

Chi-Wen Gallery

Chi-Wen Gallery at LOOP Barcelona 2015 - The Place for Video Art Lovers

Represented Artist | Chien-Chi Chang
Selected Artwork | *China Town* (1992-2011)
Room No. | 42

<http://www.loop-barcelona.com>

The selected 45 artists' works will be presented by their galleries at the 13th edition of LOOP Fair. Since 2003 LOOP has been the first fair for artists and galleries to première new video projects, and a vital meeting point for professionals of the moving image sector.

The projects carefully selected have been sourced from artists and committed galleries supporting stimulating moving image projects. The four engaged collectors that conform the LOOP Committee include the enthusiastic Jean-Conrad & Isabelle Lemaître, promoters of the StudioCollector Prize for video creation; Marc & Josée Gensollen, who have turned their Marseille home La Fabrique into a bustling art centre; Haro Cumbusyan, founder of Istanbul collectorspace, an organization aimed at bringing private art collections before the public; and Renee Drake, closely related to The Netherlands' art scene, whose collection includes a significant section of video works.

For the first time, sound-based projects have been included in the LOOP programme, as this medium shares technical, intangible and historical features with the moving image. Independent curator Anne-Laure Chamboissier has curated a section of sound works by artists Iñaki Bonillas, Michele Spanghero and Susan Philipsz.

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台北市大安區 106 敦化南路一段 252 巷 19 號 3 樓 3F / No.19 / Lane 252 / Tun-Hua S. Road / Sec. 1 / Taipei / Taiwan
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China Town | 1992-2011

Single-channel video, 19min 23sec, 1992-2011, Edition of 5



China Town, Video Still, Single-channel video, 19min 23sec, 1992-2011, Courtesy of Chien-Chi Chang, Magnum Photos and Chi-Wen Gallery

Immigration is propelled by suffering. To witness the shifting patterns of populations is to see the world in all its exigencies—war, natural disasters, repression, famine, poverty and persecution. But there is a rainbow at the bottom of that Pandora’s box of troubles; hope, too, propels immigrants to settle in strange lands.

Perhaps the most aspirational of the world’s people are the Chinese. For them, New York’s Chinatown is the capital city of promise, the place you go to make a new life for your family, a fortune. It is no coincidence that the boatload of illegal immigrants who grounded on a New York City beach in 1993 sailed on a ship called the *Golden Venture*. And this movement of people is an increasingly critical social issue. As the relationship between the U.S. and China grows ever more complex on an economic level, these individual stories, too, are weaving together the future of two nations.

To contrast the bleak, black-and-white lives of the men in the U.S. Chien-Chi Chang chose to photograph the families in China in color. Like the families who have granted access to him, the project has also grown and changed over the years. In 2005 he began using audio recordings and, in 2007, video recordings to continue to document the divided families. Now he is ready to move the project to

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a higher dimension through the combination of still images and moving images within soundscape. And, ultimately, to do what has never been done before—to make these invisible families, with their sufferings and triumphs, at last visible.

The past 20 years of developing these relationships are now culminating in a tri-generational drama. Some of the first waves of illegal immigrants are choosing to return to China to enjoy the prosperity they have created there and spend the rest of their lives with family members they have not seen for nearly two decades. Yet their sons still choose to be smuggled to New York, leaving their own families behind. Divided families remain divided.

The compelling quality of this project is its universality. It is about the essential human need to hold hope in your hands and about having the willingness to sacrifice one's own immediate happiness to realize the dream of giving children a "better" life. But is economic prosperity worth the social cost? Perhaps the answers to such questions we all ponder can be found in the lives of the people left behind in China and in those of the second and third generation immigrants growing up in the United States. Look at them, and listen to their voices. You may not understand their language, but you can feel their longing.

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About Chien-Chi Chang

Primarily using photography as his artistic medium, Chien-Chi Chang (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* (1993-1999) 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 2002 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 20 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, and at the Taiwan Pavilion of the Venice Biennale in 2009. In 2007, Chang travelled with North Korean defectors from Northeast China to Thailand, documenting their lives for his work *Escape from North Korea*, which won the Canadian AnthroPoGraphia 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 photography-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 and became a full member in 2001.

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About Chi-Wen Gallery

Founded in 2004 by Chi-Wen Huang, Chi-Wen Gallery is one of Taiwan's leading galleries, showing the best of contemporary Taiwanese art with a focus on video and photography. The gallery is dedicated to supporting emerging artists with curatorial projects that explore the most cutting-edge subjects and has been actively participating in local and international art fairs. As such Chi-Wen Gallery is very much connected with today's art and represents artists whose work continues to grow in historical importance.

Over the last decade Chi-Wen Gallery has fostered the careers of a diverse group of internationally renowned artists, both emerging and established, whose practices transformed the way art is made and presented in Taiwan today. These artists include Chen Chieh-Jen, Chien-Chi Chang, Peng Hung-Chih, Yao Jui-Chung, Hung Tung-Lu, Yuan Goang-Ming, Chen Shun-Chu, Wu Tien-Chang, Tusi Kuang-Yu, Jawshing Arthur Liou, Yu Cheng-Ta, Chen Yin-Ju, James T. Hung and among others.

For further information on the artists and works, please email gallery, info@chi-wen.com or phone: [+886 2.87723372](tel:+886287723372)

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