

The tactical life model : reconfiguring the Chinese male body in performance and participatory art practice.

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Citation:

LING, Yuen Fong (2012). The tactical life model : reconfiguring the Chinese male body in performance and participatory art practice. In: Current Research into Contemporary East-Asian Visual Culture: Art-Design-Film-Photography, Tate Modern, London, 9th June 2012. (Unpublished) [Conference or Workshop Item]

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Current Research into East Asian Visual Culture

9 June 2012
Tate Modern

In recent decades, contemporary East Asian visual culture has become increasingly prominent on the international stage. While there has been a long-standing interest in contemporary Japanese visual culture as part of debates on the significance of modernism and postmodernism, growing attention is now being paid to contemporary visual culture in the People's Republic of China, Taiwan and South Korea as well that relating to East Asian diasporas around the world. The aim of this one-day conference at Tate Modern is to showcase current research into contemporary East Asian visual culture set against the background of major social, cultural, economic and political shifts that have taken place as a result of globalisation. It is hoped that new perspectives can be opened up on shared outlooks and differences within contemporary East Asian visual culture as well as on the impact of that culture within local and international settings.

*In collaboration with the Centre for Contemporary East Asian Cultural Studies
at the University of Nottingham, Chinese Arts Centre and the University of York*

- 10:30** **Welcome** by Marko Daniel
- 10:40** **Introduction** by Paul Gladston
- 10:55** **Chae Jung-Gyun** *Going East: Abstract Expressionism from a Korean Perspective*
This paper demonstrates how Pollock's interest in Buddhism, East Asian ideas and art was stimulated as early as the 1930s by comparative ethnological studies, popularised in the US. Close examination of Pollock's abstract paintings reveals that long before America exported its abstract art to Korea, a Korean aesthetic had been synthesised into American painting.
- 11:15** **Becky Kennedy** *Translocating Positions: Korean Artists Working in Britain*
This paper examines the phenomenon of South Korean artists who have relocated from Korea to the UK to pursue their artistic careers. The artists discussed present some of the same underlying themes in their work, which can be interrogated in relation to the translocation of the artist, their experiences of a new environment and the way this affects their visual expression and cultural production. Comparable themes include notions of: in-between-ness, cultural memory/nostalgia and feelings of alienation. These concepts are framed critically within discourses concerning diaspora.
- 11:35** **Yao Yung-Wen** *China's cultural diplomacy: A case study on the Chinese Pavilion at the Venice Biennale*
Culture is now considered to be a fundamental influence on the development of nation states, shaping the formation of national policies as well as the definition of national interests. In 2007, China's president stated that the country should strengthen its 'soft' (cultural) power as part of diplomatic relations with other nation states. Since then the promotion of Chinese culture overseas has become one of the primary tasks of China's foreign policy. This paper presents a critical case study of China's contribution to the Venice Biennale as an example of the use of contemporary art as an extension of China's emerging policy of cultural diplomacy.
- 11:55** **Yujin Min** *An introduction to Korean Diaspora Writing: A critical reading of 'Point, Lines, Encounters: The World According to Lee Ufan' by Joan Kee.*
By rethinking local scholarship on Modern Korean art, this presentation explores the reinterpretation of Lee Ufan's works from the diaspora's perspective. It will closely examine Joan Kee's recently published essay to show how opinions of the Korean diaspora can offer a significantly different analysis of his work.
- 12:15** Panel discussion and Q&A chaired by **Sally Lai**
- 12:45** Break

