艺术家/Artists: Inna ARTEMOVA, Stefano CAGOL, 曹雨, 陈秋林, Margret EICHER, 冯冰伊, 廖文峰, 龙盼, Kate McMILLAN, Danie MELLOR, 缪晓春, Kirsten PALZ, 邱岸雄, Nina E. SCHÖNEFELD, Shingo YOSHIDA, 赵仁辉, 周啸虎

策展人/Curators: David Elliott & Rachel Rits-Volloch

"露天放映"由李振华策划，与CIFRA平台合作
Open-Air Cinema curated by Li Zhenhua,
in partnership with CIFRA Platform

风景:未来的尘埃
LANDSCAPES OF FUTURES PAST
2025.7.17-9.21

嘉源海美术馆
JIR VURB HRI RRT MUSEUM
上海市嘉定区大治路39号
39 Dazhi Rd, Jiading, Shanghai

JIN

指导单位：嘉定区文化和旅游局 马陆镇人民政府
Advisory Organization: Jiading District Culture and Tourism Bureau
Malu Town People's Government

特别支持
Special Support
CIFRA

MANA synergies

the point

HE!.U

MOMENTUM
momentumworldwide.org
The global platform for time-based art

Curators:

David Elliott & Rachel Rits-Volloch

Artists:

Inna ARTEMOVA

Stefano CAGOL

CAO Yu

CHEN Qiulin

Margret EICHER

FENG Bingyi

LIAO Wenfeng

LONG Pan

Kate McMILLAN

Danie MELLOR

MIAO Xiaochun

Kirsten PALZ

QIU Anxiong

Nina E. SCHÖNEFELD

Shingo YOSHIDA

Robert ZHAO RENHUI

ZHOU Xiaohu

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Landscapes of Futures Past is an exhibition of contemporary video art, digital animation, installation, and traditional artistic media such as tapestry and painting, reframed through the lens of our digitized era. Bringing together artists from Australia, China, Denmark, Germany, ltaly, Japan, Poland, Russia, Singapore, and the U.K., the exhibition unfolds as a visual journey through the terrains and multiverses of time and space.

A landscape is a terrain, or a view of it, onto which we project our aesthetic, emotional, spiritual, and physical needs. What we perceive in the land is not only what is physically there, but also what we bring to it: a sense of history and a longing for future, as well as a desire for beauty, a feeling of identity and belonging, or a fear of the unknown, a drive for survival, a hunger for control.

The works shown here are vessels for stories that unfold across time, revealing how landscapes are not static scenes, but living archives of human presence, absence, imagination and desire. The paradox of "futures past" written into the exhibition's title evokes spaces where both timelines collide, where utopias are imagined and erased, where memories and myth become embedded in the ground beneath our feet.

Whether on a scientific or a metaphysical level, the understanding of time and space is most often a dichotomy between the circular and linear — between traditional and quantum cosmologies that view time as cyclical or fluid, and other frameworks that measure it as linear and progressive. This tension underpins the temporal dislocations in Landscapes of Futures Past, where imagined futures and ancestral pasts converge, collapse, and reconfigure the landscapes that we inhabit and that others will inherit.

The unspoilt rural landscape of Jiading and its subtle relationship with the architecture of Tadao Ando's new Jiayuanhai Art Museum, are active participants in this exhibition. The interplay of circular and linear elements in the museum's design mirrors the exhibition's meditation on time and space — where past and future fold into the present. More than a container for art, the museum itself acts as a perceptual frame, not only for the artworks but also for the landscape beyond, which its windows — and the exhibition — invite us to see anew.

Imagining the world's pasts, presents, and futures, the works in this exhibition offer layered narratives about what it means to be alive in times of transformation. As global populations expand and economies accelerate, the landscapes we inhabit grow increasingly fragile — physically, culturally, and ecologically. Through their poetic and critical engagement in the present, the artworks navigate the recursive cycles of possible futures alongside the fractured, often linear timelines, of the past to reveal how memory and foresight intersect.

Some works reach back into ancestral geographies, where the earth resounds with echoes of identity, ritual, and resilience. Others confront ruptures — colonial scars, forced migrations and environmental erasures — that fracture our connection with the landscape and cast shadows on our future and past. Through intimate storytelling, speculative fictions, and poetic observations, these works invite viewers to gaze into the gaps between personal and collective memory to examine the landscapes we still carry within us, as well as those we have left behind.

In the spaces between what has been, what was hoped for, what remains, and what is still to come, artists sow the seeds of forgotten futures and remembered pasts in the hope that new narratives will take root.

——David Elliott & Rachel Rits-Volloch

LANDSCAPES:

FUTURE, PAST, and points in between

DAVID ELLIOTT & RACHEL RITS-VOLLOCH

A landscape is a terrain, or a view of it, that we endow with aesthetic, emotional, spiritual, and physical qualities. Predominantly natural, it may reflect a sense of beauty, permanence and place, yet it is also subject to fluctuating pressures and changes. Natural phenomena, like the seasons, or events such as floods, droughts or earthquakes, recur within cycles. Yet other events are triggered by human intervention which, often unwittingly, despoils the ecology and environment upon which we and the landscape depend. However, in art the idea of landscape is primarily a projection of human desires, ideals, fears, and needs.

Since time immemorial, people have felt the need to connect with the landscape: to worship it, paint it and write poetry about it, to tame it and inhabit it, to manicure it into decorative gardens, and to harness it as a source of food, livelihood, and aesthetic pleasure. What we perceive in the land is not only what is physically there, but also what we bring to it: a longing for beauty, a sense of identity and belonging, a fear of the unknown, the drive for survival, and the hunger for control.

Landscape becomes a stage upon which we all – and artists especially - project meaning, memory, and imagination. It is shaped not only by geological and natural forces, but also by human vision—sometimes romanticized, sometimes exploited, always interpreted. We see in it sanctuary or danger, freedom or boundary, promise or loss, depending on what we seek or what we lack. Quite often, we see in it our childhoods, some fleeting connection to our vanishing past in the song of a bird, the rise of a hill, or a smell in the air. We are inextricably bound to the landscapes that have shaped us. They hold the sediment of our histories and carry the scent of our ancestral roots. In this sense, we are rooted in them—formed by their textures, their rhythms, the cycles of their seasons.

Yet modern life often pulls us away, leaving us uprooted, disconnected from the very places that once gave us identity. We drift across geographies, branching out into new terrains, instinctively searching for places to put down roots, while often longing for the roots of our past. Yet landscapes do not simply tie us to the past; they also propel us forward. They are the ground on which we build futures, the canvas for our aspirations, and the terrain through which we navigate change. In this sense, landscape is both an anchor and a horizon, at once a record of where we come from and a map of where we might go. Always a threshold between the past and the future, landscape is measured in two time frames at once; the geological time of shifting tectonic plates, and the all-too-fleeting human time, in which we leave our footprints upon the lands we inhabit.

As landscapes are a part of nature, it is in humanity's interest that our interactions with them are beneficial, yet, influenced by poverty, ignorance or greed, such logic rarely prevails. The extensive chains of connection that link the natural worlds within the universe are so complex, and our consciousness of them is so limited, that it seems impossible for us collectively to either understand or acknowledge the significance or scale of our impact. But still, we try – often by making art.

Scientific developments within Physics have addressed such uncertainties from different directions. In a formulation of fundamental concepts about how everything interacts, Quantum Theory views the world and universe from an atomic or molecular level at which both time and matter become fluid because the conditions that govern them are in flux. The Theory of Relativity examines the Universe from an opposite, macro scale in which the measurement and perception of space, time and motion is unfixed because each is relative to its changing frames of reference.

Time is, by definition, in a constant state of change, but we still study the past to understand the future, and, inevitably, our imagination of what this may be is informed by what we already know. Neither is there any consensus about the history of time: some people view it as a progressive line of improvement and modernisation, bolstered by expanding knowledge. Yet, experience indicates that we often forget more than we learn, and we know that high points of civilization have often coexisted with, or have been followed by, times of ignorance and barbarism.

Could this imply that humanity itself is essentially and ultimately destructive? If it is really the case that levels of knowledge fluctuate, and patterns of destruction and creation repeat themselves, is it possible that time may be best viewed as if it were a circle?

Different chains of reasoning reach similar conclusions: within Hinduism and Buddhism, time and fate are visualised as samsara, a vast wheel of life and death into which human souls are repeatedly reborn, or in Taoist belief in which the swirling confluence of the gendered energies of yin and yang, or the mountain-water attributes of Shan Shui, are decisive elements of harmony and balance. In Zen Buddhism, the circle appears as a simple, hand-drawn circle - an ensō that expresses emptiness, enlightenment, the absence of desire, and freedom.

But other, mainly western, cultures regard existence as a linear progression, based on the belief that consciousness is a temporary expression of human, animal (even vegetal) awareness that can only exist within an organic body and is therefore subject to decay. The cyclical renewal of life in birth, with its subsequent degradation by age, trauma, disease and death, has meant that, at a human level, this notion of time is drawn as an irreversible line, subjectively associated with the span of a life.

Whether on a scientific or a metaphysical level, the understanding of time and space is most often a dichotomy between the circular and the linear — between traditional and quantum cosmologies that view time as cyclical or fluid, and other frameworks that measure it as linear and progressive. Yet other cultures — such as those of the First Peoples of Australia — live within a cosmology of the perpetual present, where no distinct words for "time" or "future" exist across any of their 500 languages. In such worldviews, time is not something that flows forward or loops back, but is something that is embedded in place, story, and ancestral continuity.

Across cultures, time takes on radically different forms — experienced, measured, and narrated in ways that resist universal definition. It is as culturally relative as it is scientifically relative, echoing Einstein's insight that time is not absolute, but shaped by perspective and context. This tension underpins the temporal dislocations in this exhibition, where imagined futures and ancestral pasts converge, collapse, and reconfigure the landscapes that we inhabit and that others will inherit. It asks us to reconsider these landscapes not just spatially, but temporally—as layered, living archives where pasts, presents, and speculative futures coexist.

An exhibition predominantly of video art and digital animation, *Landscapes of Futures Past* examines how moving images become vessels for stories that unfold across time, revealing how landscapes are not static scenes, but living archives of human presence, absence, imagination and desire. Also featuring installations and soundscapes, *Landscapes of Futures Past* considers how, within separate narratives and from various perspectives, seventeen contemporary artists have expressed different manifestations of landscape and time in their work to provide unique insights into, and expressions of, both beauty and existential complexity.

The title itself is a paradox—neither a circle nor a line, but a temporal fold that invites us to consider how landscapes are never fixed in time, but shaped by the stories we tell about them: the ones we inherit, the ones we forget, and the ones we dream into being. Its temporal dissonance evokes spaces where the past and future collide, where utopias are imagined and erased, where memory and myth are embedded in the ground beneath our feet.

The unspoilt rural landscape of Jiading and its subtle relationship with the impressive architecture of Tadao Ando's new museum, have been enlisted as supporting and active elements of this exhibition. Just as moving images move us emotionally, architecture moves us spatially. The interplay of circular and linear elements in the museum's design mirrors the exhibition's meditation on time and space — where past and future fold into the present. More than a container for art, the museum itself acts as a perceptual frame, not only for the artworks but also for the landscape beyond, which its windows — and the exhibition — invite us to see anew. Ando's unique architectural vision for the Jiayuanhai Art Museum encompasses the concurrent circularity and linearity which is at once the condition of space and time, as well as the subject matter and the physical layout of the exhibition *Landscapes of Futures Past.*

At the museum's entrance, Inna Artemova, a Russian-born artist who has for several decades been resident in Berlin, has constructed *Utopia: Velocity Expanded* (2025), a large, new, site-specific, painting that enters into dialogue with the museum's architecture as well as with the landscape and history of its natural surroundings. Originally trained as an architect, Artemova admires how Tadao Ando's architecture has diverged away from

the modernist expression of power or control in order to create "a space for spiritual experience." For her, his buildings "are not Corbusier's 'machines for living' but environments for concentration and self-awareness".[1]

Influenced by the dynamic heritage of avant-garde Russian Constructivist architecture, her previous large-scale works were concerned with the alienation caused by the regimented ideas of new modernist utopias and, in reaction, she imagined "anti-utopias of modernist functionality and technological progress."[2] But her new work reverses this approach by integrating nature and landscape into images of hope and future that are here based on "Ando's vision of "architecture [as] a bridge between humanity and nature."[3] Ando is best known for an architectural approach that fosters a deep, contemplative dialogue between built form and landscape, where landscape is an integral element of the emotional and spiritual resonance of space. Time also is a focal point of his architecture, as Ando writes about his work: "it is hoped that the dialogue between the old and the new evoked therein will have the power to connect time from the past to the future."[4]

So too, is Artemova's depiction of "transitional states – moments when forms emerge and immediately dissolve…" that strengthen this bridge by fixing past cycles of nature and time in the present with a velocity that projects them into the future: "The architecture I paint is not stable or closed – it is in motion, elastic, fragmented, and in the process of being formed anew ….I ask myself: what could a new relationship between

---

[1] Inna Artemova, typescript letter to the authors, May 2025.
[2] Inna Artemova, Ibid, May 2025.
[3] Inna Artemova, Ibid, May 2025.
[4] Inna Artemova, Ibid, May 2025.

architecture and nature look like?" [5] The answer is her new painting, made specially for this exhibition, that is built on the past in order to depict a landscape of both present and future that combines the museum's architecture with the cycles and energies of the nature that surrounds it. It is a painting that redefines beauty as a dynamic, symbiotic, chaotic and, above all, hopeful balance.

Hope also features, although in a more sardonic and condensed form, in Cao Yu's short film *Escape off the Edge of the Human World* (2021). Here we see a poetic allegory of the human condition, and a bittersweet parable of the mutability of existence that repeats in a four-minute cycle. Beginning and ending amongst the relentless waves of an ominously dark ocean, it depicts a fish tank stranded on the threshold between the land and sea. The tide rises, the shore becomes ocean and the tank is submerged in the sea; but what of the golden fish confined inside it? The only spot of bright glowing colour in a grey world, translucent in its fragility, it stares straight ahead at the encroaching ocean, swimming along the thin glass walls of its enclosed landscape. As the barrier between it and the outside world becomes ever more tenuous, we cannot help but be torn between a desire for the little fish's escape – and fears for its survival in the harsh realities of the stormy sea. Do we – as the saying goes – want to be big fish in a small familiar pond, or small fish set loose in the vastness of the ocean? As the earth spins, the cyclical movement of the tides continues, just as these same dilemmas will always continue to present themselves.

The work of Beijing-based artist Miao Xiaochun also addresses the cyclical continuity of life: the cycles of history, the rise and fall of civilisations, and the extinction, survival, and rebirth of cultures. A leading pioneer of digital animation in China, his consistent quotations of a diversity of masterpieces from art history, always reimagining them through modern technologies and contexts, is a way of bringing the past, present and future together. By transposing the compositions and emotional intensity of the western canon of old master paintings

---

[5] Inna Artemova, Ibid, May 2025.

and classical music into a contemporary Asian context, he creates arcs of incident and images of action that reflect how, whatever their origins, artists have always reacted to the times and places in which they live.

In an increasingly virtual and technologically mediated world, when access to art, music and literature has become universally available, Miao challenges conventional notions of authenticity, authorship, and the future role and place of humanity. Yet, in art, repetition has often been a necessary first step to innovation, and Miao illustrates, as do the works by a number of other artists in this exhibition, how creative synergy may be derived not only from the stimulus of other art, but also from that of literature, architecture, popular culture and music. In this expanded field of references, new visions of the future take shape; hybrid, recombinant, and deeply reflective of our mediated present.

In an investigation of the relationship between art history and contemporary digital culture, with the music of Franz Schubert's romantic Symphony No.8, (The Unfinished, 1822) playing in the background, Miao

Xiaochun's animation *Limitless* (2011-12) is composed of 18 scenes designed around compositions by the artists Giovanni Bellini (1430-15160), Caravaggio (1571-1610), Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528), Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840), Francisco Goya (1746-1840), Edvard Munch (1865-1944), Titian (1488/90-1576), Paul Cézanne (1839-1906) and Bill Viola (1951-2024), in dialogue with quotations from contemporary popular culture.

Opening with the bucolic idyll of livestock foraging in a wooded mountainous landscape in beautiful dawn light, this timeless pastoral scene is suddenly occupied by the artist's futuristic avatars; transparent silhouettes of the artist's body, traced out of flowing energy lines, at times disintegrating, at others breakdancing. A plane flying through a reconstruction of a classical painting - a possible "Last Supper" repopulated by multiples of the artist poised over a sumptuous banquet - sprays pesticides onto the feast. Floating in a space capsule, the artist rediscovers how to make fire, while robotic avatars build more of themselves. Animals invade the digital world of the avatars, while they dream of crucifixions. Avatars made out of petroleum fly around an oil rig, while others made of translucent water gaze out over a golden landscape into the sunset, bringing us full circle with the beginning.

Celebrating humankind's achievements and failures, hopes and threats, this strange sequence of events is multiplied through repetition. Within the nearly infinite permutations of *Limitless*, it seems, there are no boundaries between past and future, life, death, heaven, purgatory or hell where the human and the virtual soul confront each other in a paradoxically beautiful world of ignorance, indifference, cruelty, pollution and threatened extinction.

Limitless uncovers an unsettled universe where infinite mutability competes with chaos in an interconnected torrent of simultaneous ideas. In four sardonic, surreal, humorous, potentially tragic, and "limitless" loops shown on adjacent vertical screens, unsynchronised images unfold in a multiplicity of sequences and viewpoints. While the videos playing on each screen are identical, the disjointed sequence in which they are played means that the images never line-up in the same way twice. Though the footage is the same, the de-synchronisation fractures linear time, creating a sense of temporal dislocation and multiplicity. This endlessly shifting configuration evokes the idea of a multiverse—a reality composed not of a single, fixed timeline but of countless parallel possibilities.

These echoing timelines suggest that we do not inhabit a singular, fixed present, but rather coexist across multiple planes of reality—sliding between potential pasts and speculative futures. In this looping, layered installation small shifts constantly create nearly infinite permutations of new contexts and new narratives; and time, like landscape, is no longer singular but kaleidoscopic. This work visualises the fragmentation of time and narrative in the digital age, where memory, identity, and history are no longer linear but constantly re-edited and reframed. The repetition-with-variation structure — a cycle of echo and deviation, an ever-evolving refrain — reflects the recursive nature of human attempts to understand the past or imagine the future: always revisiting, never arriving.

Comingling the pictorial languages of digital culture and art history in a different way, Berlin-based artist Margaret Eicher reanimates what is often regarded as the antiquated art form of tapestry into an undeniably contemporary expression in which icons of popular culture appear in montage with compositions of classical art. Invoking the historical significance of tapestries as signifiers of wealth and power, her works feature the superstars of today combining contemporary characters from film and television, advertising and the music industry with video games and the vast digital image archive of the internet. These digital collages are then woven on Jacquard Looms into textile tapestries.[6] Eicher's resulting Media Tapestries move therefore in a hybrid manner between digital and textile; between mystical narratives and complex media worlds.

Like Miao Xiaochun, Margret Eicher presents images from well-known western masterpieces within a contemporary context. The "classical" composition of her tapestry *Then We Take Berlin* (2018) also comments wryly on environmental change and contemporary consumerism, but here in the context of the chaotic history of Central Europe. The aggressively armoured warriors set in a verdant forest "paradise" are the four Teenage

Mutant Ninja Turtles, quasi-Asian cartoon characters and pop culture icons. The art-historical quotations that underlie all of Eicher's work, are here humorously alluded to in the names of the four characters central to the composition - Leonardo, Donatello, Raphael, and Michelangelo.[7] The paradox within the imagery of this work deepens, as they are gathered in a forest on the outskirts of Berlin before a solitary, now-derelict "palace" perched atop a man-made hill constructed from the rubble of the city's wartime destruction. Once a Cold

War military listening post, the structure now stands abandoned, its past half-buried beneath layers of historical amnesia. The forest, meanwhile, persists — rendered here as an unnaturally verdant, almost classical image of a timeless paradise. And yet, this constructed Eden is rooted in catastrophe; its only remaining inhabitants are aging icons of mass consumer culture and a hive of bees.; but can they alone sustain life on our venial planet?

Within this, as in other examples of Margret Eicher's Media Tapestries, space and time intertwine and appropriated imagery is recontextualized as she weaves new stories of present futures past. Eicher's recent work *Ice Age* (2024) references the composition of a famous painting of the jagged Arctic icepack made in 1823-24 by the German romantic painter Caspar David Friedrich.[8] Its discordant colours and fragmented forms,

---

[6] The Jacquard Loom, its binary punch-card technology dating back to the turn of the 19th century, is widely considered to be a prototype of the computer.

[7] Created as comic book brothers at the beginning of the 1980s the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* franchise has subsequently spawned video games, toys, animated and action films, music, food, and many other products.

[8] *Das Eismeer*, (1823-24), oil on canvas, 96.7x126.9cm., Kunsthalle Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany.

however, not only refer to current global warming and the shrinking of the ice mass, but also to the way in which this previously inaccessible polar region now attracts increasing international attention as the melting of its waters present unforeseen economic opportunities and threats.

Also situated amidst the majestic Arctic icecaps is Japanese artist Shingo Yoshida's film *The end of day and the beginning of the world* (2015). Here, he brings together a lyrical documentation of an imperilled way of life with a poetically literal form of time-travel: flying through the Arctic to the North Pole, Yoshida is heading for the 180° meridian - the International Date Line - that marks the man-made boundary between two successive calendar days. With one foot in the icy landscape of yesterday and the other in tomorrow, Yoshida straddles the International Date Line to simultaneously inhabit both the future and the past. Collapsing temporal layers, *The end of day and the beginning of the world* is both an elegy and a prophecy: it beckons us to reconsider the landscapes we inherit - not as eternal backdrops, but as fragile intersections of memory and myth within the unfolding legacy of severe ecological change.

The film opens with the roar of a small aircraft, abruptly shifting us into a stark, near-monochrome tundra. Yoshida's contemplative lens lingers on intimate details: the rhythmic breath of reindeer fur, tents of local Chukchi people billowing over simmering fires, ice fissures traversing barren expanses, and moments of communal ritual. Shooting his film in the Russian Far East, specifically in the Siberian regions of Chukotka and Beringia, Yoshida was inspired by its local raven legends and ceremonies and he shares with us the ancient and vanishing shamanistic beliefs of its indigenous peoples and their unmediated contact with raw nature. As a mark of gratitude, and as a prayer for protection on his way home, he offers meat and bread as sacred offerings to both nature and the ravens. Accompanying him through this poetic landscape, on what is as much a

pilgrimage as a journey through space and time, we discover an inhospitable, hidden and threatened ecology, where time ebbs away, magic is still meaningful, and nature is under severe threat.
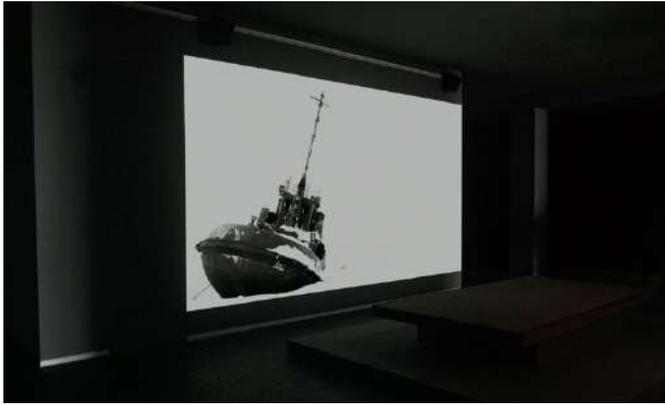
In another kind of artistic intervention upon the extremes of threatened nature, Italian artist Stefano Cagol confronts the encroaching realities of climate collapse through an ongoing series of durational video performances that transform environmental crisis into symbolic action. "With astonishment and danger, I move through shocking and wonderful manifestations of nature in extreme conditions, heat and frost, on the edge of crevasses… [I reveal its] destruction with ecological love,"[9] writes Stefano Cagol about *We Are The Flood* (2022-present). In this series of humanity-incriminating, multi-site, video-performances, he engages in solitary interventions upon nature in remote parts of the earth, reflecting and revealing both "resistant pieces of paradise and places that suffer devasting ecological impacts."[10] His video performances, made in a ubiquitous black suit - that he ironically describes as "a bit mystical and shamanic, a bit punk and exorcising" - are poetic metaphors for the cleansing of an ailing planet.[11] With a smoking flare in one hand and a drone remote control in the other, like a kind of contemporary "shaman", Cagol reveals ecological crises across the "Four Corners of the Earth" in scenes of parched deserts, ravaged primordial jungles, melting thousands-year-old icebergs, arid wastelands, and ancient monuments that are spread across Egypt, Greenland, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Malaysia.

No longer a premonition of natural disaster to come, Cagol's work is a clarion call to act now against a climate crisis that has already arrived. Using warning flares designed to signal danger, Cagol's interventions within a diversity of landscapes are an SOS signal for a planet in crisis. What were predictions of future climate disaster in past decades have, within our lifetimes, become manifested as lived reality: in rising seas, burning forests, and

vanishing glaciers that render our past fears into urgent, visible truth. With his flaming red flare raised high, Cagol's performative actions, transformed into video artworks, are an all too urgent cry for help – help that must arrive without delay, before the many warnings that the past has issued become irreversible in the future.

---

[9] Stefano Cagol, *We Are The Flood*, Milan, Postmedia Books, 2024, inside front cover.
[10] Ibid, back cover.
[11] Ibid.

British/Australian artist Kate McMillan's video installation *The Past is Singing in our Teeth* (2017/25) is also steeped in a shamanistic ritual of her own invention. Interweaving real and imagined histories and dreams of her mother, and of a young girl played by the artist's daughter, this intergenerational "fairy tale" fills the gaps in memory that time and migration have left to the imagination. McMillan believes that "artworks, objects, and even smells can serve as an 'umbilical cord' stretching back in time, thus functioning as an intermediary into the past."[12] In this case, the past is a fictional reinvention of histories and memories lost to past generations.

---

[12] Kate McMillan, "The Past is Singing in Our Teeth," in *Kate McMillan*, Berlin, MOMENTUM, 2017, p. 11.

The Past is Singing in our Teeth approaches this by reconstructing a labyrinth of lost things through a video performance that envisions a lost archive of women's knowledge, the remembrance of which is triggered by the exploration of objects and landscapes.
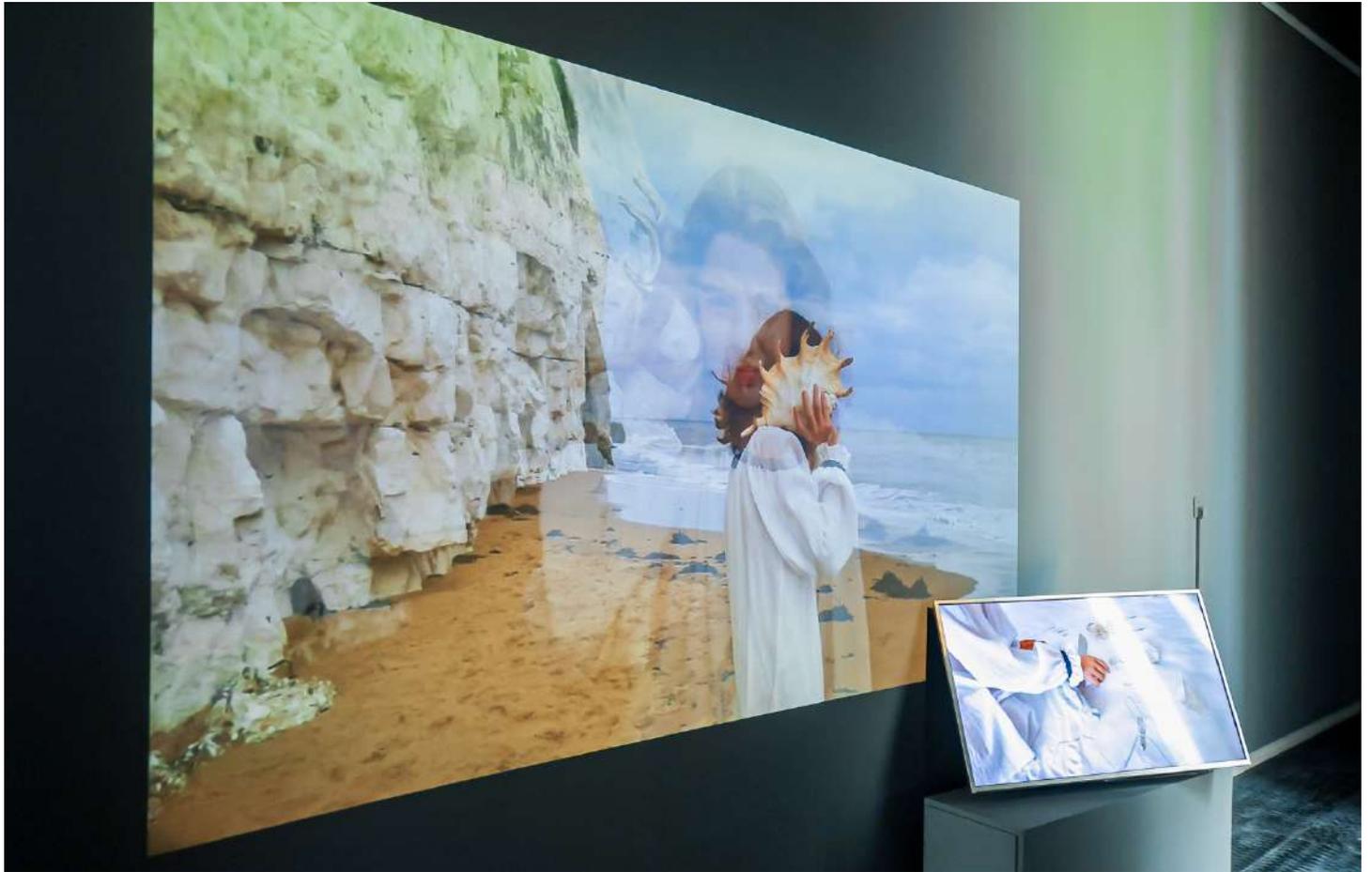
Filmed in four diverse landscapes in Britain, this work unfolds as a visual poem interwoven across two asynchronous videos, whose images continuously interlace in ever-changing patterns that never repeat. In the larger projection, a ghostly girl appears and disappears on a windswept beach beneath looming cliffs. Collecting seashells, she holds a conch shell to her ear to "listen to the memories of the ocean's song". This translucent girl appears again in the landscape beside a lake, and amongst the trees of a sun-dappled forest. Wearing a "spell gown" with a silver necklace studded with her own baby teeth, she carries the sculptural instruments that were used to make the soundtrack of this work. These ritualized objects, created by the artist from artifacts related to her own memories and past, become the focus of the second video, in which the same young girl plays with hag stones and sculptures,[13] while the artist's hand comes into view, writing new stories and re-writing histories, in the incomprehensible shorthand of her mother's handwriting.

