

Shifting Times, Moving Images: Chen Xiaoyun

Opening 19 June 2021

Singapore, June 2021 – The second instalment in the series of screenings presents Chen Xiaoyun (b.1971), who works primarily with video and photography, as well as other mediums such as painting, sculpture, and installation. Entering the field of contemporary Chinese video art in its second phase, Chen is part of the shift from the initial ‘concept and installation’ approach of video art into a more diversified practice, when ‘new media art’ and ‘experimental clips’ began to rise in popularity and acceptance in the early 2000s.

Known for the poeticism in his early video works, Chen turned towards a more powerful and succinct visual language in the mid-2000s. Two of the works shown as part of the screening, *FIRE-3000KG* (2009) and *Night/2.4KM* (2009), features students burning a truck of books and migrant workers in a silent march respectively, examining the socio-political condition through the lens of a collective state of being. Chen’s casting of non-professionals to perform conceptual gestures is in contrast to Zhu Jia’s use of scripted acting and stage sets.

Chen continued to diversify his mode of narration in video art by overlapping text on images, weaving in layers of metaphors and symbolisms to construct visuals that overwhelm the senses. With this approach, the works *Evolutionary History of Syrup Cosmos* (2013) and *It Is Sunny In Spite of Burning Umbrella* (2013) push his images to an even more absurd and seemingly nonsensical level.

Across his video works, fragmented narratives portray parts of our reality while the audience are invited to fill in the context with their own knowledge. Forced to switch back and forth between a passive mode of watching and an active mode of reading, Chen’s video works stimulate a viewer in more ways than one is able to comprehend.

About Artist

CHEN Xiaoyun was born in Hubei Province in 1971. He currently works and lives in Beijing. CHEN Xiaoyun’s works are always both artistic and poetic in style, with introspective thinking present in the narrative structure as well as the use of individual fragments of consciousness to channel the real world in pictorial form. His works usually start with a caption, a dialogue, or a motion that is then overlapped, refined, and abstracted, to make our known world more ridiculous, hesitant, and emptier.

Recent major exhibitions include: Simultaneous Eidos, Guangzhou Image Triennial 2017, Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou (2017); CHEN Xiaoyun: 106 Flashes of Lightning That I Collect, ShanghART Main Space, Shanghai (2016); Post-sense Sensibility, Trepidation and Will, Beijing Minsheng Art Museum, Beijing (2016); CHINA 8, Contemporary Art from China at the Rhine and Ruhr, Lehmbrock Museum, Duisburg, Germany (2015); CHEN Xiaoyun: Twenty-one Poems of Lenin, ShanghART Main Space, Shanghai (2014); Hysteria, Metaphorical and Metonymical Life-World, A4 Contemporary Arts Center, Chengdu (2013).

About ShanghART Gallery

ShanghART Gallery was established in Shanghai in 1996. It has since grown to become one of China's most influential art institutions and a vital player in the development of contemporary art in China, representing over 60 pioneering and emerging artists, including DING Yi, LI Shan, Arin RUNGJANG, Melati SURYODARMO, Apichatpong WEERASETHAKUL, XU ZHEN®, YANG Fudong, ZENG Fanzhi, and ZHAO Renhui Robert.

ShanghART Singapore was established in 2012 as the gallery's Southeast Asia wing, located in the contemporary art cluster Gillman Barracks. The gallery's first overseas space serves as a platform to introduce Chinese contemporary art to the region while developing collaborations with Southeast Asian artists and bringing them to the international art scene.

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