

## Chi-Wen Gallery

### Film Screening - Burma : Inside the Land of Shadows by Chien-Chi Chang

Nov. 14 – 28, 2015



*Burma : Inside the Land of Shadows* , Single-channel Video Installation, 1080x1920p, 5min 37sec, 2011  
Courtesy of Chien-Chi Chang / Magnum Photos / Chi-Wen Gallery

Chi-Wen Gallery will present **Film Screening – Burma : Inside the Land of Shadows** by Taiwanese artist Chien-Chi Chang. The video will be on screen from Nov. 14 to 28, 2015.

In the past half century, Burma went from the richest country in Southeast Asia to the poorest, becoming one of the most obscure and obscured nations in the world. Burma is an anomaly. It's the most religious Buddhist country with every male entering the monastery at some point in his life to complete his monkhood. Along with Buddhism, fortune tellers and palm readers still have great influence on the people of Burma. Astrologers are treated like rock stars and publications touting predictions for coming years are among best sellers on newsstands.

In the past, the king was once guardian of the religion; today, the junta has assumed that role. Its military rulers operate with force and fear and with ubiquitous informers to control every aspect of life. Citizens are led to believe that every move they make is being watched and every word they said is being listening to. Foreign tourists, who are allowed to see the most Buddhist of peoples and pagodas, are reminded that behind the cultural façade stands the repressive regime that has held Nobel laureate democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi under house arrest for 15 of the past 21 years. Economists say the country has a "resource curse"—the rulers make money off resources but don't share the wealth. The average per capita income is \$US435. Burma, once the rice bowl of Asia was in tatters. According one source, Burma now exports a meager 20,000 tons of rice.

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When Chien-Chi Chang posed as a tourist to make these pictures, there always seemed to be shadows on his tail. Big Brother has many little brothers. Meanwhile the rest of Burmese continue to live through a real-life version of Animal Farm.

### About the Artist

**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 Biennial 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 2004-2011 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* (1992-2014) series was exhibited in the artist's mid-career survey *Doubleness* at the National Museum of Singapore in 2008, at the Taiwan Pavilion of the Venice Biennale in 2009 and City Museum in New York (2017). In 2007, Chang travelled with North Korean defectors from Northeast China to Thailand, documenting their lives for his work *Escape from North Korea* (2007-2011), which won the Canadian Anthrophoto 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.

### 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 and Tseng Yu-Chin among others.

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