

Chi-Wen Gallery

姚瑞中 Yao Jui-Chung | James T. Hong & Chen Yin-Ju 洪子健 & 陳澄如 |
劉肇興 Jawshing Arthur Liou

Spectres of the Past

Dec. 20, 2014- Jan. 31, 2015

Opening Reception: Saturday, Dec.20, 3-6pm

Chi-Wen Gallery presents **Spectres of the Past**, a group exhibition by Taiwanese video artists Yao Jui-Chung, James T.Hong & Chen Yin-Ju and Jawshing Arthur Liou from December 20, 2014 to January 31, 2015.

Artworks in Exhibition

END TRANSMISSION | Chen Yin-Ju & James T. Hong

DVCPRO HD, black & white, stereo, 15' 40", 2010

40th International Film Festival Rotterdam -Tiger Award nominee for short film

A decoded, alien environmental message, structured as a hypnotic experimental film, forcefully and poetically warns us of their return and the planet's re-colonization.

Texts from Netherlands Media Art Institute (NIMk)

Strange messages are sent to humanity. They are frightening and poetical at the same time; they report of a takeover and the end of it all. The messages alternate with ominous black-and-white images of lifeless cities under control, frozen industrial landscapes, sterile laboratory machinery and nature in an abandoned state. "We were here before you". "Fear is natural". A final warning: the planet is re-colonized, and human life only seems possible in the protected, artificial and enclosed environment of a large-scale indoor resort.

Stephen Hawking once wrote, "If aliens ever visit us, the outcome will be much as when Christopher Columbus landed in America, which didn't turn out well for the Native Americans". In this case, who are the colonizers and who are the natives?

Saga Dawa | Jawshing Arthur Liou

Four-channel video, color, stereo, 55' loop, 2011-12

Saga Dawa — meaning 'fourth month'(on the Tibetan calendar) — is the most important Tibetan Buddhist festival. It is the time of the year when believers celebrate both Buddha's birth and the day he died and attained Nirvana. Presenting it across 4 screens, Arthur Liou takes us into the mise-en-scene of the festivities, following pilgrims and tourists as they flock towards an incense-burning stupa. The footage is slowed down and defused by a soft

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focus and incense smoke. Colourful prayer-papers offset the sepia images. Every now and then direct sunlight catches the lens making the revolving scene even more hypnotic. Uniform police is everywhere, and soldiers stomping around the stupa get caught in the view-frame. It is a reminder that in the political environment of the region such festivities are sensitive days. The gathering of groups—small or large—is treated as a potential of political rebellion by the authorities.

Long Live (Wansui) | Yao Jui-Chung

Single-channel video, color, sound, 5' 30", 2011

It has been the centenary of Hsinhai Revolution; the Cold War was long ended, neoliberalism conquered the world, the logic of global capitalism became universal currency. But what is the transcendental rule of history? Could there be a Nationalism's everlasting dynasty? This video begins in Kinmen, the frontier of the frontiers of Cold War. Not a single soul in sight on the chilling battlefield, all we hear is 'Wansui [literally 'ten thousand years']!' repeatedly coming through the most powerful loudspeakers of all psychological wayfarers'. Beyond the speakers, the Generalissimo is also calling for 'Wansui!' in the derelict Chieh-shou [literally 'long live Chiang Kai-shek] Hall next to the Chungshan Building in Yangmingshan. At the end the camera takes to a disused cinema, the propaganda of an eternal empire echoes an eternal repetition of history...

Long Long Live (Wan Wansui) | Yao Jui-Chung

Single-channel video, color, sound, 7' 20", 2013

This piece are associated with the Taiyuan Incident, a prison uprising that took place on the Feb 8, 1970 in Taiyuan Prison, Taidong County. The incident involved 150 people, including six political prisoners, 50 prison guards, as well as aboriginal youth sympathetic to the cause. Five prisoners were later executed under personal order of Chiang Kai-Shek on April 27, 1970. According to recently disclosed documents, the Taiyuan Incident was no mere prison riot, but a deliberate act against the ruling Kuomintang regime and for Taiwan Independence.

In the aftermath of the incident, the "Oasis Villa" on the Green Island was built to strengthen the overall control over the island's political "otherness". All political dissidents were without exception sent to Oasis Prison. This is the departure point for Yao Jui-Chung's video work, a personal reflection on the place, its people and the nature of suppression as well as a satire on the ruling dictatorship that never failed to dream of a "Long, long Live".

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March-Past | Yao Jui-Chung

Single-channel video, color, sound, 2' 28", 2007

If the value of art depends on its stance in history, does the potency of art's challenge against society also validate its merit? One of my key topics in recent years is how I may reflect on life, when facing complex history and society, through an engagedness of art. In *March Past*, I attempted a satirical approach, dressing up as a colossal dictator, watching the military parade in front of a scaled model of Presidential Office in Longtan Window on China theme park. To the melodic marching music, I saluted the toy tanks passing incessantly the viewing platform. The intention is, through humour and absurd action, to highlight the overriding absurdity.

Mt. Jade Floating | Yao Jui-Chung

Single-channel video, color, sound, 1' 01", 2007

On the highest peak of Mt. Jade, also the highest in East Asia, could once be found a bust of Yu Youren, which had been decapitated twice and was eventually removed. Inspired by this, I dressed up as the Chinese paramount leader, levitated on top of Mt. Jade whilst waving to the music of National Flag Anthem, then disappeared in a glare in the style of Sung Chili (religious imposter). The imagery gives the impression of a mottled, old-fashioned 8mm film, apparently haunted by spectres of history; it ends abruptly, as if flashing a sly and ambiguous smirk amidst the blotchy fragments of times past.

Phantom of History | Yao Jui-Chung

Single-channel video, color, sound, 2' 28", 2007

After Chiang Kai-shek's decease in 1975, the whole Taiwan threw itself into a frenetic rush of idolatry. All types of statues sprang up everywhere to an astounding number of 50,000 and more. Since the abolition of martial law in 1987, many of Chiang's statues were removed, some of which were relocated to the Cihu Memorial Park and becomes a popular destination for Mainland Chinese tourists. In the video I was made up to look like a splitting image of Chiang, goose-stepping all alone in the park; birdsongs, blossoms and echoes of kicking boots were my only companions The future is nothing but uncertainty. History might be haunted autocrats, schemers, cynics, and hypocrites ...; the real demons are not from the external world but in the mind of every one of us. They are the 'Phantom of History' we have to confront and overcome.

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