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CRITICS' PICKS

CURRENT | PAST

New York

"The Permanent Way"
 "Carnal Knowledge: Sex + Philosophy"
 Albrecht Schnider
 "Ecstatic Alphabets/Heaps of Language"

Los Angeles

"Ends of the Earth"
 Sharon Lockhart and Noa Eshkol
 Dinh Q. Lê

San Francisco

Lin Yilin

Austin

Lane Hagood

Chicago

Andrew Norman Wilson

Houston

"It is what it is. Or is it?"

Philadelphia

"Fükengröven"
 "First Among Equals"

Portland, OR

Betty Feves
 Bobbi Woods

Providence

Spencer Finch

San Antonio

Adam Schreiber

London

"A drawing while waiting for an idea"
 "The Historical Box"
 Amalia Pica

Dublin

Aleana Egan

Paris

Amy Sillman
 "Intense Proximity"
 R. Crumb

Mulhouse

Julien Nédélec

Berlin

Alice Creischer

Hamburg

Wim Wenders

Milan

"Addio anni '70"
 "IN"
 Judith Hopf

Hong Kong

"Taiping Tianguo, A History of Possible Encounters"

PARA/SITE ART SPACE

G/F, 4, Po Yan Street, Sheung Wan

May 12–August 12

Rather than making overreaching claims for uncovering or even just endorsing an authoritative narrative, this exhibition is ambitious for its speculative tentativeness; it is "an attempt to think of actual and concrete, as well as tenuous or even possibly non-existing connections" between four artists who lived in New York in the 1980s and early '90s: Ai Weiwei, Frog King Kwok, Tehching Hsieh, and Martin Wong. A less adventurous show might have honed in on the so-called diasporic links that unite exiled and expatriate artists of Chinese ancestry, but the gathering deftly avoids sloppy thematic generalizations about national or ethnic identity, choosing instead to remain attentive to the nuances of these personal friendships and the resultant involvement of these artists in each other's practice.

The four central artists' names and figures, along with the half-glimpsed associations and affiliations between them, seem to weave around and circulate freely through the exhibition space. Photo documents of Tehching Hsieh's formative "One Year Performances" from 1978 to 1982 turn out to be from the collection of Kwok, and Hsieh himself pops up in Ai's photos of the downtown New York scene. Meanwhile, a surprise "contribution" from artist Danh Vo's personal collection (Martin Wong's painting *FDNY*, 1998) multiplies the resonances between the various materials assembled here by recalling Vo's own trademark practice of mining the latent associative powers of ordinary objects.

Wall texts prompt and signal "possible" links and connections rather than insisting on them, while individual works shed light on personal history in a disarming way—the slide shows of Wong's performances with the gay drag troupe Angels of Light and his mother's collection of his own works on the walls of her house are particular highlights. Taken as a whole, "Taiping Tianguo" resembles not so much a "group show" centered on a specific New York-based Chinese artistic diaspora as it does a loose confederation of ingeniously sourced artworks and documents that recount the personal exploits of a group of friends and comrades.

— Darryl Wee



View of "Taiping Tianguo, A History of Possible Encounters," 2012.

[PERMALINK](#) | [TALKBACK \(0 COMMENTS\)](#) | [E-MAIL](#) | [PRINT](#)

Shanghai

Chen Wei

LEO XU PROJECTS

Lane 49, Building 3, Fuxing Xi Road | 复兴西路49弄3号, Xuhui District | 徐汇区

June 3–July 15

Everything is meticulously staged in Chen Wei's photographs. A standout work in his debut exhibition in Shanghai focuses on a handmade Ping-Pong table: a makeshift slab of wood with a layer of yellow paint on it, with a cutout of More brand cigarette cartons strapped on as a dividing net. On one end resides a single cardboard paddle, its handle formed hastily out of layers of tape. The floor is littered with disused, dented balls: the disjuncta of games past. The sun casts a late-afternoon window frame shadow across the desolate interior. Day is done, no more fun.

