

Déjà Disparu

A multimedia exhibition of artworks of the 1990's by contemporary Hong Kong artists

25 July 2013, Hong Kong - Pearl Lam Galleries presents today a group exhibition of mostly historical artworks by: Ho Siu-Kee; Ellen Pau; Sara Wong; and Vincent Yu, opening to the public tomorrow. The exhibition title ***Déjà Disparu*** takes reference from Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance, a seminal book on Hong Kong's cultural politics of the 1990's written by the renowned cultural theorist Ackbar Abbas. Curated by David Chan, the exhibition investigates our numbness towards the rapid physical changes of our urban space, and explores our collective consciousness of locality and time.

Déjà Disparu is defined by Abbas as: “*the feeling that what is new and unique about the situation is always already gone, and we are left holding a handful of clichés, or a cluster of memories of what has never been. It is as if the speed of a current event is producing a radical desynchronization: the generation of more and more images to the point of saturation going together with a general regression of viewing, an inability to read what is given to view, the state of reverse hallucination.*”¹

Déjà Disparu focuses on selected artists who emerged from the late 1980's and early 1990's. The exhibition simulates this overloaded experience through different media of photography, sculpture, and video installation. These artworks express collectively an in between state of imagination and regression that is metaphorical of a desire to escape versus being contained and where objects become flattened and dematerialized.

Subverting the narrative structure of film, Ellen Pau's *Recycling Cinema* (1999) is a single channel video installation that signifies our compliance with a master temporality central to urban development. Pau tracks the moving vehicle on the busy Island Eastern Corridor highway with a panning video camera. The moment the panning speed of the video camera matches with the one of a moving car, the vehicle is held captive for a brief moment only to accelerate out of sight during the next instant. The artist then targets another vehicle on the opposite lane, only to have forgotten what she saw seconds ago. The act of viewing is a monotonous exercise of blind fate, our reading of the city is merely a series of flattened images that can never be held captive for our closer scrutiny and the set narrative must move forward.

¹ Ackbar Abbas, *Hong Kong- Culture and the Politics of Disappearance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 25-26.

First shown at Para/Site Art Space in Hong Kong in 1998, *Local Orientation* (1998) by Sara Wong questions the elusive representation of maps and our inability to navigate through a permanent urban terrain. Drawing straight lines along the four cardinal directions on a bird's eye map of Hong Kong from a determined centre, Wong proceeded to walk along the set trajectories on actual location in order to register the daily lives on a neighborhood. Whenever she is met with a building or an obstacle along the set journey, Wong would then proceed to the nearest open space to continue with the set path. For this exhibition, Wong will project one of her walking tours from 1998 onto the ceiling of the gallery to disorient the directional bearing of the gallery. Furthermore, Wong will make a new version of *Local Orientation* (2013) by walking along the same western path as in 1998 in order to differentiate the actual physical changes within the city.

Well versed in Greek mythology and in French phenomenology, Ho Siu-Kee considers the body as a mere tool for our perception. It is through the body's timely engagement with different man-made structures that reveals our relationships with the world and its many hidden potentials. In *Gravity Hoop* (1996), the artist suspends himself upside down inside a circular steel apparatus and asks us to ponder on gravity as a fundamental physical condition that has limited the appearance of our reality. Such a defiant act celebrates stillness and the longing for a personal space for introspection.

Vincent Yu has worked as a photojournalist for Associated Press since 1989. His participation in this exhibition provides objective glimpses of living in Hong Kong with a series of documentary photographs. Two series of photographs will be shown. *HKG* is a series of photographs he took from the 1980s to 1990's that records the physical changes of the city and the events leading up to the pre and post handover periods. In addition, another series of frontal portraits of the long time inhabitants of the now demolished Shek Kip Mei Estate—the oldest public housing estate built by the former colonial government in 1953. Yu records meticulously many elderly people living and their belongings inside a cramped living quarter. Yu's matter of fact photographs acknowledge the historicity of a dwelling, his visual diaries provide an abbreviated chronology that binds the ephemeral artworks by other artists in this exhibition in a provocative manner.

David Chan, curator of *Déjà Disparu* said, “Regardless of how homogenous the urban spaces have become (a process that is still very much happening in the present) the selection of artworks by these often overlooked individuals offers new insights into different ways of confronting amnesia with a historical distance that are largely driven by a strong desire to preserve a space for creativity and survival.”

Althea Viafora-Kress, International Director of Pearl Lam Galleries said: “We are thrilled to once again dedicate the gallery to Hong Kong artists. This examination of Hong Kong through a series of multi-media works by leading homegrown artists provides a fascinating insight into the city's cultural history.”

Press Enquiries

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Exhibition Dates

26 July–4 September, 2013

Monday-Saturday, 10am–7pm

Pearl Lam Galleries, 601–605, 6/F, Pedder Building, 12 Pedder Street, Central, Hong Kong

www.pearllam.com

About the Artists

Ellen Pau

Born in Hong Kong, Ellen Pau is a radiographer by profession having studied radiography at the Hong Kong Polytechnic in 1982. Being a professional radiologist could not fulfill her creative obsessions with video art and media art and in 1984 her first film *Glove*, a super-8mm artwork, was made and screened internationally. She worked as a MTV director, cinematographer, video artist, curator, educator and arts administrator. Pau started her international career in 1995 at the Kwangju Biennale in Korea, curated by Kim Hon-Yee and Nam-June Paik, she is the co-founder and artistic director for the media art organisation Videotage and a member and curator of the organizing committee for the Microwave International Media Art Festival, Hong Kong since 1996. Pau teaches part-time in The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Polytechnic University and Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts, as well as being a full time medical image technologist. Pau is advisor to the HK Museum of Art, the HK Art Development Council and a number of festivals. She has exhibited in exhibitions including One World Exposition by Videotage and Input/Output Gallery Relocation exhibition.

Sara Wong

Sara Wong received her BA degree in Fine Arts from the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1992 and her Master of Landscape Architecture from the University of Hong Kong in 1997. Wong was a founded member of Para/Site Art Space in Hong Kong and has exhibited in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Beijing, Taipei, New York, Honolulu, Tokyo, Melbourne, Venice, Seoul, Gwangju, Oslo, Munich, Kassel and Berlin. Awards received include Artist Grant of the Centre de Reflexion sur l'Image et ses Contextes, Switzerland (2000); Most Promising Artist of the Philippe Charriol Foundation, Hong Kong (1994); Ramon Woon Art Creative Prize, The Chinese University of Hong Kong (1992). She has also participated in the Artist-in-residence programme held in PS1 Contemporary Art Center (1999), the Bronx Museum of the Arts (2000), New York; Ecole Cantonale d'Art du Valais (ECAV); Sierre, Switzerland (2000) and the Nordisk Kunstnarsenter Dalssesen, Norway (2002).

Ho, Siu-Kee

Ho Siu-Kee was born in 1964 and obtained his BA degree in Fine Arts at The Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1989. He graduated from Cranbrook Academy of Art, Michigan, USA, with an MFA degree majoring in Sculpture in 1995 and earned his Doctor of Fine Art degree from RMIT University, Australia in 2003. He is currently the Associate Professor in the Visual Arts Academy of Hong Kong Baptist University.

Ho has participated in various prestigious exhibitions worldwide including the 23rd International Biennial of Sao Paulo in 1996 and the 49th Venice Biennial in 2001. He has received various awards such as Civitella Ranieri Fellowship (Civitella Ranieri Center, Italy); Starr Foundation Fellowship (Asian Cultural Council, New York) and Fellowship for Artistic Development (Hong Kong Arts Development Council).

Vincent Yu

Vincent Yu was born in 1964 in Hong Kong and studied at the Kwun Tong Vocational Training School between 1984 and 1985 and received his higher certificate in applied photography from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University between 1987 and 1989. Yu has covered major local and international stories including the 2004 Olympic Games, the 2004 Asian tsunami disaster, as well as numerous important news events in the Asia Pacific region. He is a founding member of the Hong Kong Press Photographers Association. Yu was a recipient of the US National Headliner Awards in 2004. Many of his photos have been recognized with awards from the Hong Kong Press Association, and his work has been shown in exhibitions in Hong Kong, Mainland China, Hawaii and Berlin. He has acted as a guest lecturer on photojournalism at the University of Hong Kong, and has published two books *HKG* (1998) and *Our Home, Shek Kip Mei 1954-2006* (2007). His solo exhibitions include *The Vanishing Coastline*, (2010) *Our Home* (2007), *Shek Kip Mei*, (2007) *Cosplay*, (2007) and *HKG*, (2007) all held in Hong Kong. His works are found in the collection of Hong Kong Heritage Museum.

About David Chan

David Ho Yeung Chan is a curator based in Hong Kong and Shanghai. He was the Director of the Shanghai Gallery of Art at Three on the Bund from 2007 to 2009 and subsequently the Director of the Osage Gallery until 2011. Chan has curated many exhibitions with artists including Chen Shaoxiong, Gu Dexin, Lee Kit, Lin Yilin, Michael Lin, Tsuyoshi Ozawa, Wang Jianwei and Yan Lei amongst others. With Pearl Lam Galleries, Chan has curated *Lei Hong: Non-Geometric Study*, *Tsang Kin-Wah: Ecce Homo Trilogy I*, *Fictional Recoveries* and Su Xiaobai's solo exhibition at the beginning of this year. He holds an M.A. from the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College, New York, USA.

About Pearl Lam Galleries

Founded by Pearl Lam, the Galleries' mission is to stimulate cross-cultural dialogue and cultural exchange between East and West by establishing distinct and rigorous programming in each of its gallery spaces in Hong Kong, Shanghai and the forthcoming Singapore gallery.

Pearl Lam Galleries is dedicated to championing Chinese artists who re-evaluate the philosophy and perception of Chinese contemporary art, whilst also committed to presenting major exhibitions by international artists. Jenny Holzer and Yinka Shonibare are among the line-up of artists who will have solo exhibitions at the Galleries in 2013.

Pearl Lam Design shows works by established and emerging international designers including André Dubreuil, Maarten Baas, Mattia Bonetti, and Studio Makkink & Bey. They are invited to push the boundaries of traditional Chinese art and craft techniques and create new works that reflect their experiences in China.