---

[13] A Hag Stone is a stone that has a naturally occurring hole through it. Such stones were, and sometimes still are, believed to have magical properties. These supposedly include the ability to heal snake bites or. by looking through the hole, to see through the disguise of a witch or fairy.

Within this evocative work McMillan "traces the journey of a young girl as she rediscovers a lost heritage of

knowledge and power …. [by] stitching together a re-creation of memory …. with what remains physically in the present - objects, ephemera, locations and sounds."[14] In its construction of a poetic palimpsest of imagery, this work amplifies the unseen and articulates the way memory inflects and informs the present, not as a series of linear and knowable narratives, but as an ambiguous, constantly changing, beautiful and haunting residue of the past. In so doing, it embodies how we are all rooted in the landscapes of our own histories.

The idea of time travel, or history, as an inter-generational journey also appears in the works of Chengdu-based artist Chen Qiulin. Her early videos signal the passing of an era by showing how the swathes of demolition caused by the construction of the vast Three Gorges Hydroelectric Project impacted not only on the landscape through its remodelling of nature and demolition of old towns and villages, but also on the lives of the people who lived there. The Wanzhou district in Sichuan Province, where the artist had grown up, became for a time the main subject of her work, but the Hydroelectric Project itself rarely figures because she was primarily focused on "the changes of one small place over time – including the people and everything else surrounding them – in order to examine what exactly was going on in China at a time of rapid development."[15]
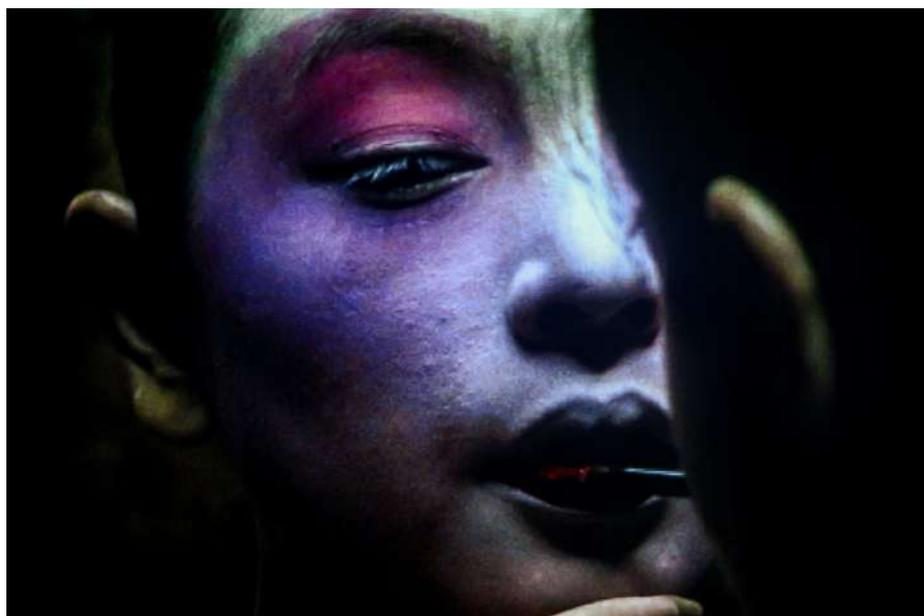
As its title suggests, Chen Qiulin's film *Farewell Poem* (2002-2007) has an intense elegiac quality: the demolition of the old town of Dachang had already begun and people were starting to move. Chen Qiulin's filmic collage of poetic juxtapositions captures the daily life of a town on the threshold between past and future, remembrance and oblivion. Recording both a way of life and its absence, the artist performs in the empty places already filled with ghosts, moving through the debris of her hometown. Interlaced throughout the film, in both sound and image, are the actors of a travelling Peking Opera company whose rendition of the traditional romantic tragedy Farewell my Concubine in the ruined buildings, intercut with the continuing bustle and life of the river, strikes a timeless note of honour, love, and fortitude. Enabling the past to survive into a transformed present and future, she dedicated this film to her parents and "to the people like them who lived on that land."

---

[14] Kate McMillan, "The Past is Singing in Our Teeth," in Kate McMillan, Berlin, MOMENTUM, 2017, p. 11.

[15] Chen Qiulin, interview with Monica Merlin, 798 Café, Beijing, 25 November 2013.

Chen's video *Peach Blossom* (2009) was made in Wenchuan, a city in Sichuan that had just been ravaged by an earthquake, the ruins of which provided its setting. She wanted to draw attention to the recent disaster there and the plight of the people who had suffered it, but as in her earlier work, she also wished to express the impact of the shock of a ravaged environment on the lives of the people who lived there. Her approach was poetic and symbolic in its overlapping of historical and contemporary tales of the courtship and marriage of a young couple set against a backdrop of ruined factories, shanty towns, and the beautiful mountains that surround them. The man who reappears throughout the film as the bridegroom carries a bouquet of peach blossoms that are believed to express beauty, fertility, good fortune and long life.

Against a backdrop of gruelling manual labour, of people made homeless, and the start of reconstruction, in a flexible timescale that could cover several centuries, we see loneliness, sadness, beauty and desolation, as well as the persistence of love. Flowers bloom even amongst the rubble, but not a word is said. The homeless in shanty towns try to re-establish themselves as the narrative alternates between stability and sadness, domesticity and hardship; the bride and groom haunt the ruins coming ever closer, but not speaking, until eventually they stand together. At times theatrical, with the pace and timbre of Peking Opera, this work is also a testimony to the reality of hardship and to how people overcome it, while at the same time, it is a tribute to a lost way of life, and to the way in which timeless stories will always be repeated.

The question of manmade hardship and the way it transforms futures and leaves scars on the environment also appears in the works of Jiangxi-based artist Long Pan, who focuses on different systems within nature and on how these have been disrupted by industrial pollution. For almost three decades, coastal cities in China have been profitably engaged in the importation of international electronic waste for reprocessing, which has led to serious environmental pollution: heavy metals have already entered the biological and food chains to such an extent that plants, animal and human bodies now all absorb them.

Long Pan's two-channel video installation *Wind Bell* (2021) poetically illustrates this disquieting point by showing how the process of phytoextraction enables copper to be obtained from wild plants and other organic bodies that have been contaminated by electronic waste. The video documents how Long Pan copper from polluted reeds in Guiyu, Guangdong Province, China – widely considered to be the world's largest electronic waste site. In a form of aesthetic alchemy, using phytomining technology (recycling metal from plants that accumulate metals), Long Pan melted the extracted copper into a small ceremonial bell.

Projected on a large screen in a continuous loop, the video *Wind Bell* portrays a solitary bell, reverberating through nature amid the timeless rustle of wind in the reeds. As a potent symbol of recuperation, vulnerability, and warning, the bell evokes not only the alienation and contamination of the environment but also the enduring resilience of nature in the face of pollution. At the same time, it highlights the stark contrast in temporal scales—between the seemingly indestructible mineral form and the fragile, fleeting span of organic and human life.

The work of Kirsten Palz, a Danish, Berlin-based conceptual artist, is also concerned with the relentless pollution of our planet and how it still remains widely unacknowledged. Using language as a form of sculpture, and with a basis in scientific research, her work addresses the pernicious interconnections between industries such as chemical and pharmaceutical, destructive consumption patterns, and the accelerated degradation of the Earth's ecosystems. Kirsten Palz's video *IMPACT* (2023-25), which has its premiere in this exhibition, transmits a clear and alarming message about the global use of 785 different pesticides in both nature and agriculture. She

has compressed these widely used substances into a litany of chemical names, formulae, and classifications that are framed in emphatic red squares and superimposed over AI-generated images of diverse landscapes and cityscapes. Here, surreal, "larger-than-life" environments are merged with evidence of the fragile state of natural ecosystems that have already been severely affected by pesticide use. Together these give a strident warning about a global problem, as well as an urgent plea for help for poisoned environments.

Palz's conflation of chemical data with landscape also invites viewers to reflect on the conflict between human needs, those of commerce and those of the natural world, against the background of our demand for, and dependence on, harmful pesticides. Watching this work within the still unspoilt rural landscape that surrounds the Jiayuanhai Art Museum, emphasises the damaging potential of our dependence on such toxic chemicals: this may feed us in the present but starve us, and others, in the future.

The themes of climate change, the destruction of biodiversity and the ever accelerating rate of species extinctions central to Kirsten Palz's practice, are also the urgent concerns that resonate deeply in the work of Singapore-based artist, Robert Zhao Renhui.

Approaching this question from an historical and cultural angle, Zhao is particularly interested in what he describes as "threshold states" that he relates to the connection between migration patterns and the extinction of different species, as both involve the crossing of boundaries or thresholds. But the critical difference between them is that migration is instinctively cyclical, while extinction – until recent scientific advances - is all too linear in its finality. Using aesthetic and poetic means, he scrutinises this question, as well as the integrity of scientific methodology.

Robert Zhao Renhui's work *A Monument to Thresholds* (2020), an installation of found objects, books, prints, texts and video, balances a narrative of two past extinctions with two potentially beneficial "invasions" in a

challenge to clichéd thinking about the deterioration of nature and its reversal. In this, he elaborates four different "thresholds": The first - The death in Cincinnati Zoo (on 1. September 1914), of the last known Passenger Pigeon, once one of America's most common birds. The second - The killing (on 3 July, 1844) of the last pair of Great Auks, for food or bait, by two fishermen on Eldey Island, Iceland. The activities of hunters, early museums, and private collectors had all contributed to these birds' early decline. The third - Volunteers depositing 114 tons of clams onto the mudflats at Dandong at the mouth of the Yalu River in the winter of 2017, in order to replenish their severely declining numbers. Clams had traditionally fed Godwits and Great Knots on their migratory flights between Australia and Siberia. Lastly, the fourth threshold - The recent rapid international spread of Zebra Mussels, originally native to Russia and Ukraine, via discarded ballast-water from European cargo ships. The mussels have a bad reputation as an invasive species that crowds out native fish and damages harbour and waterway infrastructure. But, under certain circumstances, they may have a positive impact on the environment because they thrive in the most polluted waters and, by feeding there, help clean it from contaminants.

Zhao's video *We Watch Them Disappear*, embedded within this installation, documents his own visit to the wetlands of the Yalu River in April 2019 to observe the birds' annual gathering during what is the longest non-stop avian migration in the world. Over the past ten years their number has seriously declined, but the crowds of people who go there to observe them continues to grow, as they admire the hypnotic patterns of their murmurations at each high tide when they land and gather there to feed.

In this work and others, Zhao elaborates the poetic paradox that extinction is one of the few ways in which the cyclical alliance between nature and time is broken, yet, once something is established as an event in the past,

its fate inevitably seems to presage the future. However, as Zhao implies in this work, this situation may not be as terminal as it seems: looking into the near future at a time when the technology and biology of de-extinction are already being explored, the finality of extinction itself may well soon be in question.

Zhao's artistic vision collapses temporal boundaries between past ecosystems, present interventions, and speculative futures. He invites us to consider the theoretical afterlives of the natural world: What do we choose to preserve, and why? What versions of the past do we project onto ecological futures? And how might we live differently by reimagining the stories we tell about the land? Through his layered, often eerie portrayals of flora and fauna, Zhao constructs a world in which nature is not only seen, but narrated, archived, and mythologized, by offering a poignant meditation on what it means to inhabit a world on the brink of ecological transformation.

Inhabiting the world in a totally different way – through a subtle surrealistic humor – Berlin-based artist Liao Wenfeng constructs visual play-spaces where the boundaries between object, body, concept and environment are humorously and thoughtfully explored. With minimal setups and poetic actions, each short-form, mute video performance investigates notions of resistance, balance, absurdity, and time. *Minute Gestures* (2015-16), an installation of 5 short video performances out of a series of hundreds, focuses on the relationship between action, image and perception in works that document different "natural landscapes". Liao achieves this through visual illusion, puns, art historical references, subtle yet absurd gestures, and simple child-like logic that reveal the "unnatural" qualities inherent in what we perceive as time and nature.

In *The relatively motionless second* (2015) Liao appears to make time stand still by gently rotating a clock through one minute so that its second hand seems to remain at the same spot. His two-channel video

Radically nodding or shaking the head in front of a landscape (2016) suggests a conflictual, neo-romantic relationship with life and nature in two identical views of the back of his head as he gazes at a sunset: in one he frenetically nods, presumably in admiration, in the other he seems to desperately shake his head as if in rejection or disgust.

Within his gentle world of potentially useful Duchampian ready-mades, he leapfrogs across a river using two chairs as stilts, walks across the sky by lying on his back and filming his feet moving in the air, or extends the length of a country pathway by climbing over a step ladder he has carried with him and leaving it behind for others. In ingenious and witty ways, his works reveal what often remains unseen: the potential poetry and paradoxes that lie hidden within daily life.
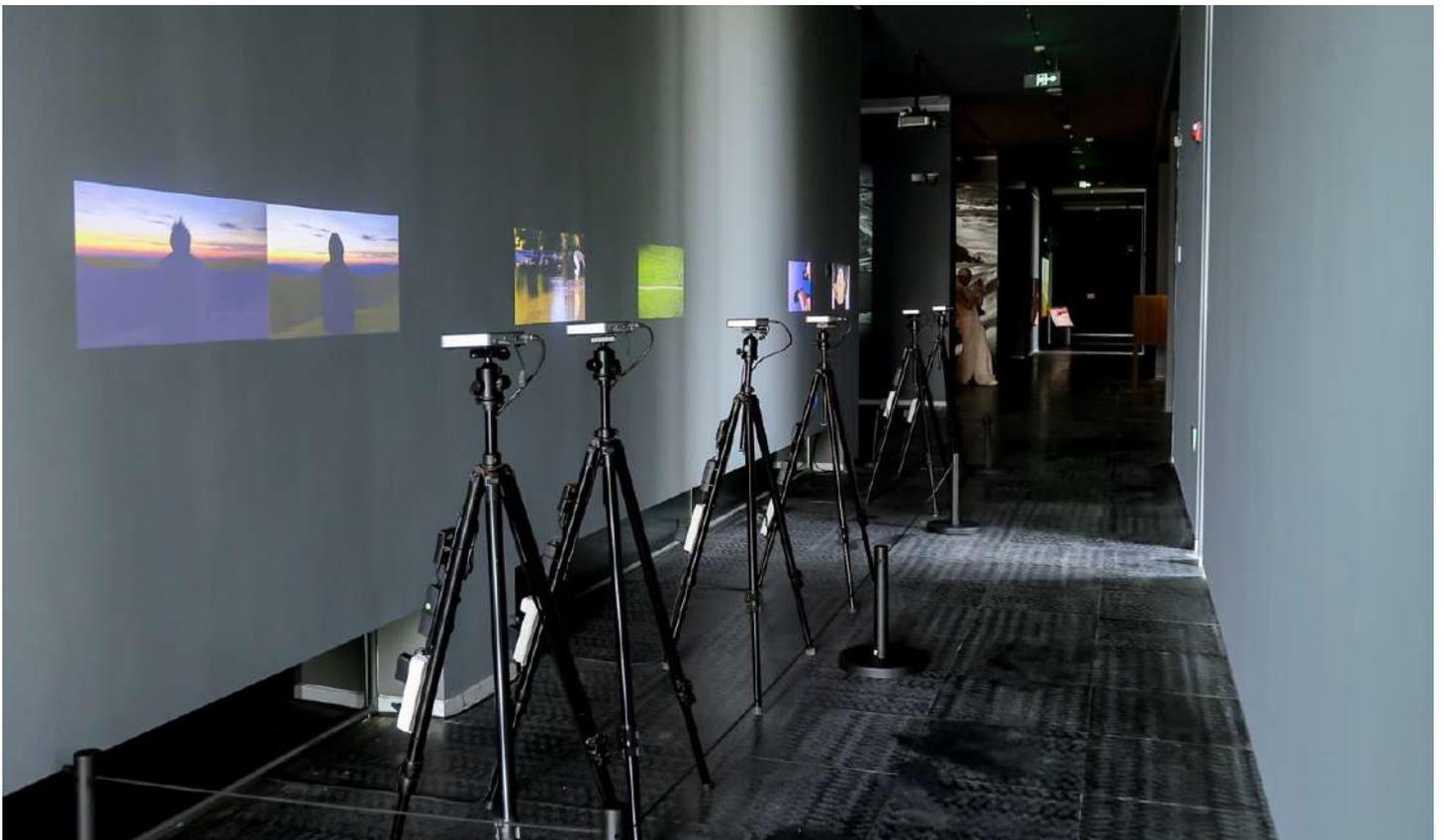
Also surreal in her approach, but examining paradoxes on a much more cosmic scale, Shanghai-based artist Feng Bingyi uses the language of film to delve into the substance of space and time. Challenging conventional time-based narratives, Feng's 2-channel video installation *MOMO* (2016), is loosely based on the eponymous

heroine of German author, Michael Ende's 1973 fantasy novel *Momo*, or the strange story of the time-thieves and the child who brought stolen time back to the people.[16] But Feng's Momo, a young girl of mysterious origins, escapes the time-thieves by regarding both the future and the past as a single state of being – as a wrinkle in time which enfolds countless other pasts and futures – a state emphasised in this work by the lack of synchronization between its two channels that creates a continuous confluence of new imagery that may never be repeated.

Much as the literary basis of this artwork is a fantasy of travel through time and space, so Feng Bingyi invokes the quantum principles of parallel universes to create a character who can encompass many futures and pasts within herself. As the work unfolds, we watch Momo speak soundlessly, perhaps narrating the tale of a mountaineer lost amongst the snowy peaks above the clouds. While on the adjoining screen, this timeless woman, existing in two places at once, walks alone through eerily empty landscapes and waterfronts: through tidal flatlands, endless fields, with waves gently lapping along beaches, under stars twinkling in a dark sky like the flows of lava that once marked the earth's beginning and will mark its end. Such cyclical landscapes of tide following tide, of day following day, and of creation following destruction, enact a perpetual replay of futures past.

The film's script contains many conclusive, illuminating and contradictory statements, such as: "I swear there is absolutely no chaos in this world. Not now, not in the past, and not in the future. Order exists in the middle of chaos, and Momo exists in the middle of order….".

---

[16] *Momo oder Die seltsame Geschichte von den Zeit-Dieben und von dem Kind*. This novel was also known in English as *The Grey Gentlemen*.

"Momo is a person who is not limited by time and space, being both our oldest ancestor and a contemporary; it could also be said that she is from the time of the world's origin and the Earth's formation and also from that of the universe's ultimate destruction.". "And finally, then what? I now ride on billions of torn molecules experiencing a myriad of possibilities. I am Momo herself - and you too. I exist in space and time, I am both the fragments and the whole subject, and our story will never end."[17]

Here, the hopefulness of Feng's space-time continuum is related to the mutability of time proposed by Albert Einstein's Theory of Relativity and reflected in the timeless landscapes that appear in her film. In such places, like in the portraits of *MOMO* herself, transformations between past, present and future occur continuously, and remain forever evanescent.

Shanghai-based artist Qiu Anxiong also addresses the topic of travel through time and space through a literary adaptation of a different sort in his recent animation "*Tian Zhi Xiu Yue*" (*Close to Heaven, Fix the Moon*, 2023). Best known for his experimental animated drawings made in the style of traditional Chinese ink painting, this work is Qiu's first use of coloured inks, a reference in itself, to times past, as he has adopted the colour scheme of the traditional Chinese blue-green landscape painting[18] that was already well established by the Tang Dynasty (618-907). The story on which Qiu bases this film, which he has transformed into one of the earliest examples of "science fiction", also dates from the same time.[19]

---

[17] Feng Binyi, text of *Momo*, edited from a typescript document supplied by the artist.
[18] qinglv 青綠.
[19] The animation's subject is inspired by Duan Chengshi's notebook novel "Youyang Zazu," also from the Tang dynasty, with the main plot coming from the "Tian Zhi" section of its first volume.

Two scholars get lost while wandering in the mountains and encounter a person in white who claims to have come from the moon. He tells them facts that we attribute to modern astronomical research about its shape and material composition and about how its light is derived from the sun's reflection. He also mentions that 82,000 households are now living there working on its maintenance, and he is one of them.[20]

In his recycling of this story, Qiu has enlisted Einstein's "Twin Paradox" illustration of the relativity between time and space as a possible explanation: *suppose that there are twin brothers, one of whom travels through space to another planet nearly at the speed of light; for him, the journey does not seem long, but upon returning to Earth, he finds that his twin at home has aged significantly, while his travels in space for a much shorter time mean that he has remained virtually unchanged.*[21] The figure in white who addresses the Tang Scholars is therefore, by the Earth's standards, an ageless traveller through time and space.

On a literary level, this encounter between Tang dynasty literature, space research, the genre of traditional Chinese ghost stories, and elements of science fiction, converges past, present and future within a contemporary

---

[20] Qiu Anxiong, the written description of his work.
[21] Ibid.

scientific context. But on a visual level, the juxtaposition of mythological narratives with modern technological tales, collapses temporal boundaries to open up new perspectives for perceiving and understanding time and space and their profound influence on history and the natural world.

Berlin-based interdisciplinary artist Nina E. Schönefeld has also used a form of science fiction to address some of the most urgent issues that face our over-mediated world.   Her futuristic scenarios, all set in the near future, critique current Western political, ecological and social issues and are prophetic in the sense that they provide a glimpse of a future that seems increasingly, imminently plausible.

Nina E. Schönefeld's haunting video series *TRILOGY OF TOMORROW (D A R K W A T E R S // S N O W F O X // L.E.O.P.A.R.T.)* are narratives suspended between fiction and forecast. Created between 2018 and 2019, the films are set in the imagined years of 2023, 2029, and 2032, where Schönefeld excavates futuristic landscapes that are, in fact, echoes of our present ecological and political crises. What was once the projected future of 2023, has now become part of our past, turning fiction into a shadow of history. In its convergence of past prediction and future condition, Schönefeld's work echoes the premise of *Landscapes of Futures Past* in that it is a meditation on the ways that imagined futures, and experienced pasts, inevitably loop backwards and forwards to define our present landscapes – physical, political, environmental, and psychological.

D A R K W A T E R S (2018) unfolds in 2029, in oceans that plastic pollution has rendered into death zones. Following the exploits of Silver Ocean, its protagonist, this work is a visceral investigation into hidden environmental collapse as seas that once promised boundless life face a poetic reckoning with death.

S N O W F O X (2018) projects us into 2023, to a world manipulated by corporate "weather engineers" whose tampering has caused widespread neural disease. Snow Fox, its titular heroine, joins a resistance group of women who, struggling to reclaim Earth's vanishing landscapes, have sought sanctuary in the last vestiges of wild nature — a terrain now made both political and personal by their struggle for survival.

L.E.O.P.A.R.T. (2019) leaps forward to 2032, where mutated crops and a monolithic seed corporation have monopolized life itself. In an insurgent narrative of human agency against engineered ecological futures, L.E.O. establishes a self-sufficient camp where she leads a revolt of survivors who have refused or escaped genetic entrapment.

Like a time-machine, this trilogy collapses future dystopias and present realities into one liminal space. Schönefeld's cinematic landscapes — of polluted seas, weather-scarred wastelands, and genetically controlled fields — simultaneously act as prophecy and memory in their evocation of what future generations may well look back on as our unheeded environmental reckoning. Visually rich and emotionally resonant, these video works compel viewers to confront the consequences of our collective inaction. Each layer of the trilogy lives in the shadow of warnings, once dismissed, that remind us that if today's landscapes are to avoid becoming

tomorrow's nightmares, our present choices to transform the future must be built on a sure and firm knowledge of the past.

Under the slogan "We don't need Virtual Reality, we need Virtual Unreality", Nina E. Schönefeld's film *P. A. R. A. D. I. S. E.* (2023/25) revolves around a new Virtual Reality programme, of the same name, that is designed to make its users experience ultimate feelings that will enable them to test their limits. But some of its effects are unpredictable: as well as fear, the game induces insomnia and sometimes sudden death; "The feeling of love is ridiculous compared to the feeling of nearly dying. I am scared of wanting more!", one disturbed character exclaims.

The film concentrates on the difference between the experience of virtual reality in artificial space and of physically tangible reality in nature, and on how the one threatens the other. "The massive investment of global corporations in digital technology and virtual reality extends the appropriation of human life to every aspect of our existence in order to maintain their control over markets and also, indirectly, over us…. We are spending longer and longer time in virtual worlds and are becoming more and more dependent on them. Even though reality often seems surreal today, and virtual reality appears more real, there is still a fundamental difference. It is the question of truth." [22]

With breakneck speed, aided by a compelling soundtrack and dynamic editing, Schönefeld's narrative unfolds in a series of savage paradoxes: "We are innovating ourselves out of existence. The focus of humanity is bent on chaining humans into a false digital world. Real life is fading. Generations of humans not married, not

---

[22] This and other quotations are from Nina E. Schönefeld, Transcript *P.A.R.A.D.I.S.E.*; typescript text of the film.

27

bearing children, A.I. characters are perfectly tailored to every individual's falsely manufactured needs. Artificial Intelligence is not the enemy. Humans, luring humanity under the will of A.I., they are the enemy."

"A dream you dream alone is only a dream. A dream you dream together is reality." This may not be paradise but is it an antidote to its opposite? If the future is virtual anything may be possible, but nothing will be traceable or tangible. In Schönefeld's film, time telescopes, but the present is never accountable. Warning against the false friends and false hope of the virtual world, whose motives are never transparent, it tries to expose them. Devoid of empathy, sensitivity or hope, the virtual landscapes of future and past will always remain suspect.
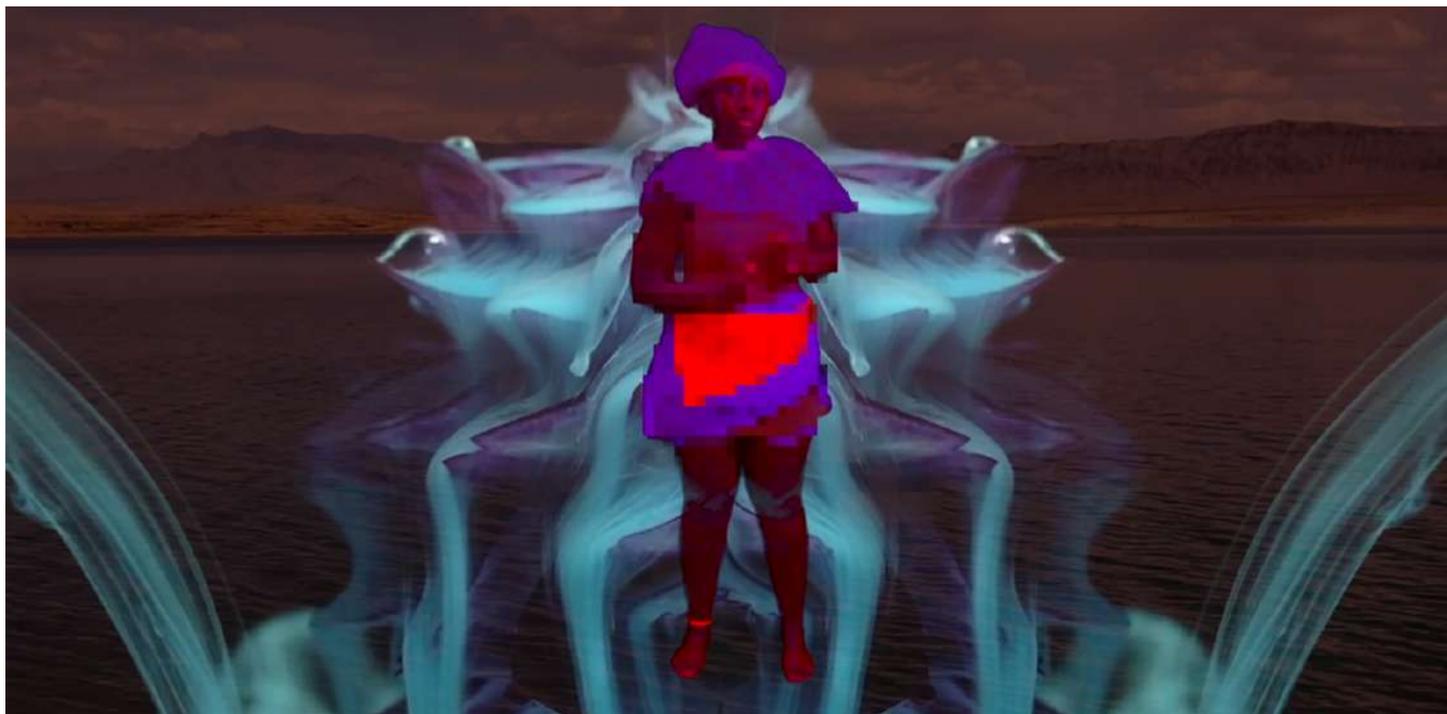
The paradoxical title of Schönefeld's film *P.A.R.A.D.I.S.E* is a word derived from the ancient Persian pairidaeza, meaning "walled garden". Likewise, paradox, absurdity and contradiction also figure strongly in a garden of a radically different sort - *The Garden of Forking Paths* (2016) by Zhou Xiaohu, a Shanghai-based artist and one of the pioneers of video animation in China. Like Qiu Anxiong, Feng Bingyi, and other artists in this

exhibition, Zhou Xiaohu also enlists literary sources, basing *The Garden of Forking Paths* on the eponymous mystery by the Argentine writer, essayist and poet Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986).
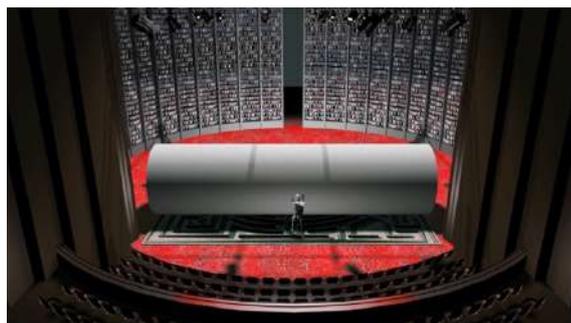
Borges's iconic short story "*The Garden of Forking Paths*" (1941) is at once a spy thriller, a philosophical parable, and an early literary exploration of what we now call the multiverse.[23] The narrative unfolds as a

---

[23] This story was first published in Spanish under the title *El Jardin de senderos que se bifurcan* and was published in English in 1948. The multi-linear openness of its plot has subsequently been regarded as a precursor of the *many worlds interpretation* of Quantum Mechanics (1957), as well as of current concepts of *hyper-text* fiction and *infinite text*.

metafictional labyrinth in which time is not linear but proliferates into infinite, coexisting possibilities. Told through the voice of a spy going to extreme lengths to complete his mission, the story introduces a fictional novel by the narrator's ancestor—a book conceived as a maze and a shifting garden where every possible outcome of every event occurs simultaneously in diverging and converging paths.