In another image, tomatoes seem to have been splattered all over a room. In the midst of the scene, there's a red foldout chair with a white undershirt draped on the back support. Again, the room is nearly dark, illuminated only by a narrow strait of sunlight. It's like we're sneaking a read of some forbidden novel, or peeking at the remnants of a

Chen Wei, *Ping Pong*, 2011, C-print, 59 x 79".

Victoria Miro

[links](#)

WALLSPACE

DAVID
NOLAN
NEW YORK

fonti

HONOR
FRASER
Los Angeles

P.P.O.W

GLADSTONE
GALLERYPAULA
COOPER
GALLERYLESLIE
TONKONOW
ARTWORKS +
PROJECTS

ARTSYSTEMS

FOUND ART PRODUCTION

mixed greens

Rome

Henrik Olai Kaarstein
"D'après Giorgio"

Helsinki

Jacob Dahlgren

Amsterdam

David Jablonowski

Lisbon

Noé Sendas

Hong Kong

"Taiping Tianguo, A
History of Possible
Encounters"

Shanghai

Chen Wei
Zhang Ding



NEWS | DIARY | **FILM**

Newest Entries

Tony Pipolo on *It's the Earth Not the Moon*
Andrew Hultkrans on Robert Downey Sr.
Naomi Fry on *Magic Mike*
Amy Taubin on BAMcinemaFest 2012
Jason Anderson on First Peoples Cinema at TIFF
Bell Lightbox
Courtney Malick on New Filipino Cinema

ritual that was supposed to remain private, hidden.

Throughout this show, Chen extracts a melancholic underlining out of every possible situation, which is why his photographs are so often devoid of figures—when a person does appear, it is usually the artist himself, his face hidden—yet full of human traces. But Chen is not involved in some realist project. He is wise enough to follow his own impulses, which occasionally bring him over the edge, as in the Polaroid series "Everlasting Radio Wave," 2008, where the birds fly right through the head of an intrepid domestic explorer. That Chen makes these image-events happen without imploring us to consider them as factual narratives makes us believe all the more that they could be true.

— Travis Jeppesen

PERMALINK TALKBACK (0 COMMENTS) E-MAIL PRINT

Zhang Ding

SHANGHART GALLERY | 香格纳画廊
50 Moganshan Rd., Bldg 16 and 18
June 2–July 15

"Buddha Jumps over the Wall" is one of those legendarily impossible Cantonese dishes, taking hours or even days to concoct, and a veritable nightmare for vegans, consisting as it does of an avalanche of meat and fish ingredients, which vary slightly according to individual recipes. The meal takes its name from an apocryphal tale about a Buddhist monk who couldn't resist the savory smell emitted from his next door neighbor's crockery, and jumped right over the wall to demand a taste, momentarily abandoning his vegetarianism.

Zhang Ding's version of the soup consists of duck, pig, turtle, fish, goat, and chicken, which are represented by white plaster casts in a video projected in the front of the gallery. Each animal is assassinated by a handgun-wielding silver cast of a butcher, which also appears in the gallery, spotlighted in front of the video projection. The animals on-screen explode, spurring a sea of blood: just like your favorite Hollywood action movie! The next room is the banquet hall. On the opening night of the exhibition, a real chef was on site cooking up the dish and spooning out servings to the lucky guests—or at least the carnivores among them—while an orchestra played in the center of the room. In another corner, the remnants of blasted animals have been put on display, all white and red—far less gory than the real thing. The back of the hall is decorated with a red carpet and kitsch paintings of naked women—the type of decor you might find in a restaurant in China with the pretensions of catering to the newly emergent middle and upper classes.

The exhibition seems like a sensible enough sequel to "Opening," Zhang's 2011 show at ShangArt, in which he confused the art-trolling public by transforming the gallery into a tacky nightclub, complete with red lights and go-go dancers. China is very much into its own version of the society of the spectacle, but it's only artists like Zhang who seem to notice—and are sophisticated enough to poke fun at it.

— Travis Jeppesen

PERMALINK TALKBACK (0 COMMENTS) E-MAIL PRINT



Zhang Ding, *Buddha Jumps over the Wall*, 2012, still from a color video, 2 minutes.

< Rest of Europe **Rest of the World**

Last Month's Picks

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