- 13:45 Ros Holmes** *Paper dreams: Visualizing 'civility' in Contemporary China*
This paper analyzes a set of contemporary artworks by the young artist Liu Gang (b.1983). Entitled *Paper Dreams* the photographs are based on a series of images appropriated from real estate advertisements featured in magazines, as well as the giant billboards which now form a ubiquitous component of Beijing's urban landscape. While many of the images appear to depict post-socialist China as a hyperbole of contemporary consumer society, their portrayal of *wenming* situates these works within the wider context of globalisation and emerging elite cosmopolitanisms.
- 14:05 Jing Meng** *The Reflexivity of Art: Representation of Red Art in Contemporary Chinese Independent Documentary*
This paper looks at two independent documentary films, *Painting for the Revolution: Peasants' paintings from Hu county* (2005) and *The Red Art* (2007) about the art and art production during the Cultural Revolution period, and will discuss the reflexivity of contemporary Chinese visual art. By re-evaluating the Cultural Revolution art, these documentaries provide us a unique perspective to see how contemporary Chinese artists understand art and their art practice.
- 14:25 Yuen Fong Ling** *The Tactical Life Model: Reconfiguring the Chinese Male Body in Performance and Participatory Art Practice*
This examination of recent art from China argues that the artist is increasingly returning the gaze, in which the seemingly problematic representation of the subservient body is a self-aware and nuanced presentation. Explored through the trials of a "British-Chinese" male artist's tentative re-framing of his own body and its reproduction.
- 14:45 Marco Bohr** *Deconstructing Voyeurism in Contemporary Japanese Photography*
This paper investigates the work of contemporary Japanese photographers Kohei Yoshiyuki, Nortitoshi Hirakawa and Hisaji Hara in relation to notions of voyeurism and scopophilia. The paper argues that their photographs relate to the politics of representation and a political desire to deconstruct and uncover the act of looking.
- 15:05** Panel discussion and Q&A chaired by **Michael White**
- 15:35** Coffee break
- 16:05 Kyung An** *The 'Tal' Syndrome: Korean Artist Collectives in the 1960s and 1970s.*
This paper examines the works of Korean artist collectives of the 1960s and 1970s, often placed post-Korean informal and pre-Korean Monochrome in the story of modern art in Korea. While the young nation grappled with rapid industrialization, dictatorship, anti-communist and anti-Japanese sentiments, these artists' practices traversed multiple traditions, at once temporal and geographical, renouncing the domineering machine of binary oppositions at play – national vs. international, centre vs. periphery, traditional vs. modern – from which the informal and the Monochrome inevitably failed to escape.
- 16:25 Chou Yu-Ling** *Cognition of Isolation: Cartography of the Non-Place in the Films of Chen Chieh-Jen*
Chen Chieh-jen was born in 1960 in Taoyuan, Taiwan. His films' subjects of journeys and returning, archival quest and destruction have become vital motifs. In his films the camera movement ultimately leads viewers into realms of isolation. I wish to discuss the theme of cognition of isolation in his films and its relation to Taiwan's geopolitics post-1960.
- 16:45 Wei Yu** *Taipei Broken Life: A Case Study of the Taiwanese Avant-Garde in the 1990s*
This research focuses on the iconic Taipei Broken Life Festival series and its relationship to Taipei County government during 1993 to 1995, examining the practices of a small group of young artists confronting cultural politics as Taiwanese alternative culture emerges following the lifting of martial law in 1987.
- 17:05 Yujie Zhang** *The social impact of art in public space- A Case Study of Shanghai CaoYang Village Public Art Project*
Whether public art is an ornament or use? Whether public art is only about an object or the process and experience of participation? How the public art impact to society? Caoyang Village Community public art project is a pioneer social intervention art project in Shanghai in order to explore these questions. It was organized by Fine art Collage of Shanghai University at 2009.
- 17:25** Panel discussion and Q&A chaired by **Wenny Teo**
- 17:55** Concluding remarks by **Marko Daniel**

Speakers

Kyung An

Kyung An obtained her BA (2007) and MA (2008) in history of art at Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London. Between 2008 and 2010, she worked at the Guggenheim Museum in New York, followed by the Tate Modern and the Serpentine Gallery in London, before commencing her PhD at the Courtauld Institute in 2010. Currently, she is the project coordinator at the Hayward Gallery in London for the tour of Move: Choreographing You to the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Korea, due to open in June 2012, and the curator of Written in Soap: A Plinth Project with the artist Meekyoung Shin in London. She will be presenting at the Between Tradition, Modernity and Globalisation: Korean Contemporary Art, an international conference this summer at the Courtauld Institute supported by the Arts Council in Korea.

Marco Bohr

Marco Bohr is a photographer, academic and writer on visual culture. His PhD thesis, awarded by the University of Westminster in 2011, investigates the emergence of a new generation of female photographers in Japan during the 1990s. After a three-months Visiting Fellowship at the Australian National University in Canberra, Marco was recently appointed Lecturer in Visual Communication at Loughborough University. Marco's blog on visual culture can be found at www.visualcultureblog.com.

Yu Ling Chou

Yu Ling Chou was a research assistant of *Taiwan Media Art Archives* project in the Graduate School of Arts & Technology at Taipei National University of the Arts. She was assistant curator of Chen Chieh-Jen's exhibition *Empire's Borders-Western Enterprises Inc.* at the Chinese Arts Centre in Manchester in 2009. In 2010 she co-curated *Plug in x Add on: Taiwanese Contemporary Art* with +8 at the Rag Factory. She is a PhD candidate at the London Consortium. Her research interests cover media art theory, video art and Art Cinema.

Yuen Fong Ling

Yuen Fong Ling (b.1972 Manchester UK) is an artist, currently Fine Art Practice-led PhD student at University of Lincoln (2007-ongoing) and Fine Art Lecturer at Sheffield Hallam University. Exhibiting artist and curator for a number of exhibitions including "Arrivals and Departures: New Art Perspectives from Hong Kong" Urbis, Manchester 2005.

Ros Holmes

Ros Holmes is a DPhil candidate in the History of Art Department at the University of Oxford. Her research examines how the discourse of wenming (meaning civilization or civility) is being visually constructed in China. Her research interests cover contemporary Chinese art, media and the politics of visual culture in China as well as Chinese contemporary politics and society. Prior to commencing the DPhil, she lived and worked in Beijing for over four years as an assistant curator at the Ullens Centre for Contemporary Art (UCCA) and at Boers-Li Gallery.

Chae Jung-Gyun

An MPhil research student in History of Art at York University, an artist and a qualified art teacher (South Korea). PhD research programme (Asian Influence on Abstract Expressionism, 08/09), MFA (2010) from Gray's School of Art (2010, Aberdeen). MFA, completed coursework of PhD in Art at KNU. The representative of the people chosen by the Ministry of Labour to present a business study to the President (2007). Ten times solo exhibitions. Lunch time talk on D. Hockney's painting at York Gallery (2011).

Beccy Kennedy

Beccy Kennedy is lecturer in Contemporary Art History at Manchester Metropolitan University and member of the Visual Culture research centre at MIRIAD. Her PhD was awarded there in 2009, on the topic of Korean diasporic art in Britain. Her MA from SOAS focused on Buddhism and contemporary Korean art. Recent projects have included organisational and curatorial involvement with Asia Triennial Manchester (2008, 2011) and various online visual arts journalism. <http://www.artdes.mmu.ac.uk/profile/bkennedy>

Jing Meng

Jing Meng is a PhD student in Film Studies at the University of Nottingham. She received her M.A. in Journalism from Peking University. She is currently researching on the representation of the historical period in Chinese films and TV dramas over the past decades, focusing on the changes in film practice and in society as a whole.

Yujin Min

Yujin Min is an independent curator and researcher in Modern and Contemporary Korean art. Her curatorial experiences include 'Good Morning, Mr. Name June Paik' (Korean Cultural Centre, 2008). In 2011, she was a participating curator of the 3rd edition of the Gwangju Biennale International Curator Course led by Ute Meta Bauer. She currently is an exhibition coordinator of the 7th Seoul International Media Art Biennale: Media City Seoul 2012

Wenny Teo

Lecturer, Courtauld Institute of Art

Wei Yu

Wei Yu is a PhD student at the London Consortium, researching Taiwanese avant-garde art in the post-martial law period. After obtaining his MA in Art History and Criticism he was a journalist, and editor of Artco magazine in Taiwan, 2005-07. His interests include contemporary art, urban culture, ruins and noise.

Yao Yung-Wen

Yao Yung-Wen is a PhD candidate at the University of Nottingham. Her research interests include China's cultural diplomacy and contemporary Chinese art. She gained her first MA in Chinese Cultural Diplomacy from Peking University before going on to complete her second MA in Cultural studies at Goldsmiths College, the University of London.

Yujie Zhang

Yujie Zhang is a lecturer at Fine Art College of Shanghai University. Currently she is a visiting scholar at Wolverhampton University. Her interests are mainly about contemporary public art practice. The project she has worked on including *Imagination of World Expo* art exhibition in Shanghai Art Museum in 2007, the Shanghai Cao Yang New Village regeneration public art project in 2008 and 2009, *Invisible city* metro line public art exhibition in 2010.

Organisers

Paul Gladston, Associate Professor in Culture, Film and Media, University of Nottingham

Sally Lai, Chief Executive of Chinese Arts Centre

Michael White, senior lecturer in History of Art at the University of York