Set during World War I, the story follows Dr. Yu Tsun, a Chinese professor and covert German agent, who must urgently transmit the location of a British artillery base on the Western Front to his superiors. Pursued through the English countryside by a relentless British counter-espionage agent, Yu Tsun seeks refuge in the home of a man named Stephen Albert, chosen for his surname, which is to become the coded message Yu Tsun must send. Albert turns out to be a sinologist—who, in an even stranger coincidence, also happens to be an expert on the life and work of Yu Tsun's own ancestor, Ts'ui Pên.

Ts'ui Pên had once renounced political life to devote himself to both writing a sprawling, incomprehensible novel and to the construction of a vast labyrinth; for generations, readers and scholars had failed to make sense of either. But in a revelatory moment, Albert explains to Yu Tsun that Ts'ui Pên's book is the labyrinth - a nonlinear narrative in which every possible decision creates a divergent timeline. In this metaphysical garden, all outcomes occur simultaneously: every path taken, and every path not taken, coexist in parallel. The labyrinth is not a structure of walls, but of time itself.

Shortly after this epiphany, Yu Tsun kills Albert - not out of malice, but as a coded act. By ensuring that Albert's name appears in the newspapers, he conveys the location of the main British artillery encampment - Albert being a town on the Western Front in France - to his German handlers. The story ends with Yu Tsun executed for his crime, having completed his mission. But the philosophical implications of Ts'ui Pên's labyrinth haunt the reader far beyond the plot's resolution. In Borges's universe, just as in Ts'ui Pên's labyrinthine book, time is not a singular thread but a tangled web of choices, all real, all unfolding in parallel. The garden, thus, becomes a metaphor for the multiverse—a space where memory, identity, fate, and future are endlessly forked and recombined.
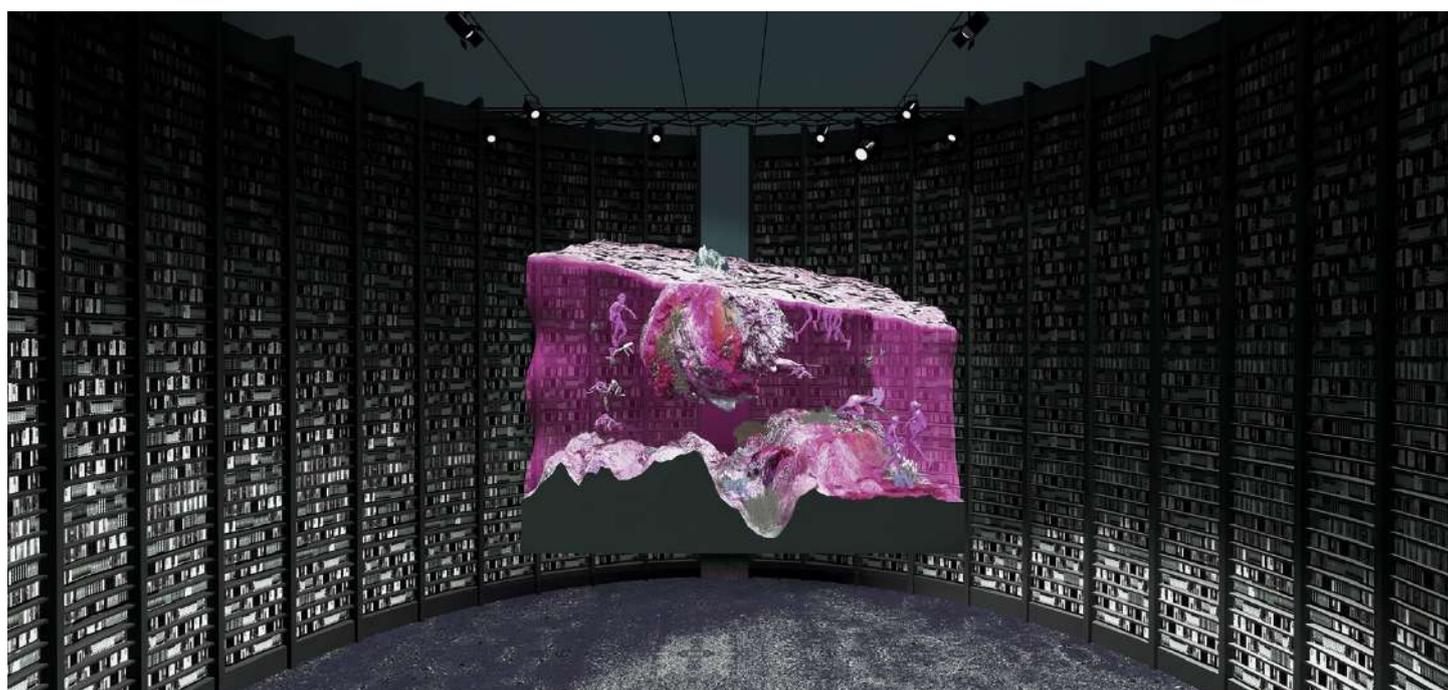
Zhou Xiaohu's artwork *The Garden of Forking Paths* borrows its title and conceptual architecture from Borges, translating the literary labyrinth into a time-based visual installation. Using his signature language of puppets and digital animation, computerised simulations and the visual conventions of video games, Zhou crafts a fragmented, nonlinear narrative composed of looping scenes that shift between historical memory, political absurdity, and imagined futures. The work eschews a single point of view, instead presenting viewers with parallel scenarios that echo, contradict, or bleed into one another. Figures and backgrounds are animated in crude yet expressive gestures, suggesting history not as a fixed timeline, but as a malleable landscape.

Together, Borges's story and Zhou's reinterpretation of it imagine reality as a terrain of simultaneities, where futures are not destinations but recursive returns, and the past is never quite settled. Borges's metaphorical garden and Zhou's animated one converge as sites of speculative memory—landscapes in which histories are rehearsed, overwritten, and re-seeded across generations. Zhou's work reflects on how narratives are constructed and fractured over time, while Borges's story provides a philosophical framework for understanding time itself as spatial, plural, and unstable.

In *Landscapes of Futures Past*, Zhou Xiaohu's *The Garden of Forking Paths* operates as both homage and critical translation—reconfiguring Borges's abstract metaphysics into a visceral, satirical terrain where historical and philosophical time collide. It invites viewers to wander not through a singular storyline, but through a multiplicity of temporalities that mirror the uncertainties of our ecological and cultural moment: where each step into the past forks into yet another future, and the landscape itself becomes a living archive of what might have been—and what still could happen.

Australian artist Danie Mellor also addresses notions of time and space that pass far beyond any classical linear and cyclical dichotomy. Being of Ngadjon and Mamu heritage his work draws on both his Indigenous and Anglo-Australian roots to explore the legacies of Australia's colonial past in themes that are critically linked to indigenous cultural histories and their unique understanding of landscape and time. There are no words for "time" or "future" in the 500 languages of the First Peoples of Australia who, according to their group, conceptualise the Universe, the World, and their place in it in different Dreamings. These mythological orders of harmony between people, plants, animals, the physical features of their Land and the stars, are strong expressions of group identity and of ways of living, where time is eclipsed by the continuous need to preserve balance through the observance of each Dreaming's landscapes, identity, motifs, rules and moral codes. This continuum may also be regarded as if it were an aesthetic system – an idea with which many Australian Aboriginal artists concur.

Dark star waterfall (2025), Danie Mellor's new two-channel video, contemplates the immense power of elemental forces through its sweeping vistas of Rainforest Country. The "Dark Star," an early astronomical term for a Black Hole, is symbolically expressed here by the irresistible pull of water towards a waterfall and its subsequent "fall" when the precipice and the edge of the waterfall become, at a certain point, inescapable. In a converse way this force echoes the "pull" of the Event Horizon of a Dark Star when it blocks the flow of light and matter from escaping it. Mellor has used both infrared and visible light cameras to film waterfalls situated in his traditional Ngadjon and Mamu Country in ways that have extended his previous use of still photography as a symbolic means of disclosure and revelation. Accordingly, historic film footage from there and the Cairns region is interspersed throughout the video, crossing over and blending the timelines of past and present as a counterpoint to Mellor's contemporary imagery.
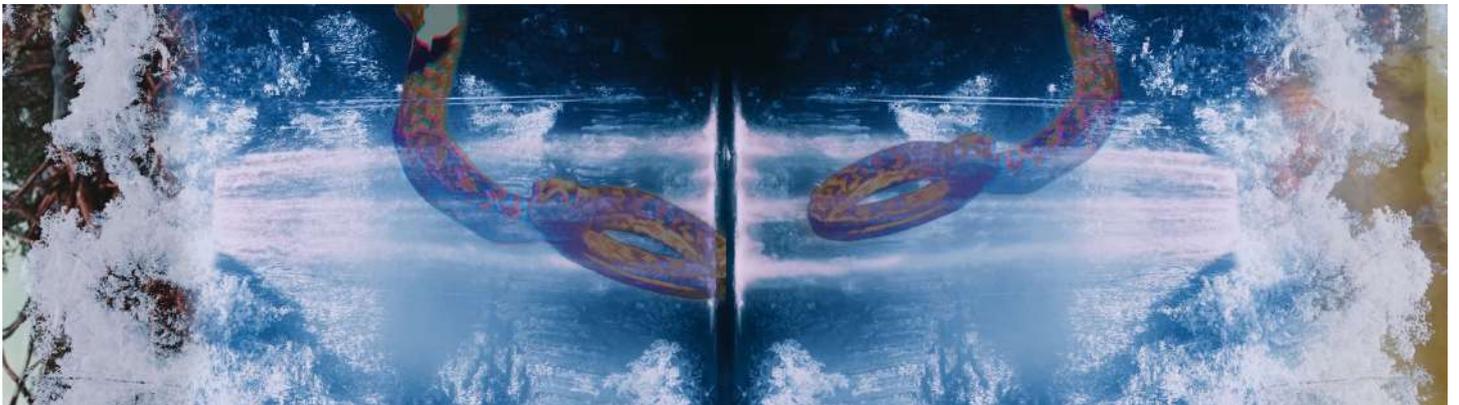
Here, Mellor contrives a convergence of time, creation, power, and the sublime, which he explores through the phenomena of landscape and nature. At its heart, he seeks to reveal the invisible by conveying the subtlety and enormity of both the material and immaterial in cultural and scientific terms by overlapping timelines of past, present and future. Traversing a timeless plane, reaching back to jujuba (the ancient time of the totems) and across Country (the traditional lands of his people), he seeks to understand the universe itself. Several audio sequences in the film are based on the sonification of astronomical data, (including infrared light), and Sagittarius A*, (Sgr A*), the supermassive Black Hole at the

centre of our Milky Way, is converted into audible tones. This reference to astronomical data reinforces the connection of "local" cosmology to the video as the Milky Way is the legendary place of origin and habitat of the Rainbow Serpent (often known in Aboriginal cultures as the "Creator God"); it also emphasizes the significance of Yamani (a "rainbow" or the coming together of different peoples and languages in song) and its centrality to Aboriginal rainforest legends of landscape and creation.
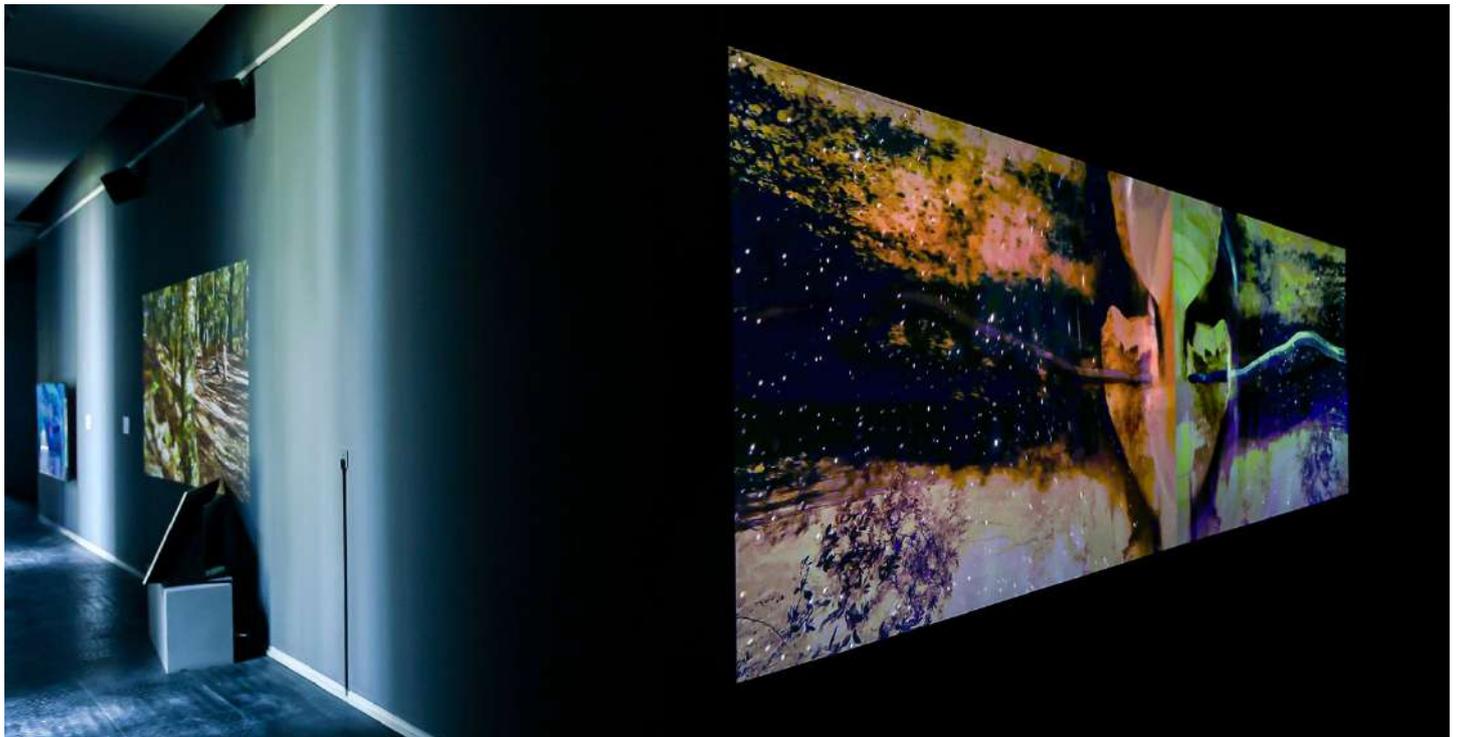
As a living archive the Aboriginal concept of The Dreaming is inseparable from landscape. Far from being just a passive backdrop, a physical environment or a resource, the land becomes a holder of time, an active, sentient, and sacred Country. The Dreaming complicates non-aboriginal notions of landscape as something to be framed, owned, or developed, by positioning it instead as alive, storied, and sacred – as a vast, ongoing network of ancestral narratives that are inscribed into the land by its rivers, rocks, deserts, mountains, and skies. The Dreaming shows us that landscape is where all times meet, and where the future may already be present,

waiting to be remembered. This understanding resonates profoundly with how *Landscapes of Futures Past* explores layered temporalities, shifting ecologies, and the reactivation of pasts and futures within the imagination.

"No man is an island" is an old-fashioned admonitory expression in the English language that uses our interconnectedness with landscape and with one another as a broad social analogy. But, as we are all dependent on the environments that sustain us, this aphorism could just as well be reversed into "without an island there is no man."

Whether sailing to an island, living on the Earth, or settling on the Moon, we are all a small part of something much larger than ourselves and, whether we like it or not, our autonomy depends on this.

Whether we look at time as a line, as a circle, or as something entirely other, in this case does not matter, as ascertaining the truth of it is far beyond our competence. The cosmic distances of Light Years are so vast that our most recent Space Telescopes now receive images of the universe when it was just being formed, long before any trace of life. Humanity though does have an edge, and artists are particularly sharp-sighted: for them, future and past will nourish the present in the beauties of landscapes still to be discovered.

Landscapes of Futures Past tells stories about how we are both rooted in, and uprooted from, landscapes that tie us to our pasts and pave the roads towards our futures. Repositories of cultural longing and ecological reckoning, landscapes bear traces of forgotten futures and unrealized pasts. Through video, installation, animation and sound, this exhibition navigates the thresholds and cycles of many possible futures, and multiple linear timelines of the past.

Some works reach back into ancestral geographies, where the earth resounds with echoes of identity, ritual, and resistance. Others confront ruptures - colonial scars, forced migrations and environmental erasures - that fracture our connection with place and cast shadows on our future. Through intimate storytelling, speculative fictions, and poetic observations, these works invite viewers to step over the barrier between personal and collective memory to examine the landscapes we carry within us and those we have left behind.

In the spaces between what has been, what was hoped for, what remains, and what is still to come, artists still sow the seeds of forgotten futures and remembered pasts in the belief that new, hopeful narratives will take root.

ABOUT THE CURATORS

David Elliott

David Elliott was born in the United Kingdom and is currently a freelance curator and writer on modern and contemporary art who has also directed and developed a number of art museums. After twenty years as Director of the Museum of Modern Art Oxford (1976 to 1996), where he first became familiar with contemporary non-western art, he moved to Stockholm to run Moderna Museet, the National Museum of Contemporary Art, where he stayed until 2001 when he moved to Tokyo as the founding Director of the Mori Art Museum.   This was followed by a brief period as   Director of Istanbul Modern after which, in 2008, he became the Rudolf Arnheim Guest Professor in Art History at the Humboldt University in Berlin, and a Visiting Professor in Curatorship and Museum Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Since that time he has split his time between writing about different aspects of contemporary art and organising large exhibitions such as "*The Beauty of Distance: Songs of Survival in a Precarious Age*" (the 17th Biennale of Sydney, 2010); "*The Best of Times, The Worst of Times*" (the first Kyiv International Biennale of Contemporary Art, 2012); "*A Time for Dreams*" (the 4th Moscow International Biennale for Young Art, 2014);   and   *The Pleasure of Love*, (the 56th October Salon in Belgrade, 2016). From 2016 until 2019 he was the visiting Vice Director and Senior Curator at the RMCA, Guangzhou. In 2021 Art Asia Pacific and Singapore UP published a book of his collected essays *Art and Trousers. Tradition and Modernity in Contemporary Asian Art.*

Rachel Rits-Volloch

Dr. Rachel Rits-Volloch is the Founding Director of MOMENTUM: The Global Platform for Time-Based Art. MOMENTUM's program is composed of local and international Exhibitions, Artist and Curator Residencies, Video Art in Public Space Initiatives, Performance and Education Programs, and a growing Collection. Based in Berlin, MOMENTUM serves as a bridge joining professional art communities, irrespective of institutional and national borders. Working on a model of international cooperations, MOMENTUM is focused on the growing diversity and relevance of time-based practices, exploring how time-based art reflects the digitization of our societies and the resulting cultural change. As the Founding Director of MOMENTUM, Rachel has curated and produced over 350 exhibitions, artist residencies, education programs, and a diversity of related events worldwide, showing more than 700 artists since MOMENTUM's inception in 2010. Rachel is a graduate of Harvard University with a BA in Literature, and holds an M.Phil and PhD from the University of Cambridge in Film Studies.

For more information about MOMENTUM:
www.momentumworldwide.org

ARTISTS AND ARTWORKS

Inna Artemova

Utopia: Velocity Expanded

2025

Acrylic marker, oil on canvas

300 x 1030 cm

For *Landscapes of Futures Past*, Artemova has been commissioned to make a new work – a site-specific painting installation in dialogue with both the rural landscape that surrounds the JYH Museum and the

modernist ideas and drawings of its architect, Tadao Ando. Ando's architecture is best known for fostering a deep, contemplative dialogue between built form and landscape, where landscape is an integral element in the emotional and spiritual resonance of his spaces. Time also is a focal point of his architecture, as he himself pointed out in relation to this museum: "it is hoped that the dialogue between the old and the new [I have] evoked will have the power to connect time from the past to the future.

Inna Artemova writes about her commission for the JYH Museum: "Tadao Ando's architecture does not express utopia in the usual modernist or ideological sense, like Le Corbusier or the Soviet constructivists. However, he has his own, deeply personal vision of the future, based on a spiritual architecture that can contribute to the inner transformation of man and harmony with nature. Ando sees architecture not as an instrument of power or control, but as a space for spiritual experience. His buildings are not 'machines for living' but environments for concentration and self-awareness. This could be considered an anti-utopia of modernist functionality and technological progress. Instead, it is a journey inwards, through light, shadow, wind, emptiness and concrete. Tadao Ando does not build utopias for the sake of a 'new society'. His vision is an 'anti-manifesto' in which architecture becomes a bridge between mankind and nature. It is not a utopia that can be built, measured or imagined as a city of the future. It is a utopia of a state of being - an inner space in which humankind regains contact with itself and with nature. Ando does not seek to change the world, but to give mankind the space to change itself. His buildings speak a clear geometric language, which he relates to nature.

I work with transitional states -- moments when forms emerge and immediately dissolve before they have time to form properly, and at the same time something new emerges. The architecture I paint is not stable or closed - it is in motion, elastic, fragmented and in the process of being formed anew. I am interested in how our environment affects the way we think, feel and act. Modernist architecture - whether the endless high-rises of socialism or the utopian projects of the avant-garde - has always been an expression of power and worldview. But today we are at a point where these old models no longer work. The dualism between city and nature, between man and the environment, has led us to an ecological and social crisis. So in my work I ask myself: what could a new relationship between architecture and nature look like? Can architecture become a space for connection rather than separation? This work is a search for new forms of coexistence, spaces that pose questions about the past and the future and address the changing relationship between man and nature." [Inna Artemova, June 2025].
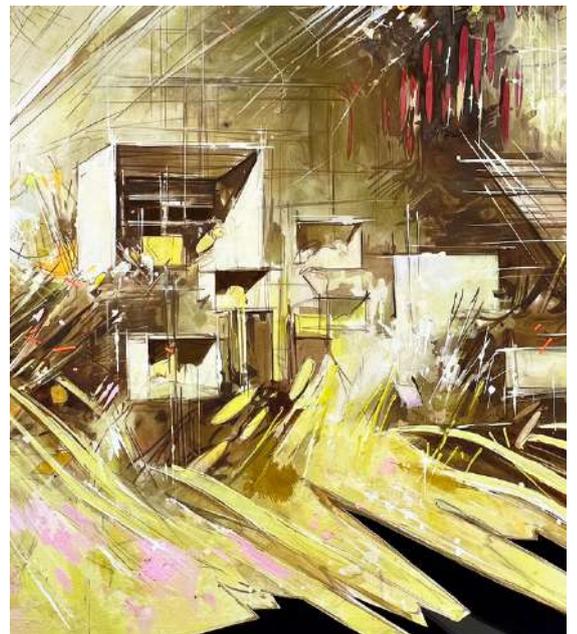
ARTIST BIO: Inna ARTEMOVA

www.inna-artemova.de

Inna Artemova (born 1972 in Moscow, USSR. Lives and works in Berlin, Germany.)studied architecture at the Moscow Architectural Institute (MArchI) and received the 2nd prize of the Russian Federation for her diploma project. In 1998 she moved to Berlin and started to work as an artist in the fields of painting and drawing but her practice remained heavily influenced by the "Paper Architects", her professors in Moscow who, from the 1980s, had developed futuristic architectural projects that were never intended to be realized. The visionary projects of the Paper Architects and her experience of migration to a city perpetually re-building itself, led Artemova to explore, through her constructivist painting style, the ideas of architectural utopias from the 1960s up to her own futuristic visions. Her recent practice as an artist has shifted from a Constructivist focus on cityscapes, to an exploration of landscape in its natural diversity – specifically on how the natural and the manmade can coexist in an ideal future. Imbued with a surreal, cinematic tension, and an explosive sense of velocity, Artemova's paintings appear to shatter the constraints of time and space that normally bind still images on canvas. Her practice explores the limits of utopian vision: whether grand architectural speculations can withstand the forces of history, memory, and ecological crisis. These often monochromatic, storyboard-like scenes—complete with floating structures, suspended gravity, and an occasional human figure—conjure a liminal space between ambition and ruin, progress and regression.

Artemova's work has appeared in gallery and institutional shows across Europe, Central Asia, Japan, UK, and US. Her works are held in public and private collections, reflecting her continuing influence on discourses around architecture, memory, and speculative futures. Recent major solo exhibitions include: "Becoming a Dragonfly", Kunstverein Hockenheim, Stadthalle Hockenheim, Germany; "After Proun. Reflections on posthuman spaces", a site specific installation at the Savitsky State Museum of Art, Nukus, Uzbekistan (2023); "Space and Vision", Gallery Erlas, Traunkirchen, Austria (2022); "It May Sound Utopian: Agile Acceleration", DISKURS Berlin, Germany (2021); "Landscapes of Tomorrow", Kyrgyz National Museum of Fine Arts, Kyrgyzstan (2019); "Reinventing Utopia", Janinebean Gallery, Berlin, Germany (2018); "No Yesterday, No Today", Kunstverein Frankenthal, Germany (2017); "Error Codes", gallery Börgmann, Mönchengladbach, Germany (2016).

Selected major group exhibitions include: "Preparing for Darkness , Vol. 8", Kampa Museum of Modern Art, Prague, Czech Republic (2024); Ostrale Biennale 023: 14th International Exhibition of Contemporary Art, Dresden, Germany (2023); "DISSONANCE. Platform Germany", Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, Germany (2022); "Danube Dialogues Contemporary Art Festival" for the European Capital of Culture Novi Sad, Sremski Karlovci, Serbia (2022); "the landscape: from arcadia to the urban", Gallery Rosenfeld, London, UK (2021); "BETWIXT: Between Becoming and Being" Tape Modern O54, Tacheles Culture Center, Berlin, Germany (2021); "Points of Resistance" with MOMENTUM, Zionskirche, Berlin, Germany (2021); "Ulugh Beg: Intrinsic Futuristic Machine of Central Asia", 2nd Lahore Biennale: "Between the Sun and the Moon", Pakistan (2020); "Bonum et Malum", MOMENTUM & Kleiner von Wiese at Villa Erxleben, Berlin , Germany (2019); "Another World", Deutsche Bank Collection, Frieze London, UK (2018); "Man - Cosmos!", Biennale Worpswede, Germany (2018); "Imágines inimaginables", Kunstverein Wasserschloss Bad Rappenau, Germany (2018); "AKKU", Collection Paschertz, Museum Heylshof, Worms, Germany (2017); "blue bleu blau blu", Verein Biennale, Vienna, Austria (2017); and many others.

Stefano CAGOL

We Are The Flood

Selected works from *We Are The Flood*, a video performance series (2022 - ongoing):

We Are the Flood: Ilulissat, Greenland (2024), 4K video, 8:17, colour, sound

We are the Flood: Ysyk-Köl, Kyrgyzstan/Kazakhstan (2024), 4K video, 10:40, colour, sound

We are the Flood: Dragon Head Dzhetyoguz, Kyrgyzstan (2024), 4K video, 4:19, colour, sound

We Are The Flood: Malaysia, Egypt (2023), 4K video, 10:44, colour, sound

In *We Are the Flood*, Stefano Cagol confronts the encroaching realites of climate collapse through a series of durational video performances that transform environmental crisis into symbolic action. Drawing on the biblical metaphor of the flood - not as divine punishment but as self-inflicted consequence - Cagol stages interventions

in fragile landscapes, using the human body as both signal and sensor of ecological unraveling. This series, initiated in 2022, becomes a meditation on prophetic warnings long ignored, where once-hypothetical futures now saturate the present. His recurring motif—a burning flare—becomes an urgent gesture of alarm, where past scientific forecasts, present disasters, and fears for the future, collapse into one performative act. Cagol's work asks us not only to witness the aftermath, but also to recognize ourselves as both the origin and the outcome of the very flood about which we were warned.

Drawing parallels between human and planetary fragility, *We Are The Flood* was shot at the "four corners of the Earth": Egypt, Malaysia, Greenland, and Kyrgyzstan. Looking at what was far before us and thinking about what will be long after us, Cagol takes us with him on a journey through *landscapes of futures past*. Confronting human, natural and geological manifestations, he ventures into deserts, primordial jungles, and thousands-year-old icebergs, performing in front of ancient pyramids, petroglyphs and vestiges of nomadic traditions. In the course of his own nomadic practice, Cagol has developed his artistic process of serial performances in solitary dialogue with nature. Using warning flares designed to signal danger, Cagol's interventions within these diverse landscapes are a clarion call to combat climate change; an SOS signal for a planet in crisis. What were predictions of future climate disaster in past decades, have manifested themselves as lived reality within our lifetimes: rising seas, burning forests, vanishing glaciers - rendering the once-speculative into urgent, visible truth. With his flaming red flare raised high, Cagol plays the role of a contemporary shaman. In his ubiquitous black suit, he travels from landscape to distant landscape enacting a ritual performance bringing fire to the ice, sending smoke signals from mountaintops. His performative actions, transformed into video artworks, are both poetic metaphors of the cleansing of an ailing planet, and an all too urgent cry for help – help which must arrive before the many warnings of the past turn into irreversible futures.

ARTIST BIO: Stefano CAGOL

Stefano Cagol (born 1969 in Trento, Italy. Lives and works in Trento, Italy.) studied at the Brera Academy in Milan and Ryerson University in Toronto with a post-doctoral fellowship from the Government of Canada. His multidisciplinary practice spans video, performance, photography, installation, and curation. Addressing pressing global issues, Cagol operates at the intersection of conceptual and environmental art, Eco-Art and Land Art. He often employs natural elements, such as ice, fire, and wind, to highlight anthropogenic transformations of nature. His approach embraces time-specificity, creating site-responsive, ritualistic performances and installations that provoke reflection on global emergencies and our place within natural systems. Cagol's work embodies a sustained investigation into the intertwining of environment, energy flows, human bodies and politicized borders, executed through poetic, high-impact interventions. Making visible the often invisible, Cagol brings climate, ecology and geography into everyday public consciousness.

Recipient of prestigious awards, such as the Italian Council (2019) the Visit Award of E.on Stiftung, and the Terna Prize for Contemporary Art, he works in the fields of Conceptual Art, Environmental Art, Eco-Art and Land Art, reflecting for years on borders, viruses, flags and climate issues. He participated in biennials, such as the Venice Biennale (in 2011, 2013, 2022), Manifesta 11, 14th Curitiba Biennale, 2nd OFF Cairo Biennale, 1st Xinjiang Biennale, Barents Art Triennale 2013 and 1st Singapore Biennale. He held solo exhibitions at museums such as the CCA Center for Contemporary Art in Tel Aviv (2021), MA*GA in Gallarate (2019), Galleria Civica di Trento/Mart (2016), ZKM Karlsruhe (2012) and Museo di Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto (2000). In 2022, he participated in the Malaysia pavilion at the Venice Biennale; in "The State-of-the-art Science" series by the IBSA Foundation at MASI museum in Lugano (Switzerland); and he initated and continues to curate the ongoing project "*We are the Flood*. Liquid platform on the climate crisis, anthropocenic interactions and ecological transition" of MUSE Science Museum in Trento (Italy).

CAO Yu

Escape off the Edge of the Human World

2021

short flm, colour/sound, edition of 6 + 2 AP4:06

Courtesy The artist and Galerie Urs Meile

Escape off the Edge of the Human World, is a poetic allegory for the human condition; a bittersweet meditation on the choice between remaining rooted in the safety of the known and being uprooted into the uncertainty of the new. Within the short space of four-minutes, this film unfolds a profound existential parable. Beginning and ending amongst the relentless waves of an ominous dark ocean, the film depicts a fish tank stranded on the threshold between land and sea. As the tide rises, the shore turns into ocean, and the tank is submerged in the sea. But what of the fish inside the tank? The only spot of bright glowing color in a grey world, translucent in its fragility, the golden fish stairs straight out at us, swimming along the thin glass walls of its enclosed landscape. As the barrier between it and the outside world becomes ever more tenuous, we cannot help but be torn between a desire for the little fish's escape, and fears for its survival in the harsh realities of the story sea. Do we – as the saying goes – want to be big fish in a small familiar pond, or small fish set loose in the vastness of the ocean? As the earth spins, the cycle of the tides continues, and the same dilemmas will always present themselves, time and time again.

JIN 嘉源海美术馆

ARTIST BIO: CAO Yu

www.galerieursmeile.com/artists/cao-yu/

Cao Yu (born 1988 in Liaoning Province, China. Lives and works in Beijing, China.) received her BFA & MA from the Sculpture Department of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing. Her sharp, provocative work spans video, performance, photography, installation, sculpture, and painting. Her interdisciplinary work is at once conceptual, subtly feminist, slightly surreal, deconstructed autobiography, minimalist yet often over the top. At the centre of her practice is her own body as both subject and tool. From the raw intensity of works made with her breast-milk after childbirth, to her neon and video declarations of desire and defiance, Cao Yu joyfully upends expectations and societal taboos. Irony and performance remain her hallmarks: through both gestures and grand visual statements, she wields art as a weapon to challenge "inferior values, aesthetics, and culture". Cao Yu's vision is as uncompromising as it is layered: she elevates the female body and lived experience as a front line to question gender norms, identity politics, power, and historical memory. Her incisive and bold artistic language, distinctive cross-disciplinary practice, witty and ironic expression have made her a leading figure of China's new generation of female artists. She has also been recognized as one of the most influential emerging artists in the Chinese contemporary art scene. Cao Yu is a nominee of the Porsche Young Artist of the Year 2024 award. She has been shortlisted for The Sovereign Asia Art Prize in 2023, amongst many other awards, and has been selected as the candidate of Forbes China Most Influential Young Artist in 2023. In 2022, Cao Yu was ranked No.1 by Hi Art - The Most Influential Female Artist in China. Her works have also been collected by museums such as: M+ Museum, Hong Kong; Erlenmeyer Foundation, Basel, Switzerland; Sishang Art Museum, Beijing; CAFA Art Museum, Beijing, and and the Zhuzhong Art Museum, Beijing.

A selection of her major museum exhibitions worldwide include: The Tanks Museum Shanghai (2024); One Art Museum Beijing (2024); Shanghai Jiushi Art Museum, Shanghai, China (2024); Jinyue Children's Art Museum, Chengdu, China (2024); ASE Foundation, Shanghai, China (2024); Goethe Institut, Beijing, China (2024); Museum der Moderne Salzburg Austria (2023); Wuhan Art Museum China (2023); The Cloud Collection, Nanjing, China (2023); ONGEUN Art and Cultural Foundation, Seoul, Korea (2023); Shenzhen Artron Art Center, Shenzhen, China (2023); Guardian Art Center, Beijing, China (2023); The 7th Guangzhou Triennial, Symphony of All the Changes, Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts, Guangzhou, China (2022); Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Germany (2022); Lillehammer Art Museum, Norway (2022); Kunstforeningen Gammel Strand, Copenhagen, Denmark (2022); Ulsan Art Museum, South Korea (2022); Shanghai DuoLun Museum of Modern Art, Shanghai, China (2021); Shanghai Gallery of Art, Shanghai, China (2021); Shenzhen Artron Art Cenrer, Shenzhen, China (2021); Today Art Museum, Beijing, China (2021); Museum of Contemporary Art Yinchuan, Yinchuan, China (2021); Hive Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China (2020); MAK Museum für Angewandte Kunst, Vienna, Austria (2019); Minsheng Art Museum, Beijing, China (2018); Zhuzhong Art Museum, Beijing, China (2018); Museum of Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, Chongqing Contemporary Art Center, Chongqing, China (2018); Tongsha Ecological Park, Dongguan, China (2018); Artspace, Sydney, Australia (2017); Sishang Art Museum, Beijing, China (2017); Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France (2016); Today Art Museum, Beijing, China (2016); Jinji Lake Art Museum, Suzhou, China (2016); Luohu Art Museum, Shenzhen, China (2016); The 1st Daojiao New New Art Fesrival, XI Contemporary Art Center, Dongguan, China (2016); OCT Art and Design Gallery, Shenzhen, China (2016); Ming Contemporary Art Museum, Shanghai, China (2016), among many others.

CHEN Qiulin

Farewell Poem

2002

video, colour, sound

9:00

Courtesy A Thousand Plateaus Art Space, Chengdu

Chen Qiulin's early video work *Farewell Poem* signals the passing of an era as the inevitable destruction caused by the building of the Three Gorges Hydro Electric Project impacts not only on the landscape but also on people's lives in the area of Sichuan Province in which she grew up as a child. As its title suggests, her film *Farewell Poem* has an elegiac quality: a nostalgic goodbye to a way of life already in the past. The demolition of the old town of Dachang had already begun, and people were starting to move away, uprooted from their native homeland and landscape – a landscape which was soon about to be drastically changed through human intervention, paving the road to the future in the name of rapid modernization. Chen Qiulin's filmic collage of poetic juxtapositions captures the daily life of a town on the threshold between past and future. Intercut with the continuing bustle of the city and life of the river are scenes of demolition, neighbourhoods reduced to rubble. Capturing both a way of life and its absence, the artist performs in the empty places already filled with ghosts, dancing atop the debris of her hometown. Interlaced throughout the film as soundtrack and imagery, are the actors of a travelling Beijing Opera company, whose performance of the traditional romantic tragedy Farewell my Concubine amongst the ruined buildings, strikes yet another timeless note comingling the past with the present. Chen Qiulin dedicated this film to her parents and "to the people like them who lived on that land."

Peach Blossom

2009

video, colour, sound

16:40

Courtesy A Thousand Plateaus Art Space, Chengdu

Chen Qiulin's video *Peach Blossom* was made in Wenchuan, a city in Sichuan that had just been ravaged by an earthquake. Like in her earlier work *Farewell Poem* (2002), this city in ruins is also caught on the threshold between past and future. In another time-bending parable, Chen interweaves historical and contemporary tales of the courtship and marriage of a young couple against a backdrop of ruined factories, shanty towns, and the beautiful mountains that surround them. The man who reappears throughout the film as the bridegroom carries a bouquet of peach

blossoms that are believed to express beauty, fertility, good fortune and a long life. Against a backdrop of gruelling manual labour, of people made homeless, and the start of reconstruction, in a fluid timescape that could cover several centuries, we see loneliness, sadness, beauty and desolation, as well as the persistence of love. Flowers bloom amongst the rubble as those uprooted by the disaster of the landscape shattering beneath their feet, try to find new ground to rebuild their homes. The narrative alternates between stability and sadness, domesticity and hardship; the bride and groom haunt the ruins coming ever closer, but never speaking, until eventually they stand together. At times theatrical, with the pace and timbre of Peking Opera, this work is also a tribute to a lost way of life, and to the way in which timeless stories will always keep repeating themselves.

ARTIST BIO: CHEN Qiulin

www.1000plateaus.org/artists/30-chen-qiulin/

Chen Qiulin (born 1975 in Yi Chang, Hubei Province, China. Lives and works in Chengdu, China.)   graduated in 2000 from Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, Department of Printmaking, in Chengdu. She works primarily with the moving image but also with performance, photography, installation and sculpture; her main interest is in the different realities of "ordinary" people living in China today. Her practice explores notions of memory, social justice, rapid development and displacement whilst also reflecting on feelings of nostalgia, confusion and hope. With a unique sensitivity, Chen introduces new viewpoints and perspectives into frequently discussed social issues.

Chen Qiulin's awards include: The Best New Artist Award of the first Montpellier Chinese Contemporary Art Biennale (2005), the recipient of ACC (Asian Cultural Council in New York) grant at China (2006), the First Asian World Women Forum Rising Talents Programme Nominee (2008), The Fourth Annual AAC Award for the Most Influential Participants of Chinese Art 2009 - the Annual Young Artist Nominee (2010), Reshaping History Academic Award Nominee (2010), Loop Award of Loop Art Fair (Barcelona) (2017).   Her works were collected by The Sondra Gilman and Celso Gonzalez-Falla Collections (New York), Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art (Oslo), T-BA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary (Vienna), Hammer Museum (Los Angeles), The Bohen Foundation (New York), Queensland Art Gallery / Gallery of Modern Art (Brisbane), Art Museum of Central Academy of Fine Arts (Beijing), A4 Art Museum (Chengdu), Tsinghua University Art Museum and many other art galleries and private collectors.   Important group exhibitions that Chen Qiulin has participated in include: "The Wall: Reshaping Contemporary Chinese Art"; THIS IS NOT FOR YOU: Sculptural Discourses; T-BA21 Collection exhibition; the 7th Gwangju Biennale; the 6th Asia Pacific Contemporary Art Triennial (APT6, Australia); China Power Station Part II, III, IV; The Land Between Us (The Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, England); Moving Image in China: 1988 - 2011 (Minsheng Art Museum, Shanghai, China); the 3rd Ural Industrial Biennial of Contemporary Art (Yekaterinburg, Russia); and others. Chen Qiulin's several influential solo exhibitions were held in Hammer Museum (Los Angeles); Long March Space; A Thousand Plateaus Art Space; Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum (Los Angeles); Honolulu Museum of Art (Hawaii); and A4 Art Museum (Chengdu).
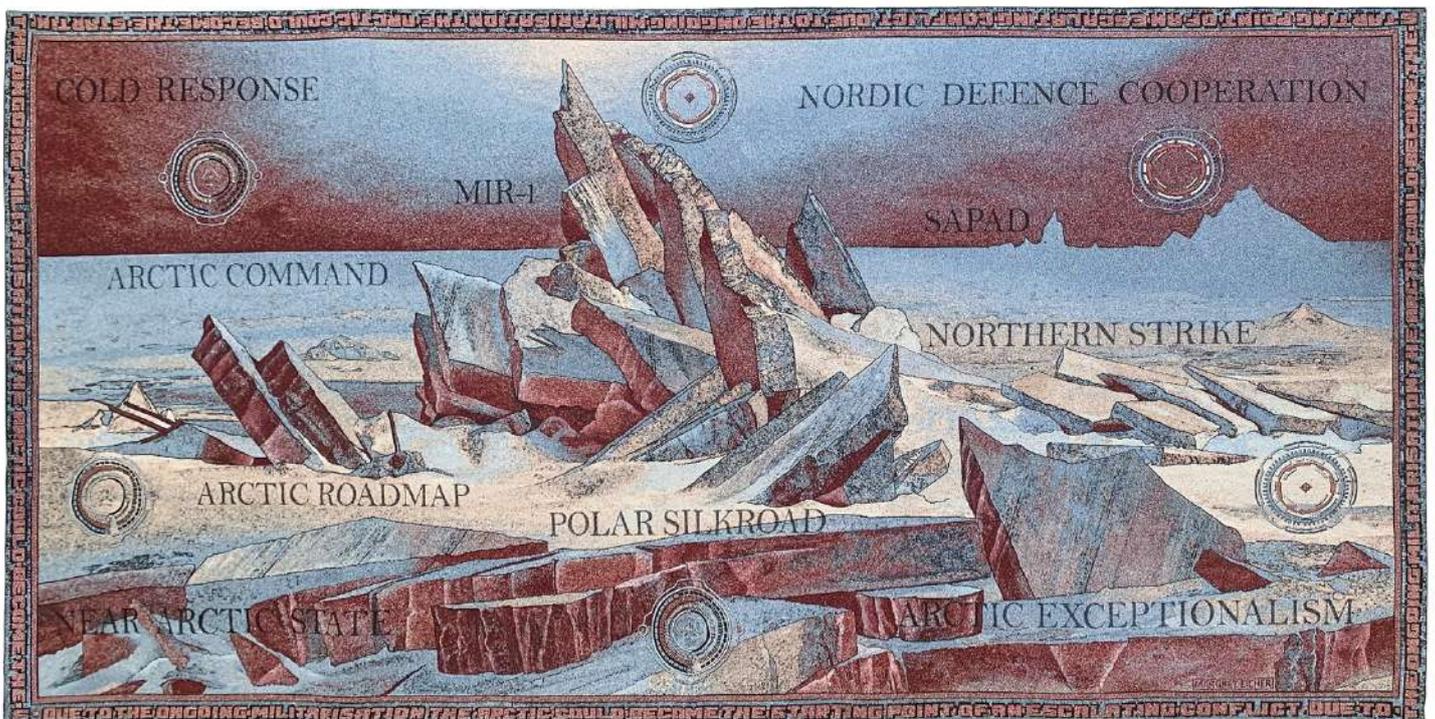
**Margret EICHER**

Ice Age

2024

Textile: digital collage, Jacquard-woven tapestry

130 x 260 cm

Eicher's recent work *Ice Age* is a tapestry based upon Caspar David Friedrich's famous painting "The Sea of Ice" (1823-24). Reimagining this well-known art historical work on its 200th anniversary, Margret Eicher creates a landscape that no longer exists – an ecological work that reminds us of the devastation of the Arctic within the short planetary timeframe of two centuries. The discordant colours and fragmented forms of her version of this painting, however, not only refer to global warming and the despoliation of the ice mass, but also to the way in

which this previously inaccessible polar region has now become globally contentious. Eicher's re-vision of this historical artwork, updated to the global concerns and technologies of the present, looks back at the past to comment on our collective future.
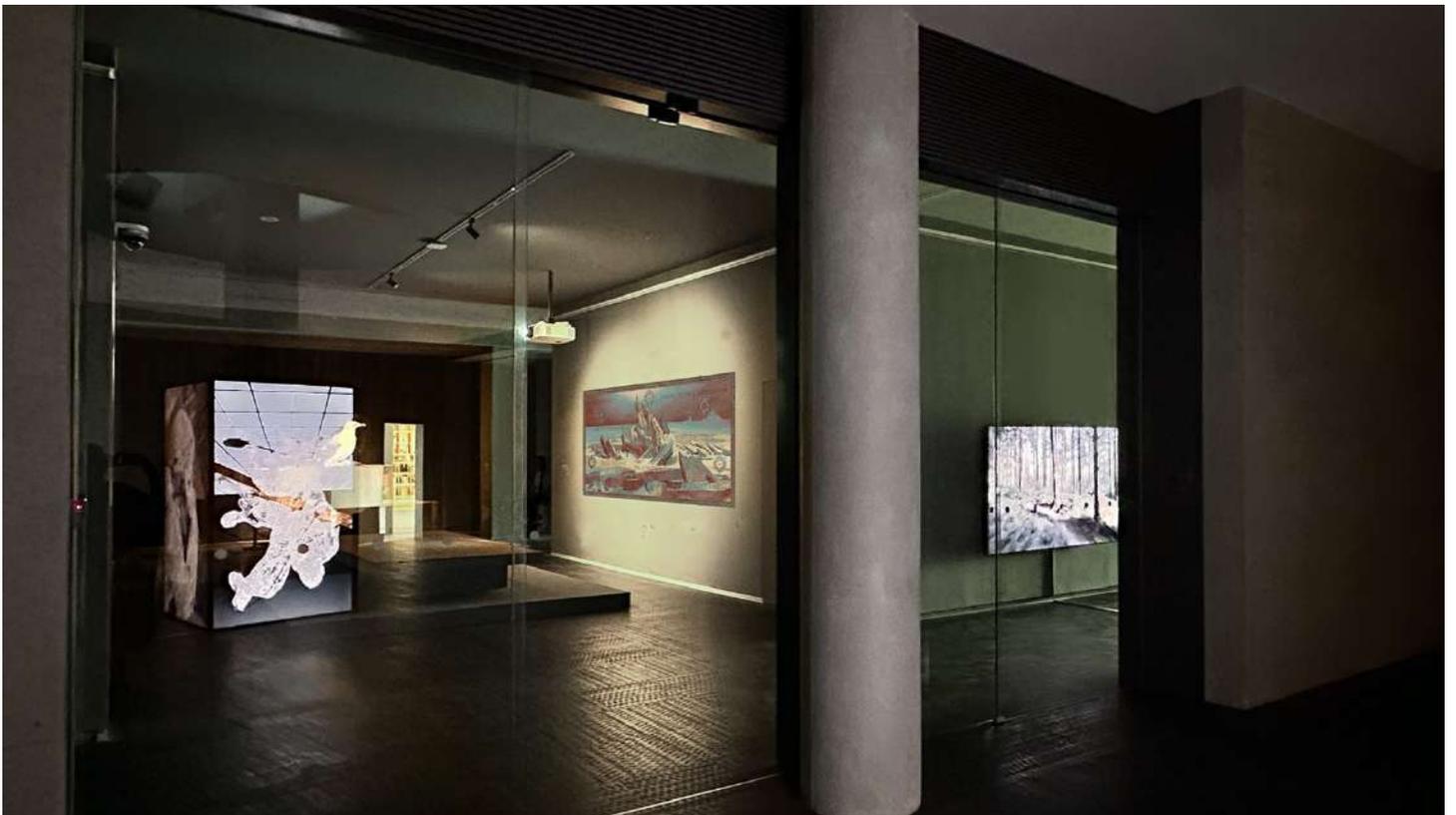
Then We Take Berlin

2018

Textile: digital collage, Jacquard-woven tapestry

295 x 230 cm

Then We Take Berlin invokes Eicher's customary lightness of humour to tackle a heavy historical subject. This tapestry depicts the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles emerging from a dense forest landscape. These fictional cartoon characters are standing in front of a real historical building in Berlin, built on top of a man-made hill, made from the rubble of the destruction of the city during WWII. This "palace", left derelict for many decades in the depths of the forest, was formerly a post-war army listening post. This forest still exists in nature, but the landscape of this image was built on the ruins of history, and the only living survivors in Margret Eicher's work are the cartoon characters of mass media – and the bees sustaining life on our planet. Her forest is unnaturally lush, a classical image of a timeless paradise transposed upon the debris of the past. The classical composition of Eicher's tapestry comments wryly on both the chaotic history of Central Europe, and the

mass media infiltrating every part of our daily lives. While the art-historical quotations that underlie all of Eicher's work, are here humorously alluded to in the names of the four characters central to the composition - Leonardo, Donatello, Raphael, and Michelangelo - Eicher reanimates what is often regarded as the antiquated art form of tapestry into an undeniably contemporary expression. In her Media Tapestries space and time intertwine by recontextualizing appropriated images in stories of futures past.

ARTIST BIO: Margret EICHER

www.margreteicher.de

Margret Eicher (born1955 in Viersen, Germany. Lives and works in Berlin, Germany.) is renowned as a digital artist who works with the textile medium of tapestry. Having studied at the Düsseldorf Art Academy (1973-1979) with a focus on drawing, Eicher subsequently developed the technique of "Copy Collage", to become part of the Copy Art movement, duplicating motifs in the public domain by means of ordinary laser copies. Since the early 2000s, the artist has become known for her "Medientapisserien" (Media Tapestries): digital montages of image motifs commenting on the mass media and ever-accelerating information age of the 21st century, which she produces as woven tapestries. Invoking the historical significance of tapestries as signifiers of wealth and power, formerly limited to the nobility, Margret Eicher's tapestries feature the superstars of today. Working for over 25 years with this practice of digital collage, she spins intricate visual narratives combining quotations from art history with diverse icons of popular culture. Drawing on the historical canon of European art, she populates her motifs with contemporary characters from film and television, advertising, the music industry, video games and the vast digital image archive of the internet. These digital collages are then woven on digital Jacquard looms into tapestries. The Jacquard loom, dating back to the turn of the 19th century, with its binary punch-card technology, is widely considered to be the forefather of the computer. Eicher's Media Tapestries move in a hybrid manner between digital and textile; between mystical narratives and complex media worlds.

Selected recent solo museum exhibitions include: Museum Schloss Gottorf, Schleswig, Germany (2025); Albrechtsburg Castle Museum, Meissen, Germany (2024); Moritzburg Museum, Hall, Germany (2022-23); Haus am Lützowplatz, Berlin, Germany (2021); Museum Villa Stuck, Munich, Germany (2020); Sprengel Museum, Hannover, Germany (2018); YAY Gallery, Baku, Azerbaijan (2015);. Selected recent group museum shows: Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Germany (2025); Kunsthalle Baden-Baden, Germany (2025); Wilhelm Hack Museum, Ludwigshafen, Germany (2025); Deutsches Textilmuseum, Krefeld, Germany (2024); Kasteel D'Ursel Castle Museum, Hingene/Antwerp, Belgium (2024); Museum Merano Arte, Merano Italy (2024); Eutin Castle Museum, Eutin Germany (2023); KAI 10 Arthena Foundation, Düsseldorf, Germany (2023); ZKM Karlsruhe/ European Culture Capitale Luxembourg (2022); Boghossian Foundation Villa Empain, Brussels, Belgium (2022); Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Schloss Pillnitz Museum, Dresden Germany (2021); Zentrum für Aktuelle Kunst, Berlin, Germany (2020); Me Collectors Room, Berlin, Germany (2019); Museum Schloss Caputh, Stiftung Staatlicher Schlösser und Gärten, Potsdam, Brandenburg, Germany (2019); München Kunstpavillion, Munich, Germany (2019); Museum Villa Rot, Burgrieden, Germany (2019); Kunstverein Pforzheim Museum, Pforzheim Germany (2018); Haus am Lützowplatz, Berlin Germany (2018); KunstHaus Potsdam Kunstverein, Potsdam Germany (2018); Museum Liner, Appenzell, Switzerland (2017); Kunsthalle der Sparkasse Leipzig, Germany (2017); Kunstmuseum Singen, Singen Germany (2017); ZKM, Karlsruhe, Germany (2017); Sprengel Museum, Hannover, Germany (2017); Kunstverein Ulm, Germany (2016); Kunstverein Bellevue-Saal, Wiesbaden, Germany (2016); Port 25 Raum für Gegenwartskunst, Mannheim, Germany (2016); Museum Pfalzgalerie, Kaiserslautern, Germany (2016); Kunsthalle am Hamburger Platz, Berlin, Germany (2015); Spazio Luparia, Stresa, Italy (2015); Gallery of Art Critics Palace Adria, Prague, Czech Republic (2015); KHM - Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Vienna, Austria (2015).

FENG Bingyi

MOMO

2016

2-channel video installation:

The starting point is also the end point, HD video, 7:39, colour, sound

Monument, HD video, 4:25, b/w, silent

Courtesy A Thousand Plateaus Art Space, Chengdu

The 2-channel video installation, *MOMO*, is loosely based on the eponymous heroine of the 1973 fantasy novel "*Momo, or the strange story of the time-thieves and the child who brought stolen time back to the people*", by German author, Michael Ende. In a poetic approximation of this story about time thieves, *MOMO* is a meditation upon the future and the past as one state of being – a wrinkle in time which enfolds countless futures and pasts – much like the two unsynchronized channels of this video installation will forever create a new confluence of images, the work never visually repeating itself in quite the same way. Feng Bingyi describes this artwork as, "Momo is a character that exists outside of time, as if she could be absolutely still or a being that remains in perpetual motion. As such, even she can't figure out which dimension she exists in. Momo is a person who is not limited by time and space, being both our oldest ancestor and a modern person, and it can be said that she is both a person from the time of the world's origin and the formation of the Earth, and a person from the time of the universe's demise and destruction." In the film, Feng Bingyi has Momo say, "I tried to measure the forms of time - in a geographical way. I now ride on billions of torn molecules experiencing a myriad of possibilities. I - am Momo herself - and you too. I exist in space and time, I am the fragments and the whole subject, and our story never ends". Much as the literary basis of this artwork is a fantasy of travel through time and space, so too does Feng Bingyi invoke the quantum principles of parallel universes to create a character who within herself encompasses both many futures and many pasts. As the work unfolds, we watch Momo speak soundlessly, perhaps narrating the tale of a mountaineer lost amongst the snowy peaks above the clouds. While on the adjoining screen, this timeless woman, existing in two places at once, walks alone through various eerily empty landscapes and waterfronts; tidal flatlands, endless fields, waves gently lapping along beaches, twinkling stars in a dark sky which could actually be the lava flow marking the earth's beginning and end. These are cyclical landscapes: tide following tide, day following day and creation following destruction in the perpetual cycle of futures past.

ARTIST BIO: FENG Bingyi

www.1000plateaus.org/artists/36-feng-bingyi/

Feng Bingyi (born 1991 in Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, China. Lives and works in Shanghai.) is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice spans video installations, digital painting, photography, animation, and spatial/media art. Drawing poetic inspiration from texts, cinema, and the cosmos, she explores the fracture between text and image. Feng takes existing texts, dissects their logical structures, and reconstructs narrative spaces that feel both poetic and philosophical. She combines elements from cinema—particularly experimental and poetic film language—with digital imagery and installation to immerse viewers in introspective realms. Her core themes include humanity's relationship with the universe, existential wonder, and collective connectivity. One of China's most compelling voices in emergent media art, Feng Bingyi crafts audiovisual experiences that feel like cinematic dreams made of words, film, and celestial wonder. Her practice is steeped in the timeless tremor of human longing.

In 2013 Feng Bingyi earned her B.A. from the School of Intermedia Art, China Academy of Arts, Hangzhou, then completed an M.F.A. with distinction at Chelsea College of Arts, University of the Arts London, in 2015. Recent solo exhibitions include: She Walks in Beauty, Fool's Gold, Cold Truth (A Thousand Plateaus Art Space, Chengdu, China, 2020/2018/2016); The Story of Your Life II (Surplus Space, Wuhan, China, 2017). Selected group exhibitions include: 2020: Future, Future (CEF Art Theater). 2019: VT Art Salon, Taipei, Taiwan; China Academy of Art Museum, Hangzhou, China; UNArt Center, Shanghai, China; The Delaware Contemporary, Wilmington, Delaware, USA. 2018: OCT Art and Culture District, Anren, Chengdu, China. 2017: Today Art Museum, Beijing, China; Mode A Contemporary Space, Xiamen, Fujian, China; ZhuZhong Art Museum, Beijing, China; A Thousand Plateaus Art Space, Chengdu, China. 2016: Long March Space, Beijing, China; Between Art Lab, Shanghai; Zhujiajiao Art Space, Shanghai; Vacuum Gallery, Beijing; Shanghai Gallery of Art, Shanghai; Inna Art Space, Hangzhou, China. 2015; Chelsea Cookhouse Gallery, London, UK; Helsinki Festival - Here out There, Helsinki, Finland; MOMENTUM & Leap Labs, Berlin, Germany; CAFA Central Academy of Fine Art, Beijing. 2014: Power Station of Art, Shanghai; Red Brick Art Museum, Beijing; MOMENTUM & Chronus Art Center, Berlin, Germany; Get It Louder Festival, Beijing.

LIAO Wenfeng

Minute Gestures

video installation of 5 video performances:

Radically nodding or shaking the head in front of a landscape (2016), 2-channel, 0:30, colour, silent

*Crossing a river with two chairs* (2016), colour, sound, 1:24

Extending a road (2016), colour, silent, 1:36

Walking on the sky (2016), colour, silent, 1:01

The relatively motionless second (2015), colour, silent, 0:59

Minute Gestures is a series of video works that document the artist's actions carried out within natural landscapes. Through these subtle yet absurd gestures, the works reveal the unnatural qualities inherent in what we perceive as natural scenery. Liao constructs visual play-spaces where the boundaries between object, body, concept and environment are humorously and thoughtfully explored. With minimal setups and poetic actions, each short-form, mute video performance investigates notions of resistance, balance, absurdity, and time. Filmed in natural or constructed landscapes, the artist's presence becomes both subject and tool for subtle intervention. Within his gentle world of Duchampian ready-mades, Liao Wenfeng can leapfrog across a river by using two chairs as stilts, walk across the sky by lying on his back and filming his feet moving in the air, make time stand still by gently rotating a clock through one minute so that its second hand seems to remain at the same spot, or extend the length of a countryside lane by climbing over a step ladder he has carried there and leaving it behind for others. The artist's neo-romantic relationship with nature is reflected in two identical views of the back of his head as he gazes at the sunset over the distant mountains, emphatically shaking his head "no", and nodding his head "yes". In ingenious and witty ways, his works reveal what often remains unseen: the potential poetry and paradoxes hidden in daily life. Together, this body of work playfully asks an all too serious question: what is our impact upon time the landscape around us?

ARTIST BIO: LIAO Wenfeng

https://liaowenfenghs.wixsite.com/liaowenfeng/video
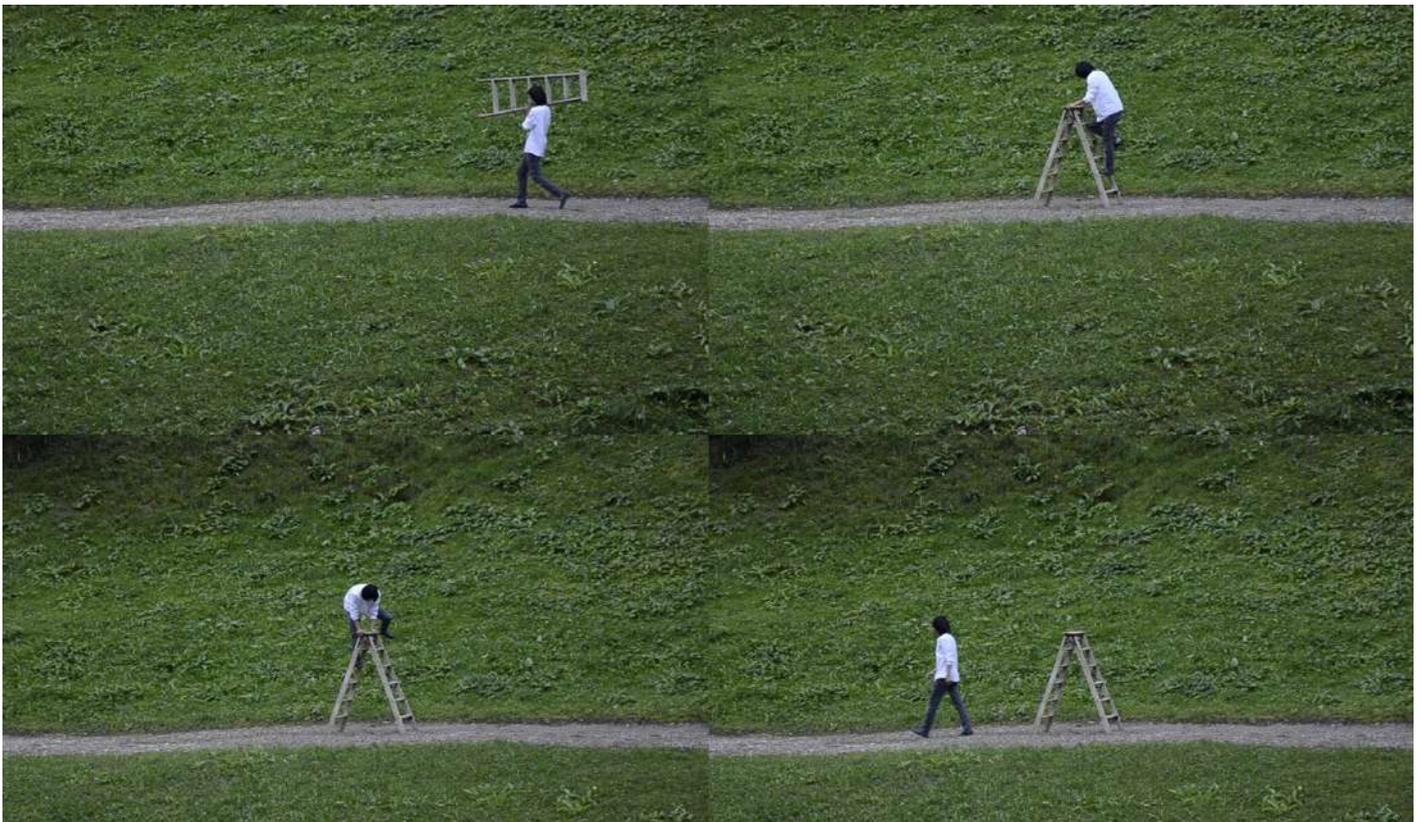
Liao Wenfeng(born 1984 in Jiangxi Province, China. Lives and works in Berlin, Germany.) is a contemporary artist whose interdisciplinary practice spans video art, GIF animation, photography, drawing, painting, sculptural and performance. Graduating from the Total Art Studio at China Academy of Art in Hangzhou in

2006, Liao lived and worked in Shanghai until 2012, During this time he also contributed as a curator at Shanghai Zendai MOMA, participating in major projects like Intrude: Art & Life 366 (2008) and Yang Fudong's solo show Dawn Mist Separation (2009). He earned his M.A. in Art in Context from the Berlin University of the Arts (UdK) in 2016, and has since based his practice in Berlin. Liao's work plays with image and perception: optical illusions, visual puns, art-historical references, and diverse symbols intertwining to reveal paradoxes and hidden poetry in everyday life. Throughout his evolving body of work, Liao continues to challenge perception, inviting audiences into playful experiences of ambiguity, visual wit, and subtle poetic dissonance.

Liao Wenfeng's solo and duo exhibitions include: 2023: "Not Flower, Nor Non-Flower", Inna Art Space, Hangzhou, China. 2022: "light, light", Lechbinska Gallery, Zürich, Switzerland. 2019 : "Water without A Glass", Inna Art Space, Hangzhou, China. 2018: "Eyes Moving A Pencil", Inna Art Space, Hangzhou, China . 2016: "Handing", Big Whale Space, Berlin, Germany. 2012: Minute Gesture, OV Gallery, Shanghai, China. Solo Projects: 2018: "Small Paths", Videokunst.ch (Showroom im PROGR), Bern, Switzerland. 2013: 17ZWEI - A Public Art Project, Hardbrücke Zürich, Switzerland. 2010: 1467+, Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow

and Landscape Research, Zurich, Switzerland. Group shows include: 2024: Spoiler Aktionsraum, Berlin, Germany; Inna Art Space, Hangzhou, China. 2022: GLUE, Berlin, Germany; KINDL Center for Contemporary Art, Berlin, Germany. 2021: alte feuerwache/projektraum–Galerie, Berlin, Germany; Inna Art Space, Hangzhou, China. 2020: Videocity, Congress Center Basel, Basel, Switzerland. 2019: Shenzhen Pingshan International Sculpture Exhibition, Shenzhen, China. 2018: Inna

Art Space, Hangzhou, China; Hive Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China. 2017: Diskurs Gallery, Berlin, Germany; CAFAM, Beijing, China; OCAT Shanghai, Shanghai, China; Inna Art Space, Hangzhou, China. 2016: 3rd Shenzhen Independent Animation Biennale, OCT-LOFT, Shenzhen, China; Minsheng Art Museum, Shanghai, China; The 1st Daojiao New New Art Festival, Dongguan, China; Migrant Birds Gallery, Berlin, Germany. 2015: East West Encounters International Photo Festival, Xiamen, China; V Art Center, Shanghai, China; The 3rd Ural Industrial Biennial of Contemporary Art, Ekaterinburg, Russia; Inna Artspace, Hangzhou, China; MOMENTUM, Berlin, Germany; CAFAM, Beijing, China; Vitamin Creative Space, Guangzhou, China. 2014: ART·SANYA, Sanya, China; 21st Century Minsheng Art Museum, Shanghai; amongst others.

LONG Pan

Wind Bell

2021

2-channel video installation:

Extract (2021), HD video, colour, sound, 13:34

Wind Bell (2021), HD video, colour, sound, on loop

Long Pan's Phytometallurgy Series, of which "Wind Bell" is a part, harnesses plants to extract and visualize heavy metals, translating microscopic contamination into tangible art, in a kind of aesthetic alchemy. The "Wind Bell" project involves extracting copper from polluted reeds in Guiyu, Guangdong Province, China – widely considered to be the world's largest electronic waste site. Using phytomining technology (recycling metal from plants that accumulate metals), Long Pan melted the extracted copper into a ceremonial bell, reflecting on recovery and resilience. When the wind blows, the distinct metallic chime of the bell contrasts with the gentle rustling of reeds in the landscape – perhaps as a warning bell sounding an SOS for the environment. Bridging science and poetics, the creation of this wind bell is not only an illustration of alienation within the environment, but also an expression of the dramatically different scales of time of the seemingly indestructible mineral, and the vulnerable, much shorter scale of organic and human life. Long Pan shows us all too clearly the devastating impact that mankind has upon the very landscapes that sustain us. With heavy metals from pollution entering the food chain to such an extent that plants, animals and humans now absorb them, it is frightening to think what the landscapes of the future will look like.

ARTIST BIO: LONG Pan

www.longpanstudio.com

Long Pan (born 1991 in Yichun, China. Lives and works in Jiangxi, China.) graduated from the Intermedia Department of China Academy of Art in 2019 with a master's degree. Currently living in Jiangxi, her recent work has often happened in China's southwestern and northwestern regions. Her works are based on field visits to different sites and collaborations with biological media in laboratories. Fungi and plants are her main research subjects; she has used biotechnologies such as "Phytometallurgy," "Fungal Degradation," and "Plant Glazing" to make visible the invisible alienation in the environment. Her research focuses on interpreting the deeper and often overlooked relationships between humanity's survival and the environment within contemporary industrial society from a non-human perspective, aiming to explore and reveal the "hidden correspondence" within the entire web of life humans inhabit. In recent years, her long-term projects include: "Mountain deities for sale" which explores the entangled relationship between minerals in the Mountains and undergrowth species (2022–); and "Leaves," utilizing glazing techniques to use plants as environmental indicators (2022–).

In 2022, Long Pan received the Prince Claus Fund Mentor Award for Cultural & Artistic Responses to Environmental Change and was selected for the Beijing Contemporary Art Foundation's Women Artists Award, sponsored by Christie's. She has undertaken prestigious artist residencies at: Pro Helvetia Arts Council, Switzerland (2024);The Swatch Art Peace Hotel, Shanghai, China (2022); Emerging Curators Online Project, PSA Power Station of Art Shanghai, China (2021); V2 Summer Sessions & Points Art Center, Jiangsu, China (2020); Dwelling in Catastrophe, DAC Dimensions Art Center,

Chongqing, China (2019); Design and Thinking, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong, China (2018). Her works are included in "Art and Ecological Impact: A Contemporary Artist's Guide to Environmental Practice" (edited by Mary Mattingly, Yale University Press, 2027).

Her recent solo exhibition "Flux in Dust" was held at Chronus Art Center, Shanghai, China (2022). Selected recent group exhibitions include: Moscow Biennale of Environment (Nizhny Novgorod, Russia, 2025), Pulse Gravity (506 Gallery, Porto Alegre, Brazil, 2025), Signals of the Visible and Invisible (Radical Fungi, Ohio, USA, 2024); Pearl Art Museum, Shanghai, China (2023); SNAP Art Center, Shanghai, China (2023); Beijing Art Biennale, Beijing, China (2022); Mecalline Art Center, Beijing, China (2022); Wuhan Biennale, Wuhan Art Museum, Wuhan, China (2022); CGK Contemporary Gallery Kunming, Yunnan, China (2022); The 8th Duolun Youth Art Exhibition, Duolun Museum, Shanghai, China (2022); Chengdu Biennale, Tianfu Art Museum, Chengdu, China (2021);   MCAM Art Museum, Shanghai, China (2021); OCT Art Center, Shenzhen, China (2020); Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennial, Niigata, Japan (2020); Fosun Art Center, Shanghai, China (2019).

KateMcMILLAN

The Past Is Singing In Our Teeth

2017/2025

2-channel HD video installation, colour, sound

6:33; 3:11

The Past is Singing in our Teeth (2017-25), by British/Australian artist Kate McMillan interweaves the real and imagined histories and dreams of the artist's mother, and a young girl played by the artist's daughter. Steeped in a shamanistic ritual of the artist's own invention, this intergenerational 'fairy tale' fills the gaps in memory that time and migration leave for the imagination. This video installation extends the notion that artworks, objects and even smells can serve as an umbilical cord back in time, thus functioning as an intermediary with the past. In this case, the past is a fictional reinvention of histories and memories lost to past generations. *The Past is Singing in our Teeth* reconstructs a labyrinth of lost things through a film-based installation that imagines a lost archive of women's knowledge, a remembrance of which is triggered through the exploration of objects and landscapes.

Filmed at four diverse landscapes in Britain, this work unfolds as a visual poem interwoven across two unsynchronized videos. In the larger of the two projections, a ghostly girl appears and disappears on a windswept beach beneath looming cliffs. Collecting seashells, she holds a conch shell to her ear to listen to the memories of the ocean's song. This translucent girl appears again in the landscape beside a lake, and amongst the trees of a sun-dappled forest. Wearing a 'spell gown' and a silver necklace studded with the girl's own baby teeth, she carries through the forest sculptural instruments used in the making of the subtle soundtrack of this work. These ritualized objects, created by the artist from artifacts of her memories, are the focus of the second projection, in which the same young girl plays with hag stones and sculptures, while the artist's hand comes into view, writing new narratives or re-writing old ones in the incomprehensible shorthand of her mother's handwriting. Through this poetic palimpsest of imagery, this work amplifies the unseen, articulating the way memory inflects and informs the present, not as a series of linear and knowable narratives, but as an ambiguous, constantly changing, beautiful and haunting residue of the past. In so doing, it intrinsically captures how we are rooted in the landscapes of our own histories.

ARTIST BIO: Kate McMILLAN

www.katemcmillan.net

Dr Kate McMillan (born 1974 in Hampshire, UK. 1982-2012 Perth, Australia. Lives and works in London, UK) is an artist based in London. She works across media including film, sound, installation, sculpture, and performance. Her work addresses a number of key ideas including the role of art in attending to impacts of the Anthropocene, lost and systemically forgotten histories of women, and the residue of colonial violence in the present. She is the author of the annual report "Representation of Female Artists in Britain" commissioned by the Freelands Foundation. Her academic monograph 'Contemporary Art & Unforgetting in Colonial Landscapes: Empire of Islands' (2019, Palgrave Macmillan) explores the work of a number of first nation female artists from the global south, whose work attends to the aftermath of colonial violence in contemporary life. McMillan is currently a Reader in Creative Practice and Deputy Head of the Department of Culture, Media and Creative Industries at King's College, London.

Kate McMillan's previous solo exhibitions include 'The River's Stomach (Songs of Empire), 2025 commissioned by theCOLAB at The Roman Bath's on Strand Lane; 'Never at Sea', St Mary le Strand Church, London, UK (2023), touring to Salisbury Cathedral, UK, in 2025; 'The Lost Girl, Arcade Gallery, London (2020); '*The Past is Singing in our Teeth*' presented at MOMENTUM, Kunstquartier Bethanian, Berlin, Germany (2017), which in 2018, toured to the Civic Room in Glasgow, and Arusha Gallery for the Edinburgh Arts Festival in Scotland. Other solo exhibitions include 'Instructions for Another Future' (2018), Moore Contemporary, Australia; 'Songs for Dancing, Songs for Dying' (2016), Castor Projects, London, UK; 'The Potter's Field' (2014), ACME Project Space, London, UK; 'Anxious Objects', Moana Project Space, Australia; 'The Moment of Disappearance' (2014), Performance Space, Sydney, Australia; and other earlier exhibitions. Her work has been featured in various museums and biennales, including the 17th Biennale of Sydney, Australia (2010); the Trafo Centre for Contemporary Art, Poland (2013-14); Minsheng Art Museum, Shanghai (2015); Art Gallery of Western Australia; Gertrude Contemporary, Melbourne, Australia; Perth Institute for Contemporary Art; John Curtin Gallery, Perth; Govett Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth, New Zeland and the Australian Centre for Photography, Sydney.

Her work is held in private collections around the world, as well as in the Christoph Merian Collection, Basel; Soho House Collection, London; The Ned 100, London; Art Gallery of Western Australia; Wesfarmers Arts Collection; KPMG; Murdoch University, Australia; University of Western Australia and Curtin University, Australia. Since 2002 she has also undertaken residencies in London, Tokyo, Basel, Berlin, Sydney, Beijing and Hong Kong. She has resided on the Board of the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (PICA) and the National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA) based in Sydney.

Danie MELLOR

Dark star waterfall

2025

3-channel 4K video projection, colour, sound

25:10

Courtesy Cassandra Bird Gallery, Sydney

Dark star waterfall, Mellor's major new two-channel video, contemplates the immense power of elemental forces through its sweeping vistas of rainforest Country. The "Dark Star", an early astronomical term for a Black Hole, is symbolically expressed here by the irresistible pull of water towards a waterfall and its subsequent "fall" when the precipice and the edge of the waterfall become, at a certain point, inescapable. In a converse way this happens when the event horizon of a Dark Star blocks the flow of light and matter from escaping it. Mellor has used both infrared and visible light cameras to film waterfalls situated in the traditional Ngadjon and Mamu Country on the Atherton Tablelands in ways that have extended his previous use of still photography as a symbolic means of disclosure and revelation. Historic footage shot both there and in the Cairns region is interspersed throughout the video, crossing over and blending the timelines of past and present, to provide a counterpoint to Mellor's contemporary imagery.
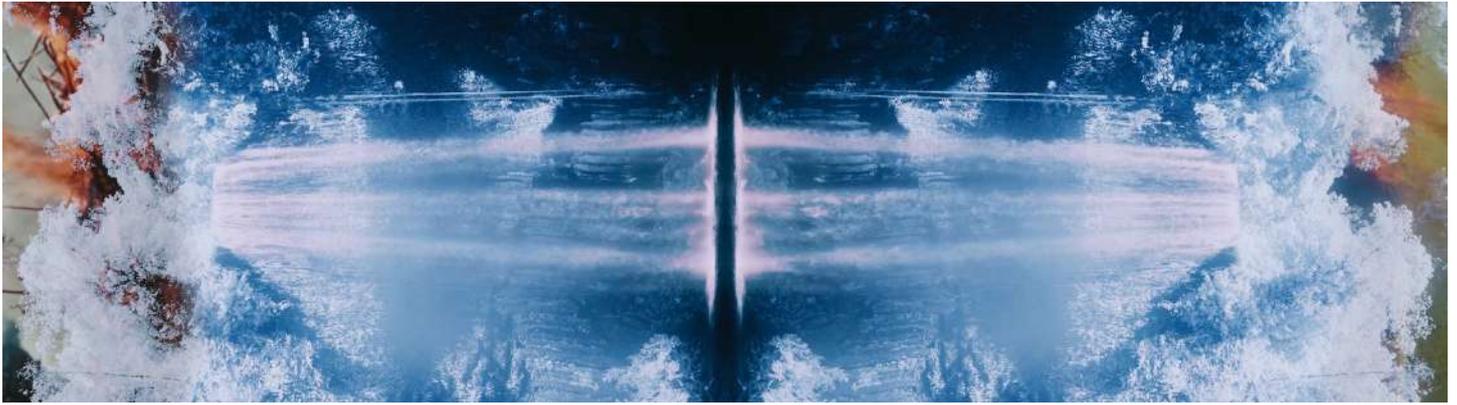
In this work, Mellor sees a convergence of time, creation, power, and the sublime, which are all explored through the phenomena of landscape and nature. At its heart, he seeks to reveal the invisible by conveying the subtlety and enormity of both the material and immaterial world through ideas of overlapping timelines (past, present, future) in cultural and scientific terms. Traversing a timeless plane, reaching back to *jujuba,* the ancient time of the totems, and across Country (the traditional lands of his people), it seeks to understand the universe itself. Several audio sequences in the film are based on the sonification of astronomical data, (including infrared light), and Sagittarius A*, (Sgr A*), the supermassive Black Hole at the centre of our Milky Way is converted into audible tones. This reference to astronomical data reinforces the connection of "local" cosmology to the video, and the Milky Way as the place of origin and habitat of the Rainbow Serpent (often known in Aboriginal cultures as the "Creator God"); it also emphasizes the significance of *Yamani* (a "rainbow" or the coming together of different peoples and languages in song) and its centrality to Aboriginal rainforest legends of landscape and creation.

There are no words for "time" or "future" in the 500 languages of the First Peoples of Australia who, according to their beliefs, conceptualise the Universe, the World, and their place in it, in different *Dreamings*. These mythological orders of harmony between people, plants, animals, and the physical features of their land provide strong expressions of group identity and ways of living, where time is eclipsed by the continuous need to preserve balance through the observance of each Dreaming's stories, landscapes, identity, motifs, rules and moral codes. This continuum also provides a strong aesthetic foundation with which most Australian Aboriginal artists concur. The Dreaming is a perpetual present, where future and past dissolve in the now; it exists *before, within, and beyond* linear time. In this way, it resonates strongly with the themes of cyclical and non-linear time in *Landscapes of Futures Past*. By collapsing distinctions between past, present, and future the Dreaming challenges Western notions of history and progress; it offers instead a vision of time that is present, lived, and ever active. The land is a living archive of these stories, and Aboriginal art often makes visible the unseen layers of these Dreamings. In this way, The Dreaming becomes a vital lens through which we can understand alternate temporalities and landscapes —those of futures that are not just imagined, but remembered.

As a living archive the Aboriginal concept of The Dreaming is inseparable from landscape. Far from being just a passive backdrop, physical environment or resource, the land becomes a holder of time, an active, sentient, and sacred *Country*. The Dreaming complicates Western notions of landscape as something to be framed, owned, or developed by positioning it instead as alive, storied and sacred – as a vast, ongoing network of ancestral narratives that are inscribed into the land in its rivers, rocks, deserts, and skies. The Dreaming shows us that landscape is where all times meet, and where the future may already be present, waiting to be remembered. This understanding resonates profoundly with the exhibition's exploration of layered temporalities, shifting ecologies, and the reactivation of pasts within imagined futures.
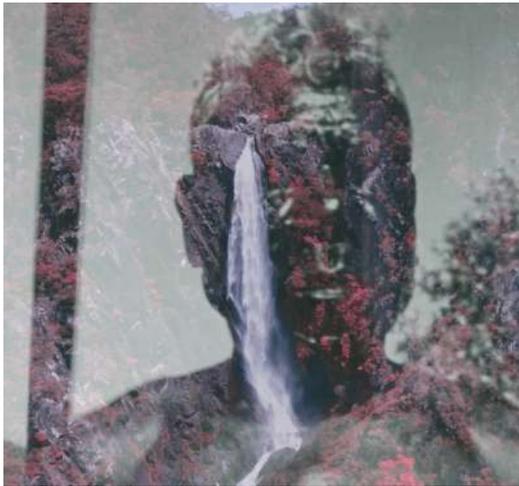
Historic footage and images: National Film and Sound Archive of Australia, Queensland State Archives, State Library of Queensland.

ARTIST BIO: Danie MELLOR

www.daniemellor.com

Danie Mellor (born 1971 in Mackay, Queensland, Australia. Lives and works in the Southern Highlands, New South Wales, Australia.) is an award-winning Australian artist of Ngadjon and Mamu Aboriginal, Scottish-Irish, and settler heritage. His interdisciplinary practice draws on his Indigenous and Anglo-Australian background to consider Australia's colonial past and its legacies today. He holds a Master's degree in Fine Art from the Birmingham Institution of Art & Design, University of Central England, and a PhD from the National Institute of the Arts, Australian National University (ANU), Canberra, Australia. Mellor's multidisciplinary research and practice explore intersections between contemporary and historic culture, and the legacies of cultural memory and knowledge. His works - held in in all major Australian public collections as well as the National Gallery of Canada, British Museum, and National Museums Scotland - explore themes that are critically linked to indigenous cultural histories and concepts of the landscape.

Mellor's work examines the entangled narratives of Indigenous and settler histories, colonial ecology, and evolving land relationships. His signature landspace is a richly textured field where archival photographs and colonial artifacts interweave with Aboriginal iconography and rainforest imagery to question what we consider timeless landscape. Through this aesthetic lexicon, Mellor visualises unseen histories—ancestral presences, environmental transformations—and challenges viewers to reflect on memory and witnessing. Whether via pastel drawings, mosaic taxidermies, giant chromogenic panoramas, or infrared video, his art collapses past, present, future into coexisting narratives, proposing that our landscapes are never neutral, but charged with overlapping stories of loss, resilience, and re-imagination.

Selected recent solo exhibitions include: Danie Mellor: marru | the unseen visible, Queensland Art Gallery, Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, Australia (2025); Redux, Tolarno Galleries for PHOTO 2022 Festival, Melbourne, Australia (2022); Jujaba [a thought space], Artspace, Sydney, Australia (2021); The Sun Also Sets, Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne, Australia (2020); The Landspace: [all the debils are here], Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne, Australia (2018); Exotic Lies Sacred Ties, The University of Queensland Art Museum, TarraWarra Museum of Art, and Museum & Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Australia (2014). Selected recent group exhibitions have been held at: Fondation Opale, Lens, Switzerland (2023); Ngununggula, Bowral, Australia (2022); Dobell Australian Drawing Biennale, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia (2020); Adelaide Biennale of Australian Art, AGSA Art Gallery of South Australia & The Anna and Gordon Samstag Museum, Adelaide, Australia (2016); 8th Asia Pacific Triennale of Contemporary Art, Queensland Art Gallery, Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, Australia (2015-16); Edinburgh International Festival, National Museum of Scotland (2014); National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada (2013), and others.
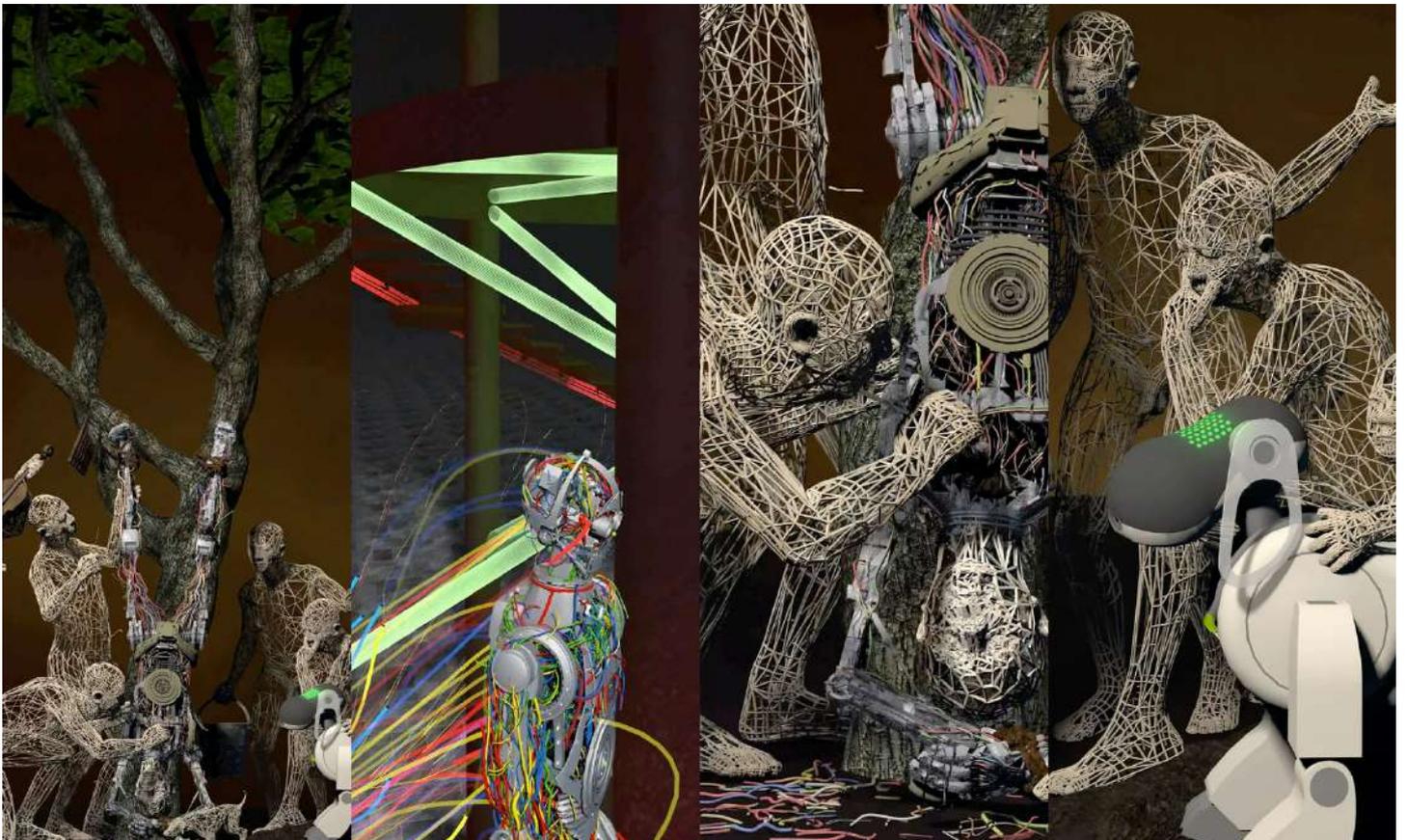
MIAO Xiaochun

Limitless

2011-2012

4-Channel 3D computer animation, colour, sound

11:15

The work of Beijing-based artist Miao Xiaochun, a pioneer of digital animation in China, addresses the cycles of history, the rise and fall of civilisations, and the extinction, survival, and rebirth of cultures. His consistent quotations of a diversity of masterpieces from art history, always reimagining them through modern technologies and contexts, is a way of bringing the past, present and future together. By transposing the compositions and emotional intensity of the western canon of old master paintings and classical music into a contemporary Asian context, he creates arcs of incident and images of action that reflect how, whatever their origins, artists have always reacted to the times and places in which they live.

In an increasingly virtual and technologically-mediated world, when access to art, music and literature has become universally available, Miao challenges conventional notions of authenticity, authorship, and the future role of humanity. Yet, in art, repetition has often been a necessary first step to innovation, and Miao illustrates, as do the works by a number of other artists in this exhibition, how creative synergy may be derived not only from the stimulus of other art, but also from that of literature, architecture, popular culture and music. In this expanded field of references, new visions of the future take shape; hybrid, recombinant, and deeply reflective of our mediated present.

In an investigation of the relationship between art history and contemporary digital culture, with the music of Franz Schubert's romantic *Symphony No.8*, (*The Unfinished*, 1822) playing in the background, Miao's animation *Limitless* (2011-12) is composed of 18 scenes designed around compositions by the artists Giovanni Bellini (1430-15160), Caravaggio (1571-1610), Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528), Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840), Francisco Goya (1746-1840), Edvard Munch (1865-1944), Titian

(1488/90-1576), Paul Cézanne (1839-1906) and Bill Viola (1951-2024), in dialogue with quotations from contemporary popular culture. Opening with the bucolic idyll of livestock foraging in a wooded mountainous landscape, this timeless pastoral setting is suddenly occupied by the artist's futuristic avatars; transparent sillouettes of the artist's body, traced out of flowing energy lines, at times disintegrating, at others breakdancing. A plane flying through a reconstruction of a classical painting, a possible "Last Supper" repopulated by multiples of the artist poised over a sumptuous banquet, sprays pesticides onto the feast. Floating in a space capsule, the artist rediscovers how to make fire, while robotic avatars build more of themselves. Animals invade the digital world of the avatars, while they dream of crucifixions. Avatars made out of petroleum fly around an oil rig, while others made of translucent water gaze our over a golden sunset landscape, bringing us full circle with the beginning. Celebrating humankind's achievements and failures, hopes and threats, this strange sequence of events is multiplied through repetition. Within the nearly infinite permutations of *Limitless*, it

seems, there are no boundaries between past and future, life, death, heaven, purgatory or hell where the human and the virtual soul confront each other in a world of ignorance, indifference, cruelty, pollution and threatened extinction.

Limitless uncovers an unsettled universe where infinite mutability competes with chaos in an interconnected torrent of simultaneous ideas. In four sardonic, surreal, humorous, potentially tragic, and "limitless" loops projected on adjacent vertical screens, unsynchronised images unfold in a multiplicity of sequences and viewpoints. While the videos playing on each screen are identical, the disjointed sequence in which they are played means that the images never line-up in the same way twice. Though the footage is the same, the de-synchronisation fractures linear time, creating a sense of temporal dislocation and multiplicity. This endlessly shifting configuration evokes the idea of a multiverse—a reality composed not of a single, fixed timeline but of countless parallel possibilities. These echoing timelines suggest that we do not inhabit a singular, fixed present, but rather coexist across multiple planes of reality—sliding between potential pasts and speculative futures. In this looping, layered installation small shifts constantly create nearly infinite permutations of new contexts and new narratives; and time, like landscape, is no longer singular but kaleidoscopic. This work visualises the fragmentation of time and narrative in the digital age, where memory, identity, and history are no longer linear but constantly re-edited and reframed. The repetition-with-variation structure — a cycle of echo and deviation, an ever-evolving refrain — reflects the recursive nature of human attempts to understand the past or imagine the future: always revisiting, never arriving.

ARTIST BIO: MIAO Xiaochun

www.miaoxiaochun.com

Miao Xiaochun (born 1964 in Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, China. Lives and works in Beijing.) received his bachelor's degree from Nanjing University in 1986. In 1989 he graduated from the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, and from the Kassel Academy of Fine Arts in Germany in 1999, with two master's degrees. He is currently a professor of Art Photography and Digital Media at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing. His pedagogical approach integrates traditional artistic methodologies with the exploration of new media technologies, empowering a new generation of artists to blend classical techniques with contemporary innovations.

Miao Xiaochun is considered one of the most representative and influential artists in the domain of China's new media art, known for his innovative use of digital technology to explore themes of time, history, and the cultural

implications of globalization. Since the 1990s he has been consistently exploring the interface between the real and the virtual. His extensive body of work includes photography, painting, CGI digital animation, 3D modelling and 3D printing – techniques which are often interwoven to inform one another. Throughout his practice, Miao investigates the relationship between art history and contemporary digital culture. By reimagining canonical Western masterpieces through modern technology—photographing himself into CGI re-creations of Michelangelo, Bosch, Cranach, Caspar David Friedrich, and countless other icons of art history—he explores multiple-viewpoint perception, the fluidity of virtual space, and our digital re-contextualization of the past and future. Miao Xiaochun is a visionary artist whose work telescopes across eras, fusing historical allegory with futuristic narratives in expanded, immersive formats. Melding Renaissance iconography with digital simulation and self-portraiture, he questions authenticity, perception, and our place within technologically constructed realities - transforming historical and religious imagery into a narrative space that bridges the past with the present. Through his intricate re-imaginings of historical and religious imagery, Miao offers a contemporary commentary on the fusion of East and West, the transformation of historical narratives, and the tension between tradition and modernity. Through both monumental digitally animated works, acrylic-on-linen paintings, and 3D printed sculpture, he questions authenticity, authorship, and humanity's role in a machine-mediated world. Through Miao's idiosyncratic imagination about history and future, his works add an important voice to contemporary negotiations with art history.

Major Biennales include: Ennova Art Biennale vol.01, Langfang, China (2024); Chengdu Biennale, Chengdu Art Museum, China (2023); 55th Venice Biennale, Chinese Pavilion, Italy (2013); 7th Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, Australia (2012); 1st Kiev International Biennial of Contemporary Art, Ukraine (2012); 4th Guangzhou Triennial, Guangdong Museum of Art, China (2012); Busan Biennale, Busan MoMA, Korea (2008); Seoul Media Art Biennale, Korea (2006); Shanghai Biennale, Shanghai Art Museum, China (2002).

Miao Xiaochun's recent solo exhibitions include: Digital Reimagining: New Dimensions, Shanghai Museum of Contemporary Art, Shanghai, China (2023); Future Memories, UCCA Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China (2020); Miao Xiaochun: Gyro Dance, Eli Klein Gallery, New York (2019); 01 Variable Cycle: Miao Xiaochun 2006-2018, OCT Art & Design Gallery, Shenzhen, China (2019); A Temporal World, The Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China (2017); Echo, Galerie Paris-Beijing, Paris (2016); Metamorphosis, Klein Sun Gallery, New York (2016); Miao Xiaochun: Save As, White Box Art Center, Beijing (2015); Miao Xiaochun 2015, Art Museum of Nanjing University of the Arts, Nanjing, China (2015). The Garden of Earthly Delights: Digital Reinterpretations, Yuz Museum, Shanghai, China (2015); amongst many others.

Miao Xiaochun's work is included in important private and museum Public Collections: MoMA, New York, USA; The Metropolitan Museumof Art, New York, USA; The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA, USA; The Smart Museum of Art, Chicago, USA; Pacific Asia Museum, Pasadena, CA, USA; Broad Art Museum, East Lansing, MI, USA; Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna, Austria; Fondation Nationale d'Art Contemporain (FNAC), Paris, France; Singapore Art Museum, Singapore; Shanghai Art Museum, China; M+ Museum Hong Kong, China; Borusan Contemporary, Istanbul, Turkey; Goetz Collection, Munich, Germany; Zabludowicz Collection, London, UK; DSL Collection, Paris, France.

Kirsten PALZ

IMPACT

2023-2025

HD video, colour, sound

12:00

The video *IMPACT* is a comprehensive visual narrative about the global use of 790 pesticides in nature and agriculture. Drawing upon data provided by state government institutions that monitor pesticide usage worldwide, the work is grounded in meticulously sourced information. Through its exploration, *IMPACT* classifies pesticides into subcategories such as herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, rodenticides, acaricides, molluscicides, and more. These substances, integral to modern agricultural practices, are depicted for their pervasive influence on ecosystems. In the video a litany of chemical names, formulae, and classifications, is superimposed over AI-generated images of diverse landscapes and cityscapes where landscapes merge surreal 'larger-than-life' environments with reflections of the fragile state of natural ecosystems affected by pesticide use. The juxtaposition of chemical data and landscape imagery invites viewers to
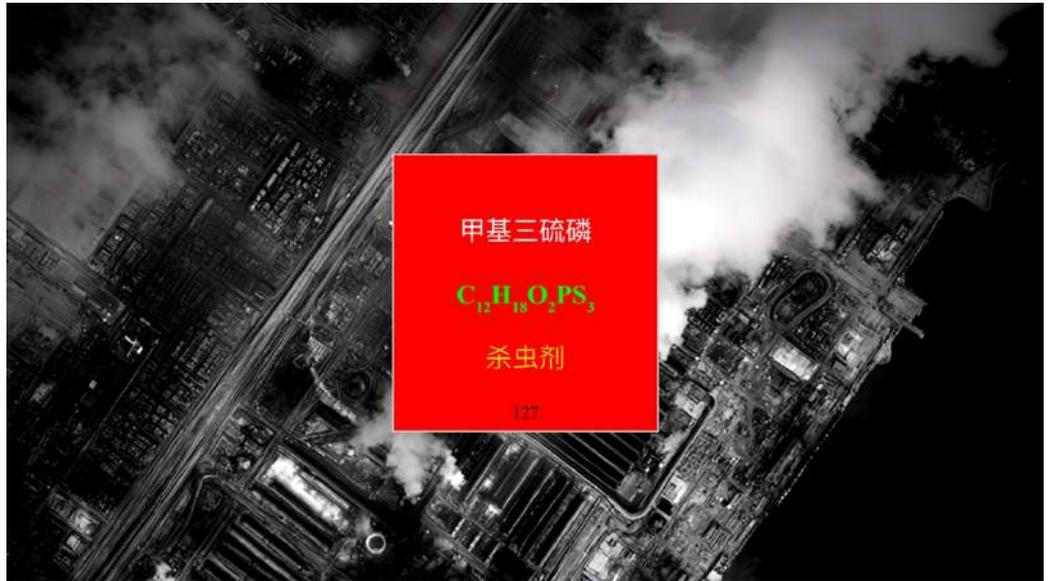
contemplate the complex relationship between human activity and the natural world. *IMPACT* deals with the dependency on pesticides and their consequences for biodiversity, soil health, water systems, and human well-being. Watching this work within the rural landscape of the JYH Museum, we are reminded of agriculture's damaging cycle of dependence on these pesticides that may feed us in the present but starve us in the future. Graphically, with the red squares framing chemical data flashing up in every scene, this work also manifests as an SOS message to our imperilled planet.

ARTIST BIO: Kirsten PALZ

https://kirstenpalz.com/

Kirsten Palz (born 1971 in Copenhagen, Denmark. Lives and works in Berlin.) is a Berlin-based conceptual artist and educator, trained in Fine Arts at the School of Visual Arts, New York (1994–98), and Computer Science at IT-University Copenhagen (1999–2003). Palz interweaves art, technology, language, and ecological critique. Her multidisciplinary practice — collected under the heading "Sculpture as Writing" — blends performance, video, installation, text, generative music, linguistic and structural form, programming, data-mining, and AI-driven media to explore aesthetics, environments, and ecological loss. Her work addresses pressing global issues such as climate change, species extinction, the influence of the pharmaceutical industry, destructive consumption patterns, and the accelerated degradation of Earth's ecosystems. Palz's practice integrates conceptual methodologies with interdisciplinary approaches, research-driven processes, and new technologies. Her methods include self-written texts, the use of AI, pop-cultural aesthetics, and scientific

research methodologies, including research into data from institutional libraries and private companies, to create knowledge-based works. These are collected in Palz's Chronicle of Extinction archive, which centres on themes of climate change and the destruction of biodiversity.

Selected recent solo exhibition include: Pavillon Milchhof, Berlin, Germany (2024); Four Boxes, Krabbesholm, (Denmark) (2024); Changing Room, Berlin, Germany (2022, 2020, 2019); Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, Gemany (2022); Spor Küblü, Berlin, Germany (2020); SCHARAUN, Siemensstadt, Berlin, Germany (2019); Hamburger Bahnhof Museum for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2018); Botschaft, Berlin, Germany (2017); The National Museum, Berlin, Germany (2016); Schwartzsche Villa, Berlin, Germany (2015); Grimmuseum, Berlin, Germany (2015); MOMENTUM, Berlin, Germany (2015); KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, Germany (2014); and many others.

Recent selected group exhibitions include: The National Museum, Berlin, Germany (2025, 2023); Spor Klübü, Berlin, Germany (2024, 2019, 2018, 2016); Gregory Allicar Museum of Art, Colorado State University, Michigan, USA (2023); LAGOS, Mexico City, Mexico (2023); Irenic Projects, Los Angeles, California, USA (2022); Stadtraum, Berlin, Germany (2021); MOMENTUM, Berlin, Germany (2021); Zionskirche, Berlin, Germany (2021); Tokyo Wondersite, Tokyo, Japan (2016); Tete, Berlin, Germany (2016); BarBabette, Berlin, Germany (2015); Den Frie, Copenhagen, Denmark (2015); Month of Performance Art, MOMENTUM, Berlin, Germany (2015); Neue Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen, Berlin, Germany (2014), among many others.

QIU Anxiong

Tian Zhi Xiu Yue (Close to Heaven, Fix the Moon)

2023

4K video animation, colour, sound

8:33
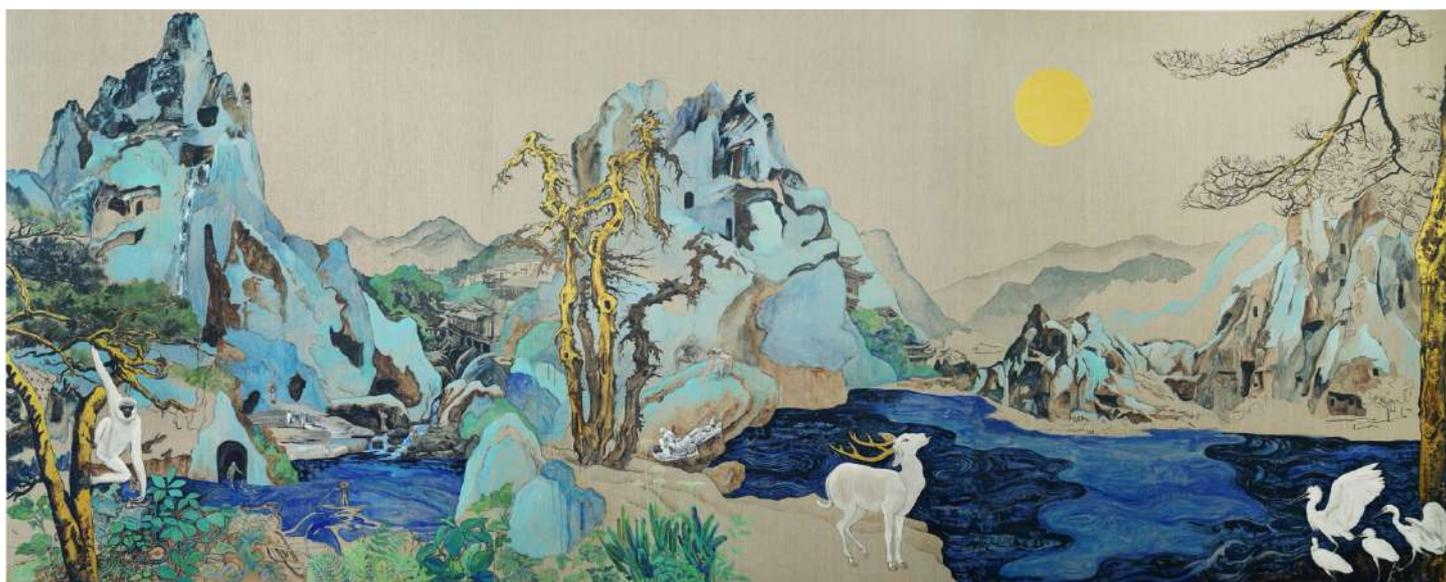
"Tian Zhi Xiu Yue" (Close to Heaven, Fix the Moon) is Qiu Anxiong's animated work in the style of traditional Chinese ink painting. Stylistically a reference to times past, this work marks his first venture into creating coloured ink animations, adopting the colour scheme of Chinese green-blue landscape painting that was already well established by the Tang Dynasty (618-907). The story on which Qiu bases this film, which he has transformed into one of the earliest examples of "science fiction", also dates from this same time. Qiu Anxiong's literary adaptation, that lyrically addresses the topic of travel through space and time, is based on Duan Chengshi's Tang Dynasty novel "Youyang Zazu", which recounts a story about two scholars who, while wandering in the mountains and getting lost, encounter a person in white who claims to come from the moon. This person describes the moon's shape and material composition, how moonlight comes from the reflection of the sun's light, and mentions that 82,000 households are working on repairing the moon, of which he is

presumably one. Qiu Anxiong combines this literary fable with Albert Einstein's famous "Twin Paradox," to structure the entire animation. In an illustration of the principle that time is relative, this paradox supposes that: one of a pair of twin brothers travels through space at the speed of light. For him, the journey does not seem long, but upon returning to Earth a light year later, he finds his twin has aged significantly, while he remains unchanged. To him, it's been a year, but for his brother on Earth, decades have

passed. The animation sets the astronaut, who travels through the universe and arrives in the Tang Dynasty via a wormhole, as the man in white, meeting the two lost scholars in the mountains. This work infuses the traditional Chinese ghost story genre with elements of science fiction, creating a meeting of past, present and future. The juxtaposition of mythological narratives with modern technological tales, collapses time to create a spectral landscape where historic characters and future selves coexist.

ARTIST BIO: QIU Anxiong

https://www.spursgallery.com/Artists/30

Shanghai-based artist Qiu Anxiong　(born 1972 in Chengdu, China. Lives and works in Shanghai.works with painting, sculpture, installation, animation, and is best known for his animated drawings in the style of traditional Chinese ink painting, which have established his practice at the forefront of contemporary experimental ink painting. He renowned for his immersive animations and installations that reimagine classical Chinese ink painting as living narrative maps of environmental and societal transformation. Trained at the Sichuan Academy of Art (1994) and Kunsthochschule Kassel, Germany (2003), he fuses hand-drawn, monochromatic ink-wash sequences with digital animation to create allegorical worlds where mythic creatures traverse landscapes disrupted by industrialization and ecological crisis, critiquing modern civilization's impacts on nature. Qiu Anxiong's work merges classical myth-making with urgent ecological critique, he transforms ancient narratives into living, paradoxical terrains—where folklore morphs into futuristic prophecy. Landscapes become animated archives, where development ravages and redraws ancestral landscapes. His art redefines time as layered and cyclical, confronting viewers with worlds both familiar and eerily alien, and prompting reflections on cultural continuity, environmental destruction, and the stories we tell ourselves in between.

Qiu Anxiong has participated in notable international Biennales, such as: 12th Sharjah Biennale (2015); 7th Asia Pacific Triennale (2012); 4th Singapore Biennale (2011); 9th Gwangju Biennale (2010); 6th Asia Pacific Triennale　(2009); 10th Taipei Biennale (2010); 52nd Venice Biennale (2007); 5th Busan Biennale (2008); 5th Shanghai Biennale (2004). Among a vast number of international exhibitions, in 2013 he participated in and Ink Art: Past as Present in Contemporary China at the Metropolitan Museum, New York, which subsequently collected his work. Qiu Anxiong's work is held in major museum collections around the world: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA; MoMA Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA; Brooklyn Museum, New York, USA; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, LA, California, USA; Arken Museum of Moderne Kunst, Copenhagen, Denmark; Spencer Museum of Art, Kansas, USA; Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, Japan; Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo, Norway; Kunsthale, Zurich, Switzerland; White Rabbit Collection, Sydney, Australia; M+, Hong Kong, China; Yuz Museum, Shanghai, China; Power Station of Art, Shanghai, China.Selected recent solo exhibitions include: A Meandering Song of Early Spring, Chengdu Fosun Foundation, Chengdu, China (2025); Echoes of Time, Beijing ZiWU, Beijing, China (2023); Anima Animal Animism Animation, Amanyangyun-Saisen Art, Shanghai, China (2023); Roam the Earth, Casa Mirror-SURPLUS Space, Wuhan, China (2022); Anthropogene – Siberia, SPURS Gallery, Beijing, China (2021); New Classic of Mountains and Seas, Modern Art Base, Shanghai, China & Boers-Li Gallery, New York, USA (2018); New Classic of Mountains and Seas, Boers-Li Gallery, Beijing, China (2017); Return, July Art Space, Shanghai, China (2016); E-Motion, Galerie Enrico Navarra, Paris, France (2014); Qiu Anxiong, Wooson Gallery, Daegu, South Korea (2014); New Classic of Mountains and Seas Part 2, Aken Museum of Modern Art, Copenhagen, Denmark (2013), and many others.
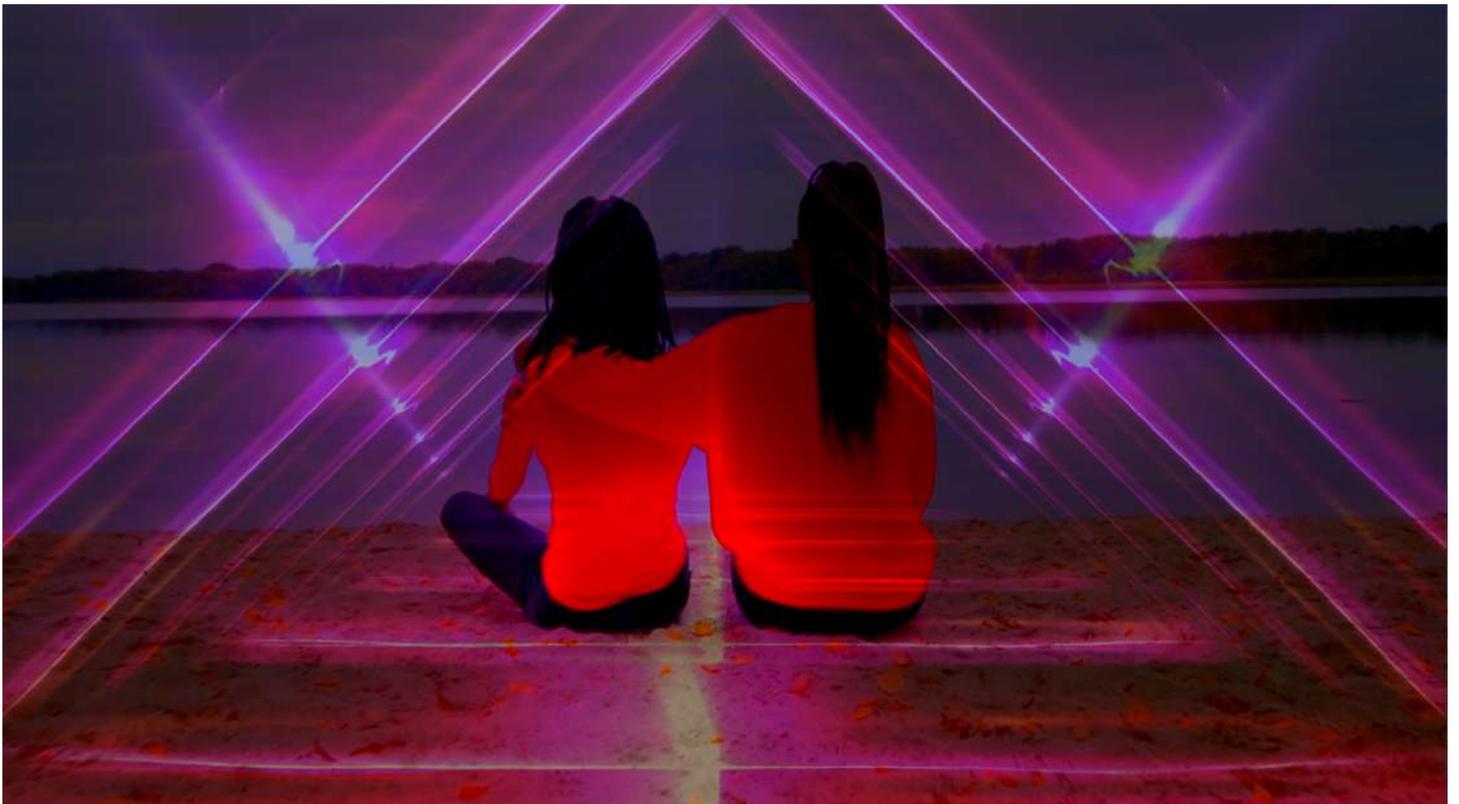
Nina E. SCHÖNEFELD

P. A. R. A. D. I. S. E.

2023/25

HD video, colour, sound

27:23

The video *P. A. R. A. D. I. S. E.* deals with the difference between the experience of virtual reality in artificial space and the experience of physically tangible reality in nature. Even though real reality may often seem surreal, and virtual reality is becoming more and more realistic, there is still a difference between them: the question of truth. The film's premise is also its final line: "We don't need Virtual Reality, we need Virtual

Unreality". The fictional story of Schönefeld's video revolves around *P. A. R. A. D. I. S. E.*, a new Virtual Reality program designed to make its users experience ultimate feelings. In it, people test their limits, blurring the lines between the virtual and the real; while the video contrasts artificially created high-tech shots with documentary-like shots of nature. As in all of Schönefeld's videos, *P. A. R. A. D. I. S. E.* is set in a fictional future that seems close enough to become our imminent reality. Will this virtual world of digitized experience become the landscape of our future?

The word 'paradise', evolving through Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, and Latin traditions to represent everything from Edenic innocence to celestial afterlives, remains in all these languages rooted in the ancient Persian *pairidaeza*, meaning "walled garden". Paradise is a tamed landscape —designed, enclosed, and idealized—a space where nature is shaped by human vision and desire. By this definition, the infinite universes of Virtual Reality could all be called paradise. Yet in Schönefeld's film, her title is a paradox, as the virtual worlds she unfolds are deadly. Unlike the safely enclosed pleasure gardens of its namesake,

Schönefeld's *P. A. R. A. D. I. S. E.* crosses the threshold between the virtual and the real. Schönefeld's futuristic scenarios, set close enough ahead to be just within our reach, are prophetic in the sense that they provide a

glimpse of a future that is all too possible; a digital world in which past, present, and future converge on a virtual plane of inner landscapes that are experienced much more sharply than the real.

TRILOGY OF TOMORROW (D A R K W A T E R S // S N O W F O X // L.E.O.P.A.R.T.) :

DARK WATERS (2018), HD video, b/w & colour, sound, 15:55

SNOW FOX (2018), HD video, b/w & colour, sound, 10:03

L.E.O.P.A.R.T. (2019), HD video, b/w & colour, sound, 17:13

In this haunting trilogy of speculative video narratives, Schönefeld excavates futuristic landscapes that are, in fact, echoes of our present ecological and political crises—turning cautionary prophecies into embodied cinematic warning signs. Schönefeld's films unfold in futures close enough to feel imminent—visions that are not fantastical, but unsettlingly plausible. Her video series, TRILOGY *OF TOMORROW* (*DARK WATERS*// *SNOW FOX* // *L.E.O.P.A.R.T.*), created between 2018 and 2019, was set in the imagined tomorrows of 2023, 2029, and 2032. Now, one of those projected futures has already become our past—transforming what was once fiction into a lived reality. In its convergence of past prediction and future condition, Schönefeld's work echoes the premise of *Landscapes of Futures Past*: it is a meditation on the ways that imagined futures, and experienced pasts, inevitably loop back to define our present landscapes —political, environmental, and psychological.
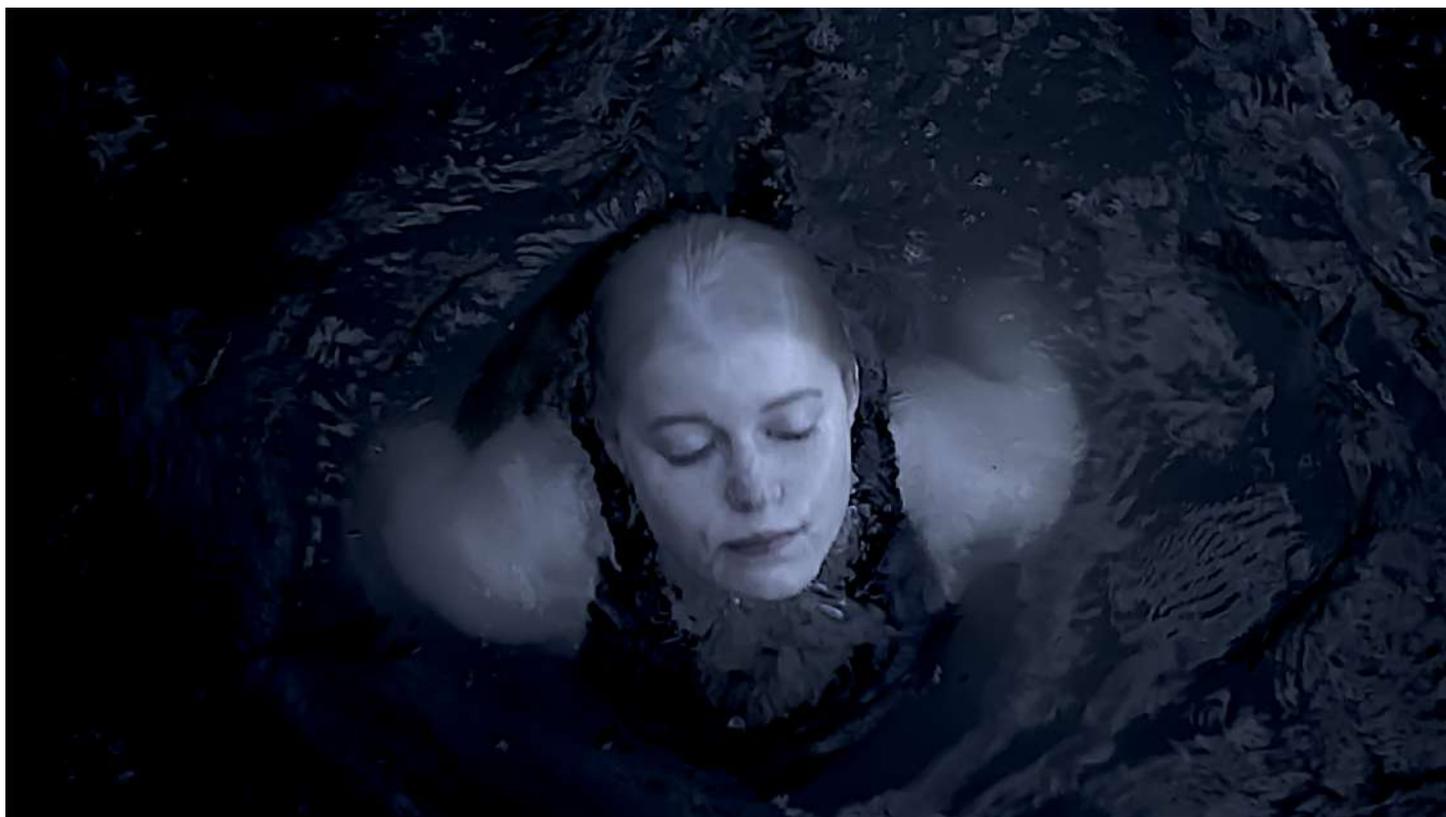
DARK WATERS (2018) unfolds in 2029, in oceans rendered into death zones by plastic pollution. Following the exploits of Silver Ocean, its protagonist, the work becomes a visceral investigation into hidden environmental collapse: a poetic reckoning with seas that once promised life but now are deadly.

SNOW FOX (2018) projects us into 2023, a world manipulated by corporate "weather engineers" whose tampering sows neural disease. Snow Fox, its titular heroine, joins a resistance group of women struggling to reclaim Earth's vanishing landscapes and seeks sanctuary in the last vestiges of wild nature — a terrain made political and personal by their struggle for survival.
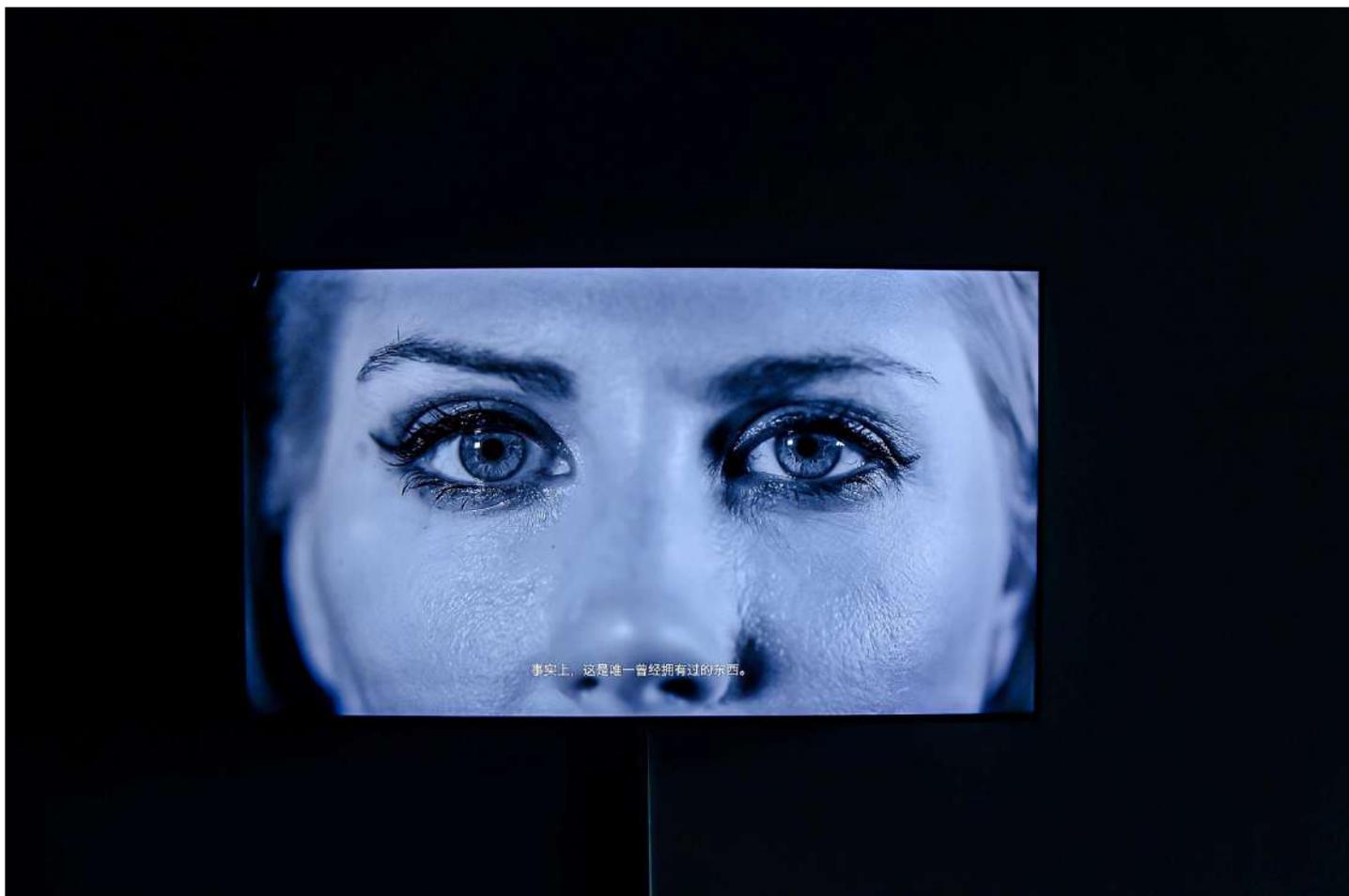
L.E.O.P.A.R.T. (2019) leaps forward to 2032, where mutated crops and a monolithic seed corporation have monopolized life itself. In an insurgent narrative of human agency against engineered ecological futures, L.E.O. establishes a self-sufficient camp where she leads a revolt of survivors who have refused genetic entrapment.

Like a time machine, this trilogy collapses future dystopias and present realities into one liminal space. Schönefeld's cinematic landscapes — polluted seas, weather-scarred wastelands, genetically controlled fields — are simultaneously prophecy and memory and evoke what future generations may look back upon as our unheeded environmental reckoning. Visually rich and emotionally resonant, these video works compel viewers to confront the consequences of our collective inaction. Each layer of the trilogy lives in the shadow of warnings once dismissed, reminding us that for today's landscapes to avoid becoming tomorrow's nightmares, our choices must build upon firm knowledge of the past in order to transform the future.

ARTIST BIO: Nina E. SCHÖNEFELD

www.ninaeschoenefeld.com

Nina E. Schönefeld (born 1972 in Berlin, Germany. Lives and works in Berlin and Ibiza, Spain) is a Berlin-based interdisciplinary artist of German/Polish descent, and PhD scholar in art theory, whose practice spans video, installation, sculpture, light, electronics, and AI-driven media. With influences ranging from the early-20th-century avant-garde to urgent contemporary crises, her cinematic works confront the seductive aesthetics of consumer culture with a sharp political edge. Rather than offering escapism, Schönefeld's immersive narratives expose the cracks in the glossy surface of capitalist modernity. Her work grapples with the most pressing dilemmas of a hyper-mediated, hyper-consumerist West—where environmental collapse, authoritarianism, and algorithmic control are too often obscured by distraction and spectacle. Central to her practice are stories of abrupt societal rupture: digital surveillance, nuclear threat, ecological devastation, and the fragile illusions of freedom under neoliberal systems. Her protagonists—frequently women—navigate dystopian near-futures where rebellion becomes survival, and where the cost of complacency is laid bare.

A selection of Schönefeld's recent major museum and institutional exhibitions includes: 2024 - RIDE OR DIE (solo), KINDL Center for Contemporary Art, Berlin, Germany; NO FUTURE (solo), Lothringer 13 & Münchner Kammerspiele & Habibi Kiosk, Munich, Germany; MSU Museum (CoLab Studio, Michigan State University), Michigan, USA; GDM Contemporary Gallery, Ostrava, Czech Republic. 2023 - FUCK THE SYSTEM (solo), Diskurs Berlin, Germany; Kunsthalle Osnabrück, Germany; Ikono TV, COP28, Dubai; Gong Gallery, with Goethe-Institutes Prague & Bratislava, Ostrava, Czech Republic; Aleš South Bohemian Art Museum, Czech Republic; GDM Contemporary Gallery, Ostrava, Czech Republic; Kultursymposion Weimar, Goethe-Institute & Galerie Eigenheim, Weimar, Germany; LAGOS Gallery, Mexico City, Mexico. 2022 - Enemy Within (solo), Berlin Weekly Gallery; Haus am Lützowplatz, Berlin, Germany; Ikono TV, COP27, Egypt; Diskurs Gallery Berlin, Germany; Artspring-Festival, Berlin, Germany. 2021 - Heidelberger Kunstverein, Heidelberg, Germany; MOMENTUM, Kunstquartier Bethanien, Berlin, Germany; Alte Münze, Berlin, Germany; CICA Museum, Gyeonggi-Do, Korea; Kunstverein Familie Montez, Frankfurt, Germany; Seoul International ALT Cinema & Media Arts Festival (NeMaf), Seoul, Korea; Art Life Foundation, Hong Kong, China; ARTSPRING-Festival, Berlin, Germany; Roppongi Art Festival, Tokyo, Japan. 2020 - Heidelberger Kunstverein, Heidelberg, Germany; Weltkunstzimmer, Düsseldorf, Germany; Kunsthalle Bratislava Museum, Slovakia; Galerie la Pierre Large, Strasbourg, France; MOMENTUM, Kunstquartier Bethanien, Berlin, Germany; Contemplatio Art, Germany. 2019 - Aram Art Museum, Seoul, South Korea; Alternative Culture Making Art Space, Shenzhen, China; Federation Square, Melbourne, Australia; MOMENTUM, Kunstquartier Bethanien, Berlin, Germany; Anima Mundi Festival 2019, Palazzo Ca' Zanardi, Venice, Italy; Bamhaus Luxembourg, Luxembourg; Mitte Media Festival 2019, Berlin, Germany; Made In NY Media Center by IFP, New York City, USA; Villa Heike, Berlin, Germany. 2018 - Berlinische Galerie, Berlin, Germany; Goethe Institut, Beijing, China; Kühlhaus, Berlin, Germany; BBA Artist Prize 2018 Berlin, Germany; Ex Pescheria Centrale, Trieste, Italy; Mitte Media Festival, Berlin; Palazzo Ca' Zanardi, Venice, Italy; THE ROOM Contemporary Art Space, Venice, Italy. And many others.

Shingo YOSHIDA

The end of day and the beginning of the world

2015

4K ProRes 422 HQ, colour, sound

22:00

Shingo Yoshida's film *The end of day and the beginning of the world* (2015) is a lyrical documentation of an imperilled way of life, and a poetically literal form of time-travel. Flying through the Arctic to the North Pole, traversing stunningly beautiful arctic landscapes, Yoshida travelled to the 180° meridian - the International Date

Line - that marks the man-made demarcation between two successive calendar days. With one foot in the icy landscape of yesterday and the other in tomorrow, Yoshida straddles the International Date Line to simultaneously inhabit both future and past. Collapsing temporal layers, *The end of day and the beginning of the world* is both elegy and prophecy. It beckons us to reconsider the landscapes we inherit—not as eternal backdrops, but as fragile intersections of memory, myth, and the unfolding legacy of ecological change.

The film opens with the roar of a small aircraft, abruptly shifting us into a stark, near-monochrome tundra. Yoshida's contemplative lens lingers on intimate details: the rhythmic breath of reindeer fur, tents of local Chukchi people billowing over simmering fires, ice fissures traversing barren expanses, and moments of communal ritual. Shooting his film in the Russian Far East, specifically in the Siberian regions of Chukotka and Beringia, Yoshida was inspired by this uncanny zone where calendar days, national borders, and ecological cycles intersect. He shares with us the stark beauty of vast glaciers, and the ancient vanishing shamanistic beliefs of the indigenous peoples who live there in an unmediated contact with raw nature. As a mark of gratitude, and as a prayer of protection for his way home, he offers meat and bread as sacred offerings to both nature and the ravens of local folklore. Accompanying him through this poetic landscape, on what is as much a pilgrimage as a journey through space and time, we discover an inhospitable, hidden and threatened ecology, where time ebbs away, magic is still

meaningful, and nature under threat. Remote Arctic panoramas once imagined as distant, static realms become urgent testimonies to climate shifts, human resilience, and cultural continuity.

Yoshida acts as a kind of cartographer—not of borders or nations, but of affective and ecological territories that resist mapping. His artistic inquiry follows trails that science might deem anecdotal, but which carry the weight of cultural survival and ecological reverence. He draws attention to the ways local knowledge, oral histories, and minor rituals encode entire cosmologies—systems of understanding that often vanish under the flattening force of modern progress. Yoshida's film acts as a visual palimpsest: an accretion of ancestral myth and present reality, enclosed within a fragile climactic frontier that prefigures wider futures of environmental rupture.
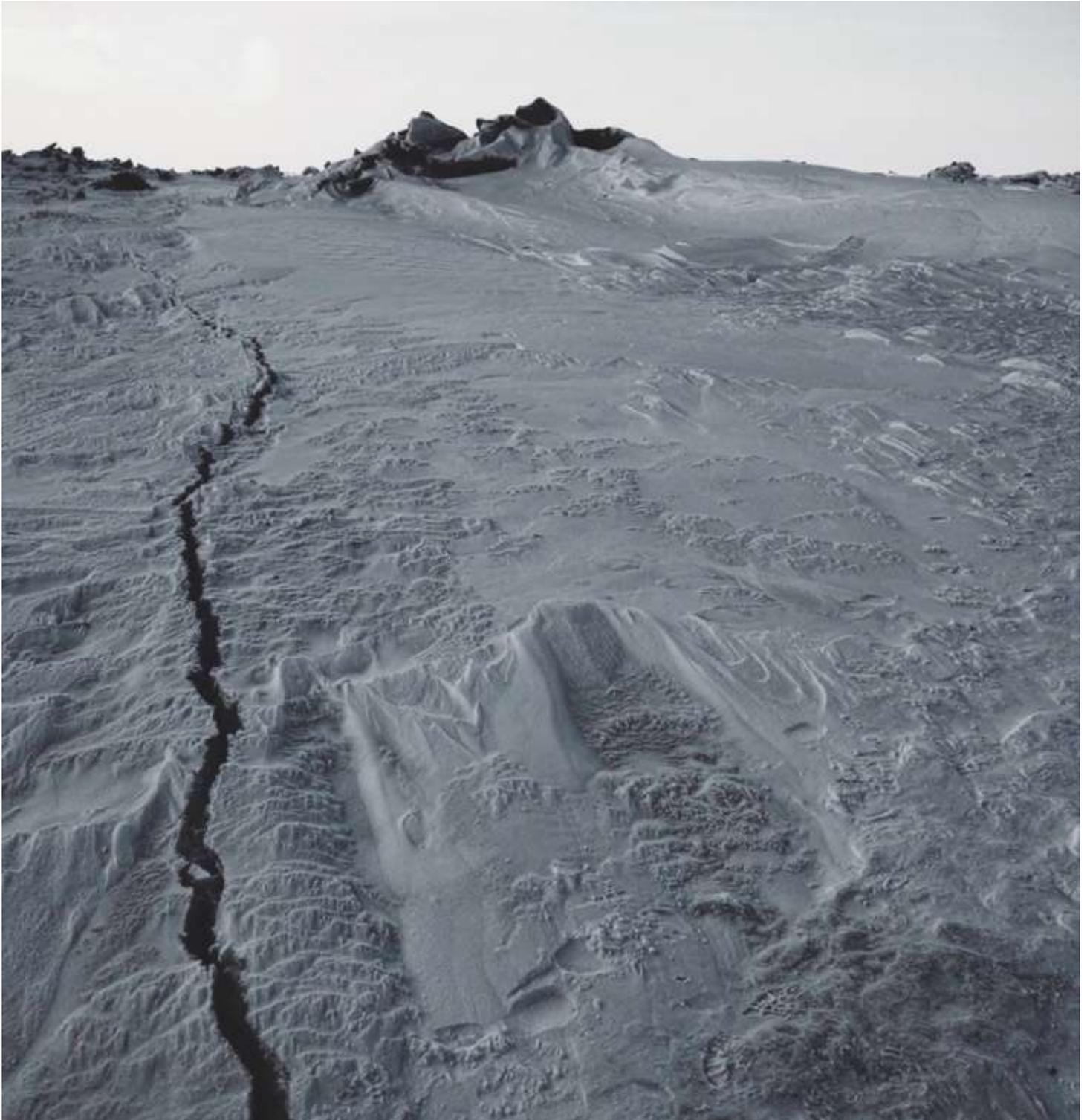
ARTIST BIO: Shingo YOSHIDA

www.shingoyoshida.com

Acclaimed filmmaker/photographer Shingo Yoshida (born 1974 in Tokyo, Japan. Lives and works in Marseille, France) defines his artistic practice as 'Seeking the Hidden'. "I create works that focus on the daily life, culture, traditions, myths, and interactions with nature of people from various lands, as well as the powerlessness of humans. Life is ephemeral. What's important is how we live in the present, the process, and preserving those memories in my work. My creations evolve and grow with the times." Yoshida completed three post-graduate degrees at Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Art, Villa Arson, Nice, France (2005), Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Lyon, France (2005); and Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris, France (2007). Shingo Yoshida's practice takes him to hidden places around the globe. With a gentle poetic sensibility, he seeks out forgotten or disappearing legends and myths hidden in remote parts of the world. His practice reflects a deep awareness of human fragility and insignificance in the face of nature. His work explores the intersections of landscape, memory, folklore and systems of knowledge, through film, photography, drawing, and site-specific interventions. Yoshida traces the remnants of disappearing landscapes, isolated cultures, and marginal mythologies, often journeying to remote regions that exist beyond the edges of the dominant narratives of the globalized world. His work is characterized by a quiet observational rigor and an ethnographic sensibility. Rather than documenting from a distance, Yoshida embeds himself in the rhythms and silences of the worlds he enters, forging intimate encounters with geographies often deemed peripheral or obsolete.

Selected recent major exhibitions include: New York Public Library, New York, USA (2024); La Société Étrange, Marseille, France (2024); Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg, Germany (2023); Gunma Museum of Art, Tatebayashi Japan (2023); Kanagawa Kenmin Hall, Yokohama, December 2022; The State Museum of Oriental Art, Moscow, Russia (2022); Tokyo Arts and Space Hongo, Tokyo, Japan (2021); Haus am Lutzowplatz, Berlin, Germany (2021); Berlinische Galerie, Museum for Modern Art - Berlin Video Art Festival, Berlin (2020); Yebisu International Festival, Loko Gallery, Tokyo, Japan (2020); MOMENTUM, Kunstquartier Bethanien, Berlin, Germany (2019); S.Y.P Art Space, Shinjuku, Tokyo, Japan (209); Mikiko Sato, Hambourg, Germany (2018); Pavillon am Milchhof Berlin, Germany (2018); COP23 - UN Conference on Climate Change, Ministry of Environment Berlin & Bonn, Germany (2017); ikonoTV, global streaming (2017); Gunma Museum of Art, Tatebayashi, Gunma, Japan (2016); Tokyo Wonder Site, Kunstraum Kreuzberg, Berlin, Germany (2016); La Conciergerie Art Contemporain, Chambéry, France (2016); POLARIZED Vision!, Award Winner, Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland (2015); Videoart at Midnight #67, Babylon Cinema, Berlin Germany (2015); Istanbul Modern Museum, Istanbul Turkey (2015); 60th International Short Film Festival Oberhausen, Germany (2014); Villa Arson, National Center for Contemporary Art, Nice, France (2013); Arte TV Creative, France-Germany (2013); 66th Festival de Cannes court métrage, Cannes, France (2012); MAC Museum of Contemporary Art, Santiago, Chile (2012); amongst many others.

Yoshida's films and photographic works are held in many respected public collections, the New York Public Library (2023); Stiftung Hamburger Kunstsammlungen - Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg, Germany (2023); Gunma Museum of Art, Tatebayashi, Japan (2023); FRAC - French Public Collection, Provence, Alpes, Cote d'azur, France, (2022); MOMENTUM, Berlin, Germany (2020); Art Collection of the Ministry of Environment Germany, Berlin, Germany (2017); Berlinische Galerie, Museum for Modern Art, Berlin, Germany (2016); Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Germany (2016); Fluentum, Berlin, Germany (2016); Alliance Française, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (2006).

Robert ZHAO RENHUI

A Monument to Thresholds

2020

digital inkjet prints, found objects, with single-channel video

136.5(H)*123.5*218cm

Courtesy ShangART Shanghai and Singapore

The topics of climate change and the destruction of biodiversity are the focus of Singapore-based artist, Robert Zhao Renhui. Approaching these topics from an historical and cultural angle, Zhao is particularly interested in what he describes as "threshold states" that he relates to the migration patterns and the extinction of different species, as both involve the crossing of boundaries or thresholds. But the critical difference between them is that migration is instinctively cyclical, while extinction is all too linear in its finality. Using aesthetic and poetic means, Zhao scrutinises this question, as well as the integrity of scientific methodology.

Zhao's work *A Monument to Thresholds* (2020), an installation of found objects, books, prints, texts and video, balances a narrative of two past extinctions with two potentially beneficial "invasions" in a challenge to clichéd thinking about the deterioration of nature and its reversal. In this, he elaborates four different "thresholds":

- The death in Cincinnati Zoo (on 1. September 1914), of the last known Passenger Pigeon, once one of America's most common birds.

- The killing (on 3 July, 1844) of the last pair of Great Auks, for food or bait, by two fishermen on Eldey Island, Iceland; the activities of hunters, early museums, and private collectors had all contributed to these birds' early decline.

- Volunteers depositing 114 tons of clams onto the mudflats at Dandong at the mouth of the Yalu River in the winter of 2017, in order to replenish their severely declining numbers: clams had traditionally fed Godwits and Great Knots on their migratory flights between Australia and Siberia.

- Lastly, the recent rapid international spread of Zebra Mussels, originally native to Russia and Ukraine, via discarded ballast-water from European cargo ships. The mussels have a bad reputation as an invasive species that crowds out native fish and damages harbour and waterway infrastructure. But, under certain

circumstances, they may have a positive impact on the environment because they thrive in the most polluted waters and, by feeding there, help clean it from contaminants.

Zhao's video *We Watch Them Disappear*, embedded within this installation, documents his own visit to the wetlands of the Yalu River in April 2019 to observe the birds' annual gathering during what is the longest non-stop avian migration in the world. Over the past ten years their number has seriously declined, but the crowds of people who go there to observe them continues to grow, as they admire the hypnotic patterns of their murmuration at each high tide when they land there to feed.

In this work and others, Zhao elaborates the poetic paradox that extinction is one of the few ways in which the cyclical alliance between nature and time is broken, yet, once something is established as an event in the past, its fate inevitably seems to presage the future. However, turning our gaze from past extinctions to future hopes, this situation may not be as terminal as it seems: looking into the near future at a time when the technology and biology of de-extinction are already being explored, the finality of extinction itself may well soon be in question.

Zhao's artistic vision collapses temporal boundaries between past ecosystems, present interventions, and speculative futures. He invites us to consider the theoretical afterlives of the natural world: What do we choose to preserve, and why? What versions of the past do we project onto ecological futures? And how might we live differently by reimagining the stories we tell about the land? Through his layered, often eerie portrayals of flora and fauna, Zhao constructs a world in which nature is not only seen, but narrated, archived, and mythologized, offering a poignant meditation on what it means to inhabit a world on the brink of ecological transformation.

ARTIST BIO: Robert ZHAO RENHUI

https://www.shanghartgallery.com/galleryarchive/artists/name/robertzhaorenhui

Singapore-based artist Robert Zhao Renhui (born 1983 in Singapore. Lives and works in Singapore) graduated from the Camberwell College of Arts, London, UK in 2008, and received his Masters degree for the London College of Communications, London, UK in 2011. Zhao's practice unfolds at the intersection of art, science, and speculative ecology, offering a powerful and poetic lens through which to explore the landscapes of both memory and possibility. Working through photography, video, installation, and pseudo-scientific narrative forms, Zhao investigates the evolving relationship between humans and the natural world—particularly how systems of knowledge, classification, and conservation shape our understanding of nature and its future. By constructing alternate realities through fictional institutions like The Institute of Critical Zoologists and The Land Archive, he challenges the authority of scientific objectivity while drawing attention to how ecological truths are archived, erased, or imagined. His projects often take place in contested or transitional environments — secondary forests, extinction zones, or human-wildlife borders — where the line between what once was and what might be remains blurred. In doing so, Zhao renders visible the ghostly persistence of species, rituals, and

habitats that linger in the ecological unconscious. Rather than adopting a purely documentary approach, Zhao deploys a careful mix of observation and invention. He constructs meticulous visual archives that feel scientific but subtly unravel upon closer inspection, exposing the fragility of the narratives we tell about nature. This gesture of blending fact and fiction does not aim to deceive but rather to provoke a critical reflection on how landscapes are mediated through language, politics, and image-making.

Robert Zhao Renhui's works have been awarded The United Overseas Bank Painting of the Year Award (Singapore) in 2009 and The Deutsche Bank Award in Photography by the University of the Arts London in 2011. In 2010, he was awarded The Young Artist Award by the Singapore National Arts Council. He was also named as a finalist for the Hugo Boss Asia Art Award 2017 as the only Southeast Asian artist, and the 12th Benesse Prize 2019 for his work in the 6th Singapore Biennale. Most recently, he was awarded the inaugural Silvana S. Foundation Commission Award in 2020 and Excellence Award in the 44th New Cosmos of Photography competition in 2021.

Zhao represented Singapore in their national pavilion at the 60th Venice Biennale in 2024. Selected recent biennales and solos museum exhibitions include: Singapore Art Museum, Singapore (2024); 14th Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju, South Korea (2023); The First Beijing Biennale, Beijing (2022); The Forest Institute, Singapore (2022); Busan Biennale: Words at an Exhibition, Busan, South Korea (2020); Singapore Biennale 2019, Singapore (2019); The Lines We Draw, Yalu River Art Museum, Dandong (2019); Effect, Orange County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, U.S.A. (2019); Mind Set Art Center, Taipei (2019); Observe, Experiment, Archive, Sunderland Museum and Winter Garden, London, U.K. (2019); The 9th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Australia (2018); Taipei Biennial 2018, Taipei (2018); Onassis Cultural Centre, Athens, Greece (2018); NTU Centre for Contemporary Art, Singapore (2018); Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai (2017); National Museum of Singapore, Singapore (2017); JIWA: Jakarta Biennale 2017, Jakarta, Indonesia (2017); 7th Moscow Biennale, Moscow, Russia (2017); 20th Biennale of Sydney, Sydney, Australia (2016); The Substation, Singapore (2015); Centre of Contemporary Photography, Melbourne, Australia (2015); Kadist Art Foundation, San Francisco, USA (2014), amongst many others.

shanghart.com

ZHOU Xiaohou

The Garden of Forking Paths

2016

HD video animation, colour, sound

20:04

Paradox, absurdity and contradiction figure strongly in Zhou Xiaohu's *The Garden of Forking Paths*, based on the eponymous mystery by the Argentine writer, essayist and poet Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986). Jorge Luis Borges's iconic short story *"The Garden of Forking Paths"* (1941) is at once a spy thriller, a philosophical

parable, and an early literary exploration of what we now call the multiverse. The narrative unfolds as a metafictional labyrinth in which time is not linear but proliferates into infinite, coexisting possibilities. Told through the voice of a spy going to extreme lengths to complete his mission, the story introduces a fictional novel by the narrator's ancestor—a book conceived as a shifting garden where every possible outcome of every event occurs simultaneously in diverging and converging paths.

Set during World War I, the story follows Dr. Yu Tsun, a Chinese professor and covert German agent, who must urgently transmit the location of a British artillery base to his superiors. Pursued through the English countryside by a relentless British counter-espionage agent, Yu Tsun seeks refuge in the home of a man named Stephen Albert. Chosen for his surname, which is to become the coded message Yu Tsun must send, this particular Stephen Albert turns out to be a sinologist—who, in a strange coincidence, happens to be an expert on the life and work of Yu Tsun's own ancestor, Ts'ui Pên.

Ts'ui Pên had once renounced political life to devote himself to writing a sprawling, incomprehensible novel and constructing a labyrinth. For generations, readers and scholars have failed to make sense of either. But in a revelatory moment, Albert explains to Yu Tsun that Ts'ui Pên's book is the labyrinth—a nonlinear narrative in which every possible decision creates a divergent timeline. In this metaphysical garden, all outcomes occur simultaneously: every path taken, and every path not taken, coexist in parallel. The labyrinth is not a structure of walls, but of time itself.

Shortly after this epiphany, Yu Tsun kills Albert—not out of malice, but as a coded act. By ensuring Albert's name appears in the newspapers, he conveys the location of the British artillery - Albert being the town of Albert in France - to his German handlers. The story ends with Yu Tsun executed for his crime, having completed his mission. But the philosophical implications of Ts'ui Pên's labyrinth haunt the reader far beyond the plot's resolution. In Borges's universe, just as in Ts'ui Pên's labyrinthine book, time is not a singular thread but a tangled web of choices, all real, all unfolding in parallel. The garden, thus, becomes a metaphor for the multiverse—a space where memory, identity, and future are endlessly forked and recombined.

Zhou Xiaohu's artwork *The Garden of Forking Paths* borrows its title and conceptual architecture from Borges, translating the literary labyrinth into a time-based visual installation. Using his signature language of puppets and digital animation, Zhou crafts a fragmented, nonlinear narrative composed of looping scenes that shift between historical memory, political absurdity, and imagined futures. The work eschews a single point of view, instead presenting viewers with parallel scenarios that echo, contradict, or bleed into one another. Figures and backgrounds are animated in crude yet expressive gestures, suggesting history not as a fixed timeline, but as a malleable landscape.

Together, Borges's story and Zhou's reinterpretation imagine reality as a terrain of simultaneities, where futures are not destinations but recursive returns, and the past is never quite settled. Borges's metaphorical garden and Zhou's animated one converge as sites of speculative memory—landscapes in which histories are rehearsed, overwritten, and re-seeded across generations. Zhou's work reflects on how narratives are constructed and fractured over time, while Borges's story provides a philosophical framework for understanding time itself as spatial, plural, and unstable.

In *Landscapes of Futures Past*, Zhou Xiaohu's *The Garden of Forking Paths* operates as both homage and critical translation—reconfiguring Borges's abstract metaphysics into a visceral, satirical terrain where historical and philosophical time collide. It invites viewers to wander not through a singular storyline, but through a multiplicity of temporalities that mirror the uncertainties of our ecological and cultural moment: where each step into the past forks into yet another future, and the landscape itself becomes a living archive of what might have been—and what still could be.

ARTIST BIO: ZHOU Xiaohou

http://www.longmarchspace.com/zh/artists/zhou-xiaohu-2/

Zhou Xiaohu (Born 1960 in Changzhou, China. Lives and works in Shanghai) is a pioneering figure in Chinese contemporary art, celebrated as one of the first to develop claymation and stop-motion video animation in the region. Trained in sculpture and oil painting at the Sichuan Academy of Fine Arts, he began using computers as an artistic tool in 1998. He has since experimented with stop-frame video animation, video installation and computer-gaming software by interlayering images between moving pictures and real objects in what has become his signature style. His work defies genre boundaries by combining animation, video, installation, performance, photography, and sculpture. Drawing on techniques from folk puppetry, popular media, and classical art forms, Zhou orchestrates biting social satire that critiques the mediated production of reality and the absurdities of modern public life.

Zhou's interdisciplinary practice reflects the documentation of and misunderstandings of history in a digital age. His work offers a provocative exploration of mediated reality—using puppetry and animation as metaphors for spectacle and absurdity in contemporary culture. Through meticulously crafted claymation scenes re-enacting news events, social spectacles, and folklore, his installations dismantle the authority of media while exposing how spectacle shapes collective perception. With roots in Chinese folk forms and engagement with philosophical parody, Zhou's artistic vision challenges viewers to question the line between fact and fiction, and to see how narratives are constructed, circulated, and internalized. Using absurdist narratives and puppet-like figures, Zhou Xiaohu probes the social and philosophical landscapes of contemporary life.

Selected major exhibitions include: Permaculture, Zhou Xiaohu Solo Exhibition, Biyun Art Museum, Shanghai China (2024); The 14th Shanghai Biennale (2023); 2nd Bangkok Art Biennale (2020); Chimera: Zhou Xiaohu Solo Exhibition, Shanghai Minsheng Art Museum, China (2016); Schiesse: Zhou Xiaohu Solo Exhibition, MOMENTUM, Bethanien Art Center, Berlin, Germany (2015); Harmonious Society, Asia Triennial, Manchester, UK (2014); White Rabbit Gallery, Sydney, Australia (2013); Panorama: Recent Art from Contemporary Asia, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore (2012); 4th Guangzhou Triennial -Grangdview project, Guangzhou, China (2012); Barbican Art Gallery, London, UK (2011); National Art Museum of China, Beijing, China (2011); 40th International Film Festival Rotterdam in Netherland (2011); Not Soul For Sale, Tate Modern Turbine Hall, London, UK (2010); 8th Gwangju Biennial, Gwangju, South Korea (2010); Tate Liverpool, Liverpool, UK, (2007); Museum Moderner Kunst, Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna, Austria (2007); Kunst Museum Bern, Bern, Switzerland (2007); Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Brisbane, Australia (2006); The Utopia Machine, MoMA Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA (2004); 1st Seville Biennial, Seville, Spain (2004); Between Past and Future, International Center of Photography, New York, USA (2004); 56th International Film Festival Locarno, Locarno Switzerland (2003); Experimental Video Gold Medal Award, 36th World Fest-Houston International Film Festival (2003); China Rushes, Hamburger Bahnhof National Museum, Berlin, Germany (2001); 3rd Shanghai Biennale (2000); amongst many other.

EXHIBITION MAP
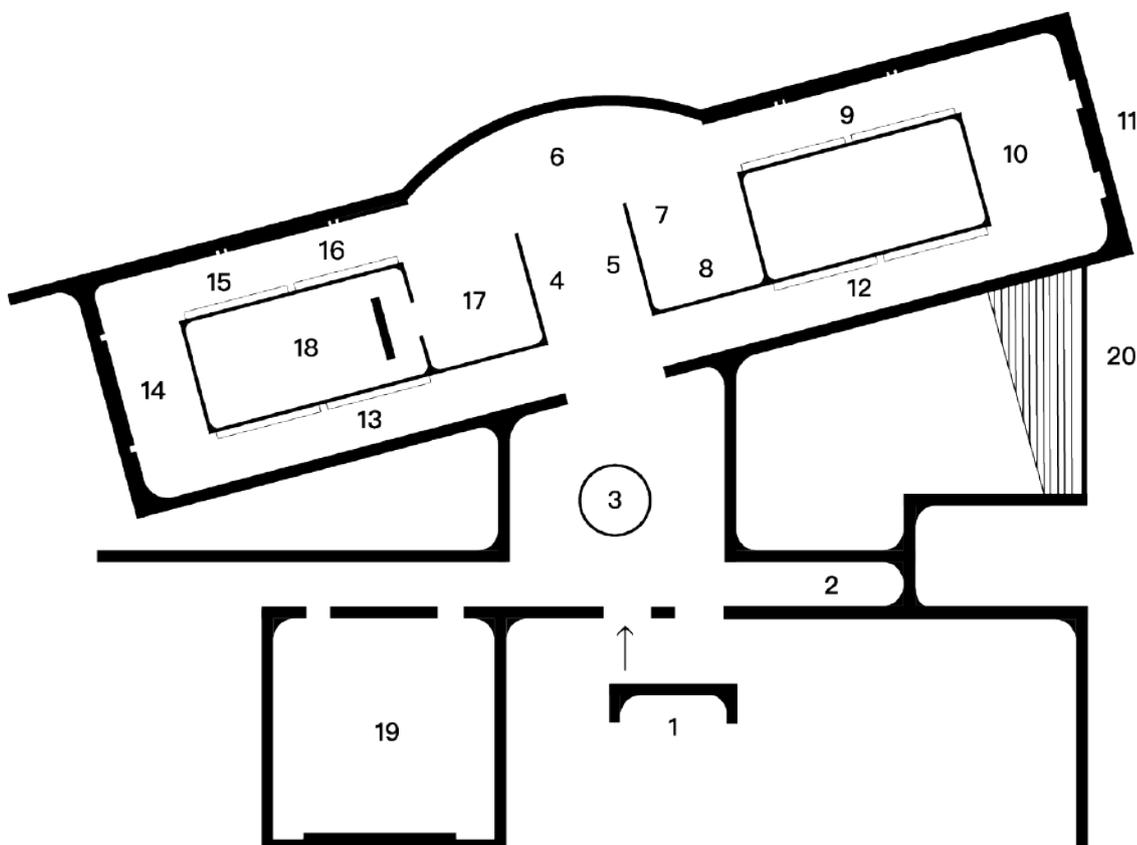
1 《乌托邦：速度扩展》/ 因娜·阿尔捷莫娃 / 2025
Utopia: Velocity Expanded / Inna ARTEMOVA 2025

2 《逃离人间的尽头》/ 曹雨 / 2021
Escape off the Edge of the Human World / CAO Yu / 2021

3 《无始无终》/ 缪晓春 / 2011-2012
Limitless / MIAO Xiaochun / 2024

4 《日暮与世界之初》/ 吉田真悟 / 2015
The end of day and the beginning of the world / Shingo YOSHIDA / 2015

5 《冰川时代》/ 玛格丽特·艾歇尔 / 2024
Ice Age / Margret EICHER / 2024

6 《阈值的纪念碑》/ 赵仁辉 / 2020
A Monument to Thresholds / Robert ZHAO RENHUI / 2020

7 《冲击》/ 克尔斯滕·帕尔茨 / 2023-2025
IMPACT / Kirsten PALZ / 2023-2025

8 《风铃》/ 龙盼 / 2021
Wind Bell / LONG Pan / 2021

9 《细微动作》/ 廖文峰 / 2015-2016
Minute Gestures / LIAO Wenfeng / 2015-2016

10 《然后，我们征服柏林》/ 玛格丽特·艾歇尔 / 2018
Then We Take Berlin / Margret EICHER / 2018

11 《风景》/ 无名 / 2025
Landscape / Unknown / 2025

12 《天堂》/ 妮娜·E·舍内费尔德 / 2023/2025
P. A. R. A. D. I. S. E. / Nina E. SCHÖNEFELD /2023/2025

《明日三部曲》/ 妮娜·E·舍内费尔德 / 2018-2019
TRILOGY OF TOMORROW / Nina E. SCHÖNEFELD / 2018-2019

13 《别赋》/ 陈秋林 / 2002
Farewell Poem / CHEN Qiulin / 2002

《桃花》/ 陈秋林 / 2009
Peach Blossom / CHEN Qiulin / 2009

14 《暗星瀑布》/ 丹尼·梅勒 / 2025
Dark star waterfall / Danie MELLOR / 2025

15 《过往在我们齿间吟唱》/ 凯特 麦克米兰 / 2017/2025
The Past Is Singing In Our Teeth / Kate McMILLAN / 2017/2025

16 《我们是洪水》/ 斯特法诺·卡戈尔 / 2022-2024
We Are The Flood / Stefano CAGOL / 2022-2024

17 《MOMO》/ 冯冰伊 / 2016
MOMO | FENG Bingyi / 2016

18 《迷走花园》/ 周啸虎 / 2016
The Garden of Forking Paths / ZHOU Xiaohu / 2016

19 《天咫修月》/ 邱岸雄 / 2023
Tian Zhi Xiu Yue (Close to Heaven, Fix the Moon) / QIU Anxiong / 2023

20 露天放映 / 2025
Open-Air Cinema / 2025

1. Utopia: Velocity Expanded

Inna ARTEMOVA, 2025

2. Escape off the Edge of the Human World

CAO Yu, 2021

3. Limitless

MIAO Xiaochun, 2011-2012

4. The end of day and the beginning of the world

 Shingo YOSHIDA, 2015

5. Ice Age

Margret EICHER, 2024

6. A Monument to Thresholds

 Robert ZHAO RENHUI, 2020

7. IMPACT

Kirsten PALZ, 2023–2025

8. Wind Bell

LONG Pan, 2021

9. Minute Gestures

LIAO Wenfeng, 2015-2016
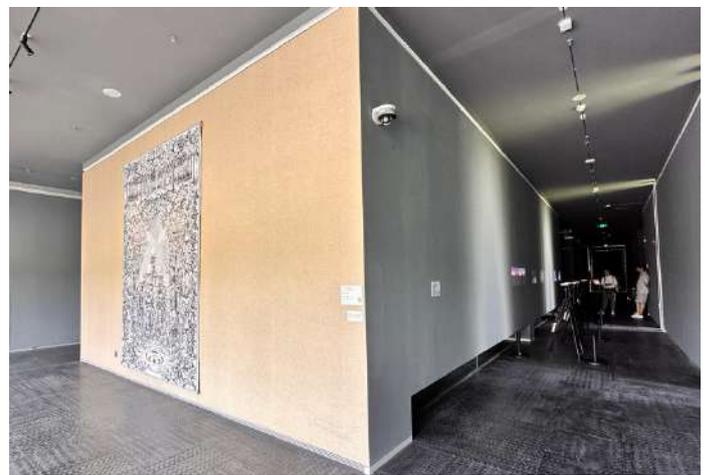
10. Then We Take Berlin

Margret EICHER, 2018

11. Landscape

Unknown, 2025
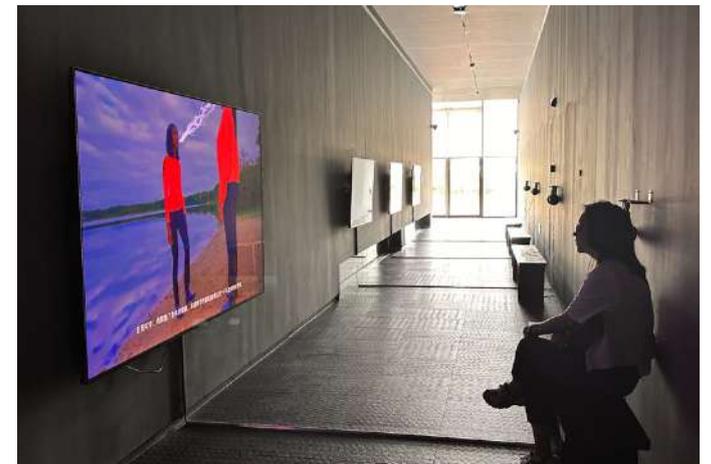
12. P. A. R. A. D. I. S. E.

Nina E. SCHÖNEFELD, 2023/2025

TRILOGY OF TOMORROW

Nina E. SCHÖNEFELD, 2018-2019

13. Farewell Poem

CHEN Qiulin, 2002

Peach Blossom

CHEN Qiulin, 2009

14. Dark star waterfall

Danie MELLOR, 2025

15. The Past Is Singing In Our Teeth

Kate McMILLAN, 2017/2025
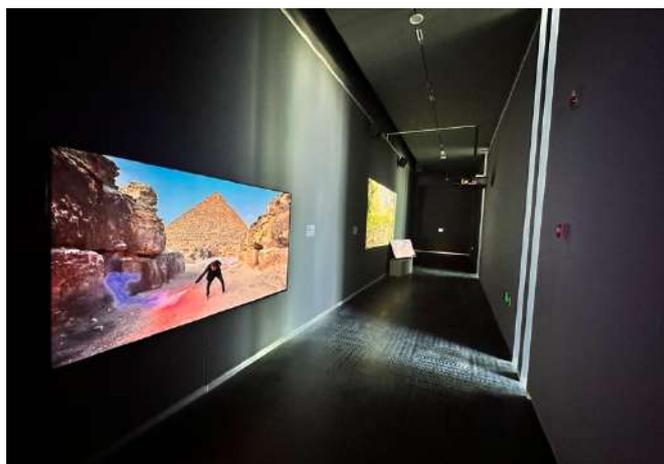
16. We Are The Flood

Stefano CAGOL

17. MOMO

FENG Bingyi, 2016

18. The Garden of Forking Paths

ZHOU Xiaohou, 2016

19. Tian Zhi Xiu Yue(Close to Heaven, Fix the Moon)

Qiu Anxiong, 2023
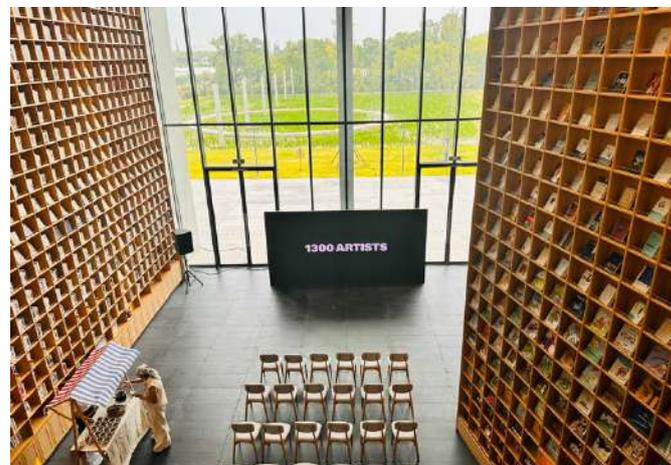
20. Open-Air Cinema

Curated by Li Zhenhua, in partnership with CIFRA Platform

INSTALLATION PHOTOGRAPHS

我叫查理·克劳德

那时，我发现了一个没有人应该知道的秘密：乌云。
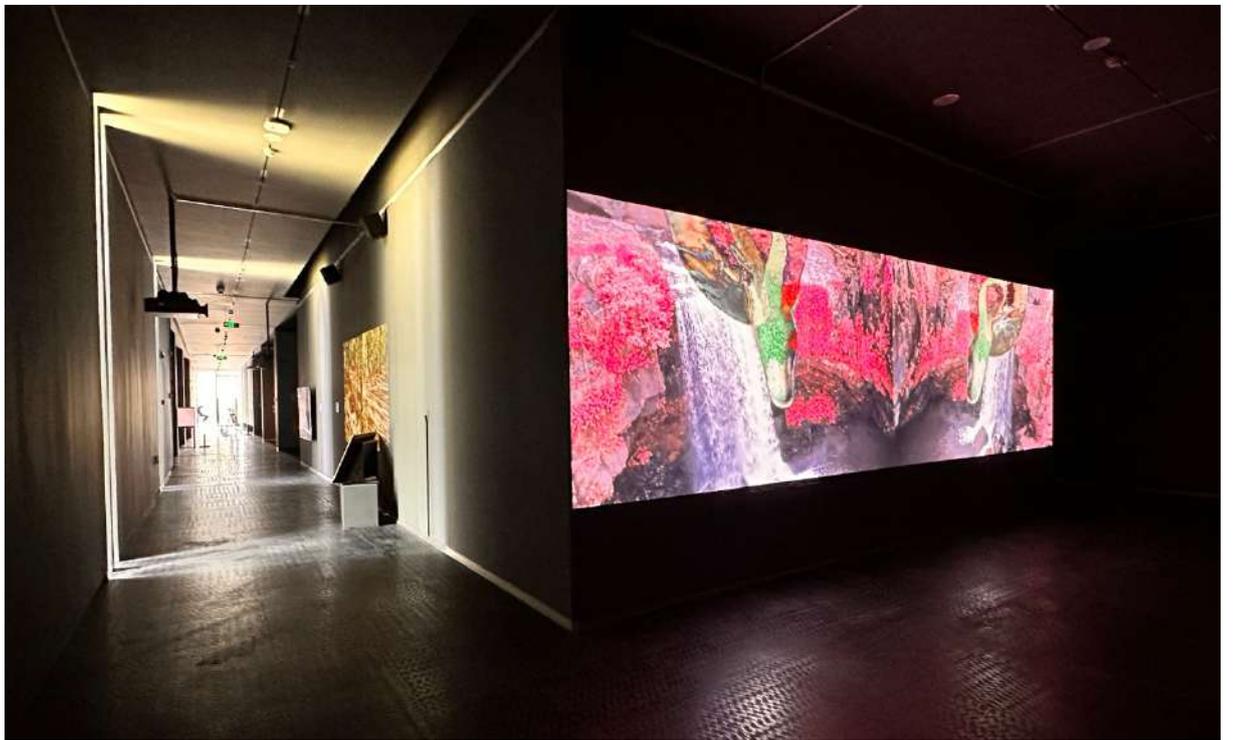
OPEN-AIR CINEMA PROGRAMME

Cinema has always been a way of travelling without moving, of gathering together with friends and strangers to embark on shared journeys, to discover distant landscapes or to revisit familiar terrains through new cinematic eyes. Cinema is uniquely capable of folding time and space, collapsing memory and imagination into a single frame.

In parallel with the artworks from China and around the world presented in this exhibition, film curator Li Zhenhua has assembled a cinematic cartography that traces *landscapes of futures past*—visions shaped by history, displacement, aspiration, and change. This Open-Air Cinema Programme, invites audiences to journey through time and place, across decades and through the diverse geographies of China, revealing how different landscapes remember, transform, and look to the future.

The *Landscapes of Futures Past* Open-Air Cinema, presented in partnership with the CIFRA Platform, comes to life every Saturday throughout the exhibition—an invitation to reflect, gather, and imagine together under the open sky, set against the evocative backdrop of Jiading's grape vineyards and rice fields.

—— David Elliott, Rachel Rits-Volloch, and Li Zhenhua
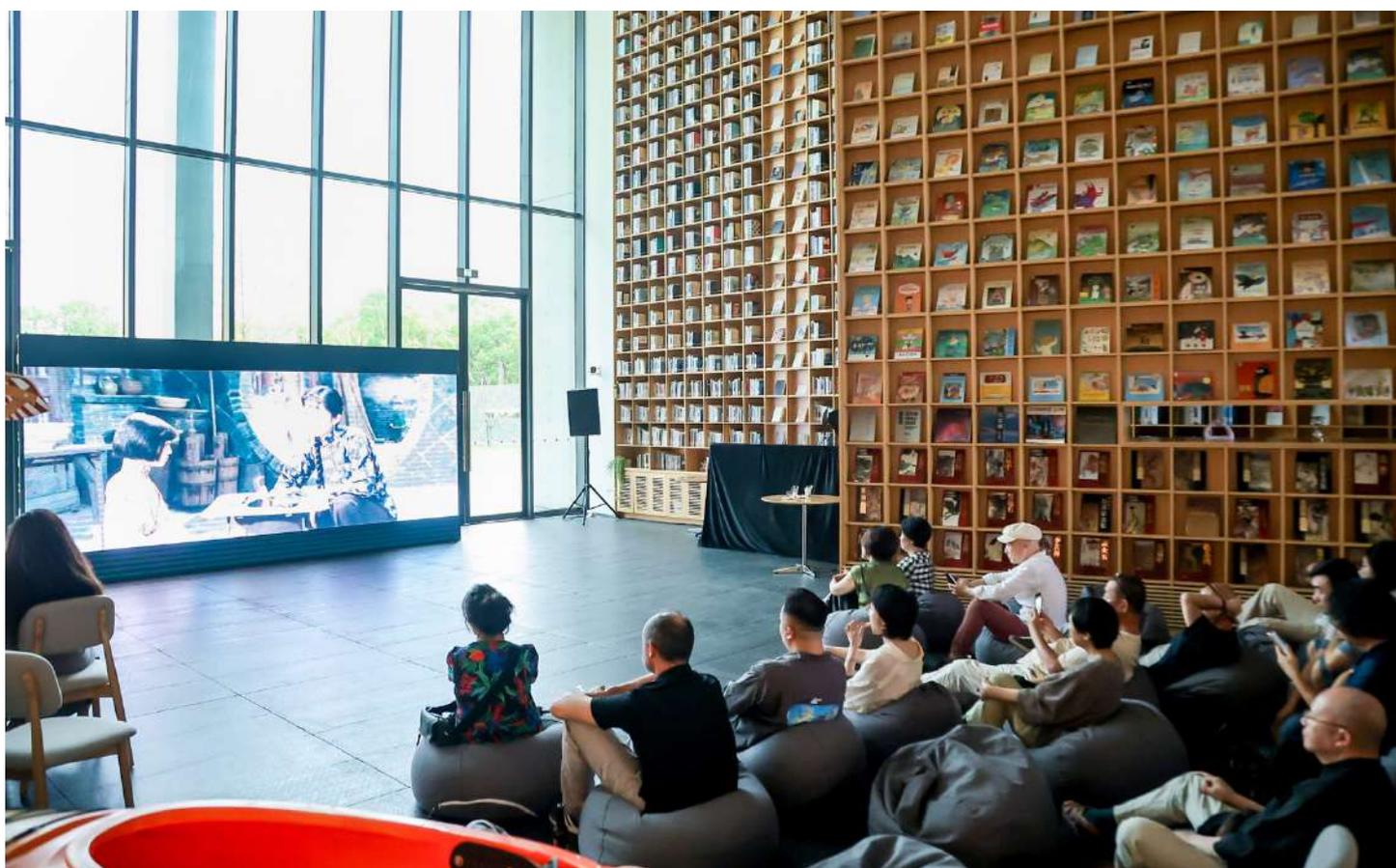
OPEN-AIR CINEMA

in partnership with CIFRA Platform

Curated by Li Zhenhua

CIFRA.COM

Preface

Outdoor cinema is a memory from my childhood, with blurry characters and scenes, sudden moments, and us, a group of boys, often confused by the plot. The films would start and end amid our roughhousing. 'Breaking' (1984), 'Rock Youth' (1988),'Fong Sai-Yuk' (1993). I remember the nights outside my home in Beijing, where everyone gathered like an army, carrying their own small stools and mats. The mosquitoes were particularly numerous, and in the distance, a bright silver screen seemed like a gateway to another world. The sound effects of the film echoed like they were coming from a canyon, and a single line from far away might not be clearly heard. Perhaps because we were boys who loved to roughhouse, we often couldn't remember the romantic scenes. The subtle expressions of love in films from the 1980s and 1990s would make those who understood them blush. Those of us who didn't understand often couldn't even remember what we had watched.

I lived in an industrial area where different factories would show films regularly or irregularly. People who knew each other and strangers would gather together happily. At that time, there were no boundaries between the countryside and the town. Next to the highway was a wheat field. Once, while reminiscing about these times, I sat on the back of my father's bicycle. The poplar trees on both sides blocked out the sky. The road was made of dirt and stones, muddy and pitted when it rained. Even when it didn't rain, if a large truck passed by, dust would rise several metres high. During the summer, everything was warm and yellow, bright and clear.

*Liu Sanjie* [*Third Sister Liu*] **(1960), directed by Su Li, 1h 57m**

In response to the curatorial concept of Rachel Rits-Volloch and David Elliot for *Landscapes of Futures Past* at the Jiayuanhai Art Museum, I think the above text is about the past and the future, and is a landscape that will always remain in my mind and cannot disappear.

The Guangxi landscape and local actors are particularly noteworthy, especially the folk songs, costumes, and ecology that have been passed down through the generations. Local opera is one of the intangible cultural heritages that transcends time and is slowly disappearing.

***Romance on Lushan Mountain*** **(1980), directed by Huang Zumo, 1h 30m**
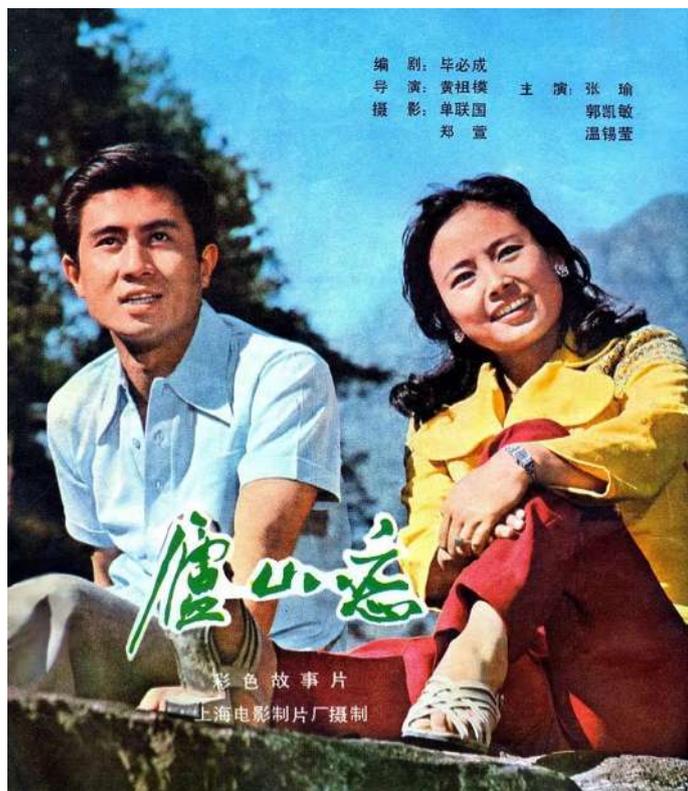
'Romance on Lushan Mountain' is a romantic love story set on Lushan Mountain. Last August, I visited the area with friends and saw that there was a dedicated cinema screening this film, but unfortunately, I missed it due to the late screening time. In 1980, China was in the early stages of reform and opening up, and many new things and ideas were emerging. The love portrayed in the film is vague and can leave one feeling a bit melancholic. Especially at the beginning, when the two protagonists speak in English through a tree: 'I love my motherland.' Here, 'motherland' represents motherhood and serves as a substitute for expressing love in that era. Love in that time had to be vast and passionate. The film often takes place in landscapes, dreams, and montages, and sometimes, time is out of sync. The protagonist is more like a narrator of the era, spanning the era of his parents' generation. This is also related to the context of that era, where individuals, families, and the nation were inseparable.

This often makes me think of words like 'the tide of the times,' which represents the lives of each individual. The key to this film, apart from the love story, is that it represents an era that is open to accepting its past and welcoming a new era.

Camel Xiangzi **[*Rickshaw Boy*] (1982), directed by Ling Zifeng, 2h 3m**
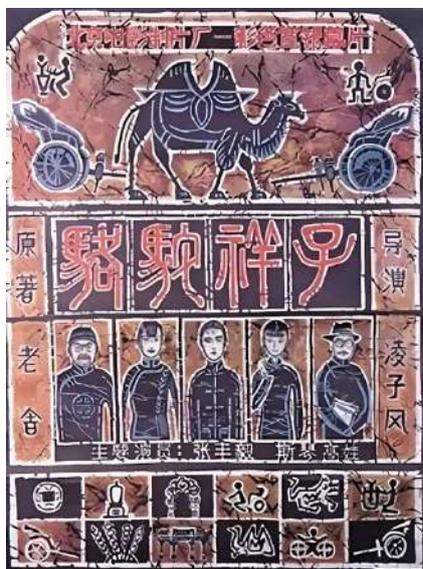
The Horse Thief **(1986), directed by Tian Zhuangzhuang & Pan Peicheng, 1h 28m**
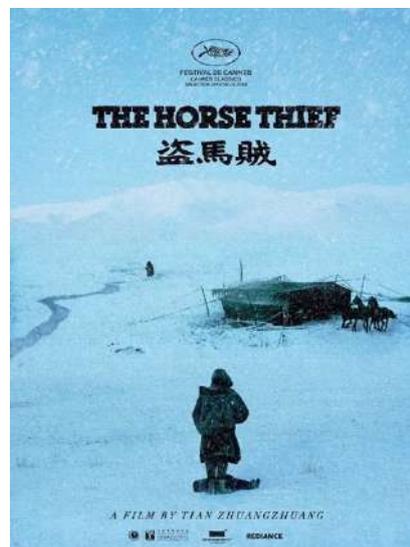
The Camel Xiangzi is set in Beijing before liberation, and The Horse Thief is set in Tibet. If Dutch landscape paintings have a certain style, then the images of landscapes and people in Chinese films of the 1980s allowed viewers to see China's beautiful mountains and rivers, providing a momentary spiritual flow in their minds for landscapes they had never seen before. For a southern viewer, the northern landscape is empty and harsh: desert, heavy snow, and strong winds. While for a northern viewer, the south is synonymous with dampness and gloom, where everything seems to be shrouded in rain. The seasons are distinct, or there are only spring and summer. Landscape and geography are the ties that connect people and culture. Films of the 1980s strove for authenticity in their settings, which served as a manifesto for the fifth generation of directors, where the landscape was stylised with strong colours and people.

Three... Life Is a Dream [*Still Life*] (2006), directed by Jia Zhangke, 1h 48m

Jia Zhangke's film features rare scenes of science fiction, such as mountains suddenly flying away, which are more like human illusions. This is also the huge illusion presented by the entire film. All the characters and events seem to be seriously telling a true fantasy story, which is closely related to human existence and the changing times. The seemingly loose threads all focus on the traces of individuals in the landscape.

The Monkey King: Uproar in Heaven (1964), directed by Wan Laiming & Cheng Tang, 1h 54m

Nezha Conquers the Sea [*Nezha Conquers the Dragon King*] (1979), directed by Wang Shuchen, Yan Ding Xian, Ada, 58m

Magic Lantern [*Lotus Lantern*](1999), directed by Chang Guangxi & Wang Dawei, 85m

113

The above three works are all from the Shanghai Animation Film Studio.

The Monkey King: Uproar in Heaven is included here because this animated film was shown every few days during my childhood. At that time, there was always an old TV set, and a group of people would gather in the courtyard to watch it together. From black and white to colour, everyone knew the story, which ended with Sun Wukong chasing away the Jade Emperor. Unlike the Journey to the West, there are no appearances by the Buddha or Guanyin, no 500 years of being trapped under a mountain, and no subsequent quest to the West. It embodies a heroic spirit, as Mao Zedong once said: 'To overthrow an old world and establish a new one.' Today, this is the best version of Sun Wukong—born into the world without any purpose, unconstrained by anything, and never saddened by his own insignificance.

This film is particularly suitable for children because Sun Wukong is every child—often making mistakes but not caring. As they grow up, they will marvel at the beauty of 'The Monkey King,' the arduousness of hand-drawn animation, and the beauty of the music—things they couldn't appreciate as children. These elements make this work a classic and suitable for adults as well, because adults may not have the time to appreciate it again, the projection of their childhood selves, and such a beautiful work.

The three works produced by the Shanghai Animation Film Studio are all masterpieces, but due to the limitations of their time, most people saw them on television, from black-and-white to colour, until the release of 'The Legend of the Magic Lantern' when these animated films finally broke free from their connection to television. Perhaps these films deserve to be seen again in the cinema, with their scenes and characters reconstructed.

Conclusion

Some films are classics from the early days of reform and opening up. The films of the 1980s revisited the diversity of humanity and landscapes. Reform and opening up brought people together on a human level, highlighting the experiences of different individuals and societies. Even when revisiting pre-liberation literature, such as Lao She's *Camel Xiangzi*, these works use the perspective of their own era to re-examine China and the Chinese people. Era and landscape are inseparable; through the landscapes in these films, people may glimpse the beauty of the past and present, the wheat fields of the past and those of today. The landscapes themselves may not have changed much, but the ambiance has evolved because the viewers—the people—have already changed.

Responding to the curatorial concept of Rachel Rits-Volloch and David Elliott for *Landscapes of Futures Past* is a paradox of thought, a chaotic interplay of turmoil and eternal questions: Can one find oneself in the landscape? Zhuangzi, Xu Xiake (1587–1641): which aspects of the world, poetry, and travelogues imagined by the ancients resonate with today? Which have changed with the passage of time? Which may have remained unchanged? I want to return to the human dimension, to explore anthropocentrism. The landscapes of the past and future are all about people—the spaces where they live, what they see, hear, and think. An ancient poem, a modern painting, or a future film are all about how people use their imagination to create and expand their perceptions. Under the concept of the Anthropocene, in geological terms, human existence is also part of the landscape. What about emotions?

What is changing? What remains the same?

There are some films that I hope to see again on the big screen outdoors, because these films are disappearing from our lives and memories. Additionally, films should not merely be streaming content on phones, tablets, and computers, causing us to overlook the richness of audiovisual experiences. Films are also the pinnacle of technological development, a temporal and spatial magic created for collective development. As old films fade away, so too will the technology that accompanied them—projection equipment, projectionists, 35mm film, and more.

——Li Zhenhua

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABOUT JYH ART MUSEUM

VISIT

Opening Hours:

9:30-17:30 Closed on Mondays (except on holidays)

Address: 39 Dazhi Rd, Jiading, Shanghai

jyhartmuseum.com

Jiayuanhai Art Museum is a public institution located in a rural setting in the northwestern outskirts of Shanghai, officially opened in 2024. Within the dynamic spaces designed by the acclaimed Japanese architect Tadao Ando, its exhibitions display many diverse media in an exploration of Shanghai's distinctive Haipai culture within the context of global contemporary art. In spring and autumn, it stands as Shanghai's only art museum producing rice and grapes, and offers unique rural charm with new possibilities for redefining the boundaries between art and life.