

An Uncommon Past ||

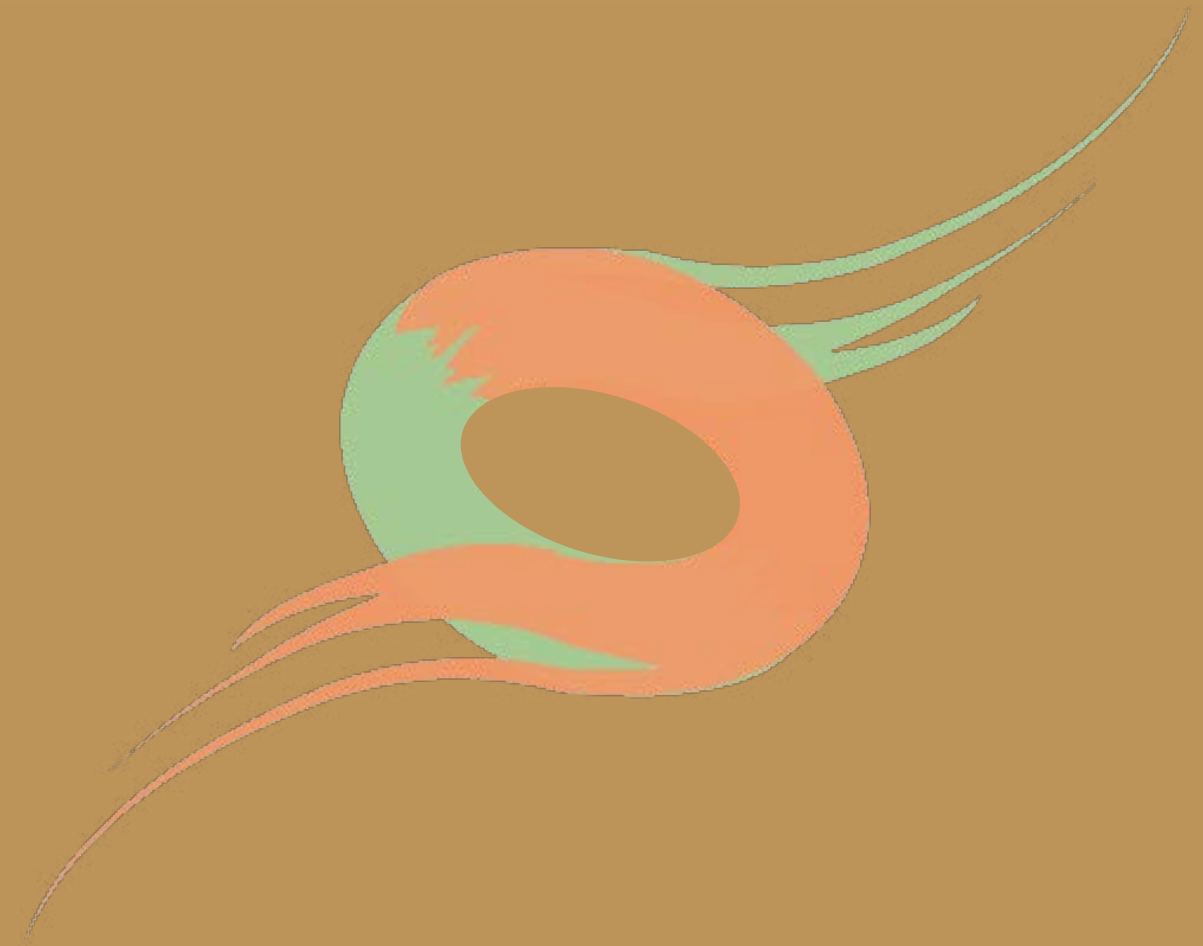
Visual Explorations of Time, History and Memory

Edited by John Goto

Sichuan Fine Art Institute |

University of Derby |

An Uncommon Past |
Visual Explorations of Time, History and Memory



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AN UNCOMMON PAST EXHIBITION

26 APRIL – 13 MAY 2012

New Media Centre Gallery
Sichuan Fine Art Institute
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The exhibition forms part of the British Council's UK NOW festival in China.
Web: www.uknow.org.cn/en/events/1113.html

'UK Now is the biggest ever festival of British arts and creative industries held in China. Hundreds of world-class events will run across 17 Chinese cities between April and November 2012'.

