

gallery guide

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Revealing links in time

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Photography and video Hong Kong artist Morgan Wong (born 1984) graduated from City University's Creative Media department in Hong Kong. After a couple of jobs as a designer and an art assistant project he moved to Beijing where he worked as a press coordinator in the 798 Art District for Beijing Commune – the gallery created by critic and curator Leng Ling, who represents Zhang Xiaogang, Song Dong, and Yin Xiuzhen.

Reversing time

Plus-Minus-Zero is a three-minute video work made during a two months artist residency in Sapporo. It was first commissioned by Para/Site and affiliated to the exhibition FAX. Wong stages himself sliding backward and anti-clockwise on skis around a circular forest patch in snowy Sapporo. In the recorded video, fast-forward or return motions are played, reversing the snow fall and direction taken by other skiers in an attempt by the artist to reverse time and create a link between Hong Kong and Japan. Wong says: "I use instant chat and other communication software to talk with friends who are in different time zones". Just as you fax something at 10am from Japan it arrives in Hong Kong at 9am, so the fax itself gained one hour.

Emotional momentum

"Because videos are time based, I use them to explore how things can go in one direction or the other" says Wong, who exemplifies his use of the timeline within a dramatisation context in his work *Demolishing Rumor*. He attempts to reverse a rumour announcing the demolition of 'Caochangdi Art District', located in the outskirts of Beijing, by the Chinese government. He recreated a brick model of the place and makes a video where he single-handedly hammers the structure - symbolically demolishing

the rumour. This work was shown at *No Soul For Sale* at Tate Modern. While depicting a passionate and aggressive action, Wong chose to film the scene with a certain distance, introducing a sense of peace towards his conceptual stopping of the demolition.

Hues as language

Conscious use of colours is part of Wong's creative language. His work is often coloured in lower hues, close to black and white visually - introducing a degree of detachment. He is cautious not to distract the viewer from the meaning residing within motion and duration. "I want the audience to focus on one thing only, in *Demolishing Rumor* the duration and passion are growing by the minute". While in *Untitled*, a piece about communicating with an elder Japanese cook he met during his residency in Sapporo, his green jacket and red trousers are clues towards his identity – they are the same clothes he wore when he developed his friendship with the cook. Although in this case his face and hands are covered by a skin-like costume directing the viewer's attention towards body language. "I want the audience to focus on my hands rather than my face and create a more global work than just a communication between China and Japan".

Recently he has not only been researching video artists like Swiss native Roman Signer; but also John Wood and Paul Harrison whose strong interrelations between people and objects, worked through simple and direct actions - he finds inspiring.

Striving to be able to work as a full time artist, Wong is pursuing his explorations of communication, traditional culture, time and social issues. But while looking for strong concepts, he says: "the most important aspect in the work is to convey emotion to the audience".

Left: Video Stills from *Plus-Minus-Zero*, Courtesy Para/Site and the artist

Coming up: *Fuse* residency at Videotage, May-June 2011.

For full projects list and CV, please go to

art.wongwingfat.com