery

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S series

By Noritoshi Hirakawa

Death exists next to life. There is no clear line between them, and death is provided as one of the alternatives to living. Once one lets his/her body reply on this alternative, there is no way back. Thus death is a highly valid individual right, and functions as a conduct which should be respected as a human's privilege.

People find some kind of fantasy in this conduct. It is probably because everyone consciously imagines what it would be like, more than once, and experiences regret that s/he couldn't make up his/her mind.

A vicarious experience of "death" which could be aesthetic, started as I visited ten famous suicide spots in Switzerland, fixed the point one-meter away from the place where the suicider stepped out, and decided the range of viewing scope for images toward the direction of gravity. The scene, which one sees there, is the place which welcomes a person's death, and probably is the gate to the last prelude from "life" to "death" which no one has ever talked about.

Those who have already knocked on this door do not have the means to talk about how beautiful is the scenery from the door to the last prelude. However, my photo series sadistically mesmerizes the viewer into wandering into the moment when s/he flies into the air and becomes vacuumed by gravity right after taking the first step. (Noritoshi Hirakawa, 1997)

Noritoshi Hirakawa (b.1960) originally studied Applied Sociology and today works with photography, film, installation and performance. His works have been described as erotic and intimate and challenge mainstream views of sexuality and the assumption that male desire is inherently exploitative, objectifying and oppressive towards women. The artist believes that human activity forms the culture in which we live today and proposes to push the boundaries of perception in order to further culture as such. In particular, he identifies the camera as “a very good excuse to connect men’s and women’s desires.”

Hirakawa’s work has been exhibited over 300 times, including at the Venice Biennale, Venice; Istanbul Biennale, Istanbul; Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt; Centre

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Pompidou, Paris; MoMA PS1, New York; Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna; Christophe Guye Galerie, Zurich and Taka Ishii Gallery, Kyoto. The artist has also collaborated with poets, musicians, choreographers and architects and presented his work at Das TAT, Frankfurt; Danse Montpellier; and Fondation Cartier, Paris.

Noritoshi Hirakawa lives and works in New York City.



S Series - Pont du Gottéron

Silver Gelatin Print / 30.5x46 cm / 1997 / Courtesy of Chi-Wen Gallery

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