05	Introduction by Huw Davies	40	The Garden by Vered Lahav	66	An Historic Place by Li Rong Feng
07	Dreams Light the Future by Zhang Xiaotao	44	Heimat by Heike Löwenstein	68	Grandma by Luo Chaoqun
09	Introducing An Uncommon Past by John Goto	48	Documentation of a Record of Fear by Louise K Wilson	70	Wimm by Song Xiaoning
12	My Father & L'Orage by Cesario Alves	54	Sky by Chen Meng Sha	72	Chongqing Time-Lapse by Wang Chun & Song Xiaoning
16	That Faraway Look by Robert Casselton Clark	56	Contracts by Dong Liang	74	Great Leap Forward by Xiong Rui
20	The Changing Face & Twenty Eight Mirrors by Huw Davies	58	New Morning by Fang Kejie	76	Looking Towards the Future by Zhou Yaun
24	Everyday by Peter Finnemore	60	The Model by Gao Zhibin	79	Acknowledgements
28	Quickening by Fletcher, Parker & Watson	62	People Can't Settle For Vague Images Anymore by Kexin Liu		
32	Dance to the Muzik of Time by John Goto	64	The City Graveyard by Leong Man Pan		
36	The Bird Catcher by Sookyoung Huh & Björn Larsson				





From left to right: Zeng Tu (artist), Zhou Yuan (post-graduate student), Tang Yiming (post-graduate student), Zhang Xiaotao (Dean, Department of New Media Art SCFAI), John Goto (artist), Huw Davies (Dean, Faculty of Arts, Design and Technology,

University of Derby), Zhang Jie (Vice Chancellor SCFAI), Chen Bing (Assistant Director, Cultural & Education Section of the British Consulate-General, Chongqing), Nancy Yu (Project Manager, University of Derby).

DREAMS LIGHT THE FUTURE

The Digital and Material Arts Research Center at the University of Derby (D-MARC) and the New Media Art Center have a natural and profound basis for cooperation. We are all devoted to the comprehensive development of talent and inter-discipline cross-media exploration. D-MARC focuses on the transformation of art's margins and the combination of the traditional rules of art with new technologies. While D-MARC explores the potential creativity of digital mixture, and also commits itself to theoretical teaching and education. NMAC (New Media Art Centre at Sichuan Fine Art Institute) was founded in 2010. NMAC works on the construction of multiple dimensions, such as experimental animation and film, art performance, new drama, multimedia interaction, as well as offering a library centre, film archive, academic forum, exhibition space, etc. NMAC aims to provide an international and domestic cross-media platform for experimental arts and artists' exchange. We have facilities including an archive, Apple workstations, training centre, studios, etc. NMAC will build on a programme of international academic exchanges, committing itself to research and teaching into the practice of digital art against a global background. NMAC will bring digital art into the spheres of research into China's history of literature, thinking, mind, vision, and culture, establishing a reflective independent and free academic environment.

New Media Art, in essence, is an inter-discipline subject, which not only relies on the use of technology, but also expresses itself in the language of art. Therefore, New Media artists usually work in groups, which demands the cooperation of practitioners from different professional backgrounds.

Digital Art, on the one hand, is an open, instantaneous and inter-disciplinary art. On the other hand, it is a multimedia, progressive, discursive, conceptual and context dependent art, and also tends towards an interaction with audiences. In the evolution of art's disciplines, virtual art dispels the vividness and nicety of traditional art, and promotes the development of a process driven artistic mode. It also challenges the interface of human perceptual systems and deconstructs participants' perceptions. Now there are many immersion works of virtual art, including architecture, sculpture, painting, drama, photography, and historic image media. A multi-dimensional world is expanding in front of us, a perfect unity of science and art. Today's digital art is the recombination of virtual reality and image worlds, and is able to dig into, or even extend, the potential artistic value of images.

In this time of revolution in new media, what is the order of today's vision? What are the new characteristics of digital art in today's global age? What is the future of art in the digital age? It is these questions that drive us to expand our vision across borders and pursue a multi-dimensional interpretation. It is this shared speculation and exploration that sets the stage for the academic exchange between Sichuan Fine Art Institute and University of Derby. And the academic exchange will begin at NMAC in Sichuan Fine Art College, led by the Professor John Goto from D-MARC at the University of Derby.

