

**FOCUS SHANGHAI: New Video from China**  
**Anthology Film Archives, May 23-25, 2008**

[http://www.anthologyfilmarchives.org/schedule/?current\\_date=2008-05-01](http://www.anthologyfilmarchives.org/schedule/?current_date=2008-05-01)

By now, everyone knows that Chinese art is hot. But - as for video – it is also young, precarious, and taking place within a context that artists themselves are creating. All this makes for an interesting moment, and the work has an energy that is incredibly appealing. It is also relevant, here, now, at a time when we are all looking for clues about what it means to be an artist - especially a media artist - as technology changes the materials we work with and creates a new global culture.

New York based artist Katy Martin and Denis Zhu (Zhu Haijian) join together again to present this follow-up to their eye-opening CHINA s CUTTING EDGE series presented at Anthology in 2006. FOCUS SHANGHAI continues where the other programs left off, and brings us up to date on the ever evolving scene. Zhu, the Film/Video Curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art Shanghai (which has one of the only experimental film series in China), is also an artist, and he is at the center of a burgeoning video artists community centered in Shanghai and nearby Hongzhou. Martin made her second trip there last year and thankfully returned with this exciting assortment of new works that once more proves China is where it's at.

**PROGRAM ONE, May 23, 2008, 75 minutes**

TANG MAOHONG

*Orchidaceous Finger,*  
 2006-07, 12 minutes, video.

A surreal universe of people, animals and plants interact and converge in orgiastic scenes. The round format of the animated frames references classic flower and bird paintings.

SONG TAO

*4.7 GB: Part 2 – Yard*

2007, 10 minutes, video.

*4.7 GB: Part 3 – Four Country*

2007, 7 minutes, video.

Song Tao has a light touch, and has taken thousands of photos of daily life in Shanghai, from the perspective of the young generation that grew up in China's booming economy. This sensibility (being inside and outside, hopeful and alienated) permeates **4.7 GB**.

*Four Country* is the name of a game.

YANG FUDONG

*City Light,*

2000, 6 minutes, video. Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

Already known to American audiences, Yang Fudong is a huge influence on other filmmakers in Shanghai and very supportive of their work. *City Lights* shows his love of movies and his interest in all the in-between moments, the visual, nonverbal narratives of classic cinema.

SUN XUN

*Mythos*

2006, 5 minutes, video.

*Lie,*

2006, 7 minutes, video.

*Requiem*

2007, 8 minutes, video.

Sharp, bitter, funny and thoughtful, Sun Xun's animations are a meditation on history as a magician's black and white art.

LIANG YUE

*I Love Oleander*

2007, 20 minutes, video.

Liang Yue is a keen observer of daily life has developed a sophisticated, casual style that seems almost like home movies. She takes us with friends on an evening out where the talk is of nothing but jobs and real estate. Consumer society is China's new form of control. Like oleander, it blooms all over Shanghai.

## **PROGRAM TWO, May 24, 2008, 73 minutes**

CAO KAI

*Channel China I and Channel China II*

9 minutes, video.

As an innovator of the China Independent Film Festival, Cao Kai has his finger on the pulse of what is happening in experimental and documentary film throughout China. *Channel China* is his reaction to the convergence of political and media control.

*Time Is a Drop of Water in My Heart*, 6 minutes, color, silent.

A silent crescendo based on Chinese writing.

QIU ANXIONG

*Ming Guo*

2007, 15 minutes, video.

*Ming Guo* means Republic of China (1911-1949) and a period of intense crossover of eastern and western cultural forces. Anxiong's paintings form the basis of this animation that combines western (acrylic on canvas) and Chinese (ink wash) modes of painting.

YAN YAO

*1/4 mm*

2008, 20 minutes, video.

A silent, surrealist murder mystery, *1/4mm* highlights the bizarre in the everyday.

ZHOU HONGXIANG

*Chinese Portraiture*

2006, 13 minutes, video.

Zhou Hongxiang, one of the most formally innovative video artists in China, hones his approach in this pared down piece which was first shown as an interactive gallery installation, where all the portraits were projected side by side and animated whenever viewers approached.

*Cornland*

2006, 10 minutes, video.

A 3-screen piece about the countryside where the filmmaker grew up, *Cornland* references the memories that flicker as one navigates city life.

### **PROGRAM THREE, May 25, 2008, 93 minutes**

#### **LU CHUNSENG (solo show)**

Lu Chunsheng is rising to international prominence through exhibitions at such showcases as PS One/MOMA (New York), Red Mansion Gallery (London) and the Sao Paulo Biennale. He takes on big narrative themes through minimalist strategies, understated humor, and shifts in the frame of reference that make for a sense of dislocation. He sets up tense dramatic situations, which he films with a neutral, experimental attitude. Lu's work is an uncanny blend of far ranging influences, from the slow moving beauty of Bresson to Tarkovsky's cinematic worlds that are loosely bounded by history and fiction.

*A Square Which Is Loaded with Nuclear Power Is Coming to America*

2007, 3 minutes, video.

A nefarious contraption lurching forward. Look out!

*History of Chemistry 2: Excessively Restrained Mountaineering Enthusiasts*

2007, 90 minutes, video.

In Part 2 of his *History of Chemistry* cycle, Lu is re-imagining history as an amalgam of fiction, documentary, and everyday life. The crime movie (*who dunnit?*) meets performance art in a series of intrigues that are acted out in minimal, wordless, drawn-out scenarios. The real stars are a big cardboard box and an industrial vacuum cleaner. This work was shot in England, where Lu had a residency, and he has made the most of its old factories and gardens. Lu Chunsheng trained as a sculptor, and his sense of mass and volume makes for beautifully composed imagery. The human figure, at times, is just another volume, carrying out an absurd set of actions within inexplicably odd situations.