Professor John Goto is the Director of D-MARC Digital and Material Art Research Centre and also a productive artist, especially in the field of the digital image. Since the 1990s, he has brought the computer

into his artistic creation, focusing on historic topics and modern social ironies. He has held an exhibition at Tate Britain Gallery and has had frequent exhibitions in other European countries. During the Professor's two-week visit to NMAC, he held four lectures, discussing topics concerning the relationship between time, memory and history. On these topics, students made various works, some using old photos and multi-media devices to illustrate their thinking about time and memory. The works of students in Sichuan Fine Art Institute and works from Derby University constitute a perfect exhibition, which is not only a collection of NMAC's current achievements, but also the start of the exchange between Derby University and Sichuan Fine Art Institute. In the preparation of this exhibition, Professor John Goto participated in hanging the exhibition with the students. And the students learnt a rigorous attitude from Professor John Goto, who said that an artist should "treat your works like caring for your children."

I hope the students in Department of New Media Art will carry on the inter-discipline and cross-media artistic spirit. And there will be more profound academic exchange and cooperation between the University of Derby and Sichuan Fine Art Institute, and we two universities will have a brighter tomorrow. May dreams light the future, and may drops form into streams, and converge into rivers!

PROFESSOR ZHANG XIAOTAO |
Dean of the Department of New Media Art



John Goto in conversation with Professor Wang Chunchen, Deputy Head Curator of the Museum of the Central Academy of Fine Art, Beijing, before an invited audience.

AN UNCOMMON PAST

The title of this exhibition can take on different meanings. 'Uncommon' can mean out of the ordinary, extraordinary. This infers that we remember those moments or events that run counter to our everyday lives and experience. The filmmaker Chris Marker doubted that we can make such fine distinctions whilst actually experiencing events. The narrator of his film *La jetée* claims that *'Nothing tells memories from ordinary moments; only afterwards do they claim remembrance on account of their scars.'*

'Uncommon' might also be taken to mean discrete. In this sense it suggests that we do not share, in fact cannot share, another's experience nor their memory of events. To believe this is to subscribe to an extreme form of individualism, in which each of us is lost in our own isolated world. On the contrary, most of us assume that we have a common past as a member of a group of some kind - a family, clan or nation. In the context of this exhibition, therefore, 'uncommon' might refer to the differences between the peoples of China and Britain, and their common store of memories, which we call history.

General history books seem to support this view. Until the middle of the seventeenth century the two nations had little contact. At this point in time Britain had not yet become a united kingdom, whilst China could claim to have been a nation for over two thousand years. Once contact was established the colonial ambitions of the British Empire precipitated the Opium Wars, and the Chinese reaction of the Boxer Rebellion. In the twentieth century both nations were engaged in appalling life and death struggles, though for the most part in separate arenas.

We now find ourselves in the early twenty-first century with unprecedented opportunities for dialogue, cooperation and collaboration between our nations, their institutions and individuals. This exhibition is a small contribution to a growing dialogue.

As is so often the case, institutional collaboration has grown from a chance meeting of two like-minded individuals. Video artists Huw Davies and Zeng Tu met whilst Tu was on a short residence at Quad in Derby. Huw is Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Design and Technology (ADT) at the University of Derby, and Tu lectures in the New Media Art Department at Sichuan Fine Art Institute (SCFAI) in Chongqing. Eighteen months on, I was invited to curate an exhibition of new media work from the University of Derby, to be shown at SCFAI. It was to be sent electronically and fabricated in Chongqing. I was also to run a two-week workshop with the students there.

I felt that the themes of common concern to artists working in new media in ADT, are those of history, memory and time. The relationship between the past and present is evident in my work and that of Peter Finnemore. The haunting effect of images from the past is at the core of works by Alves, Clark and the collaborative team of Fletcher, Parker and Watson. History inscribed in the fabric of places informs the work of Davies, Lahav, Löwenstein and Wilson, whilst the poetry of historic objects is explored by Huh.

When I arrived in Chongqing I found the students already engaged with these same questions of time,

memory and history, and keen to develop the themes in our workshop. I framed our discussions by giving a series of lectures on Realism, tracing its course from the mid-nineteenth century, through its many incarnations, to the hyperrealism and the virtual reality of today. Some students made new work, whilst others recontextualised previously made images.

The sense of rapid change in Chongqing was evident to me even from my brief visit. The sheer scale of the city is breathtaking. A megacity with a population of twenty-nine million, it is one of the largest municipalities on earth. Those who live there, as can be seen in the students' work, acutely feel an accelerated sense of time. When reaching back into the past they are eager to preserve something, anything almost, of significance from the tide of change. Their anxieties about the future are amplified by the instabilities of the present, which are both exhilarating and disturbing.

All the artists in this exhibition work with digital technologies, which are themselves drivers of social and economic change. New technologies sweep all before them, contributing to the passing of old certainties and the advancement of a new global culture. What the students in Chongqing showed me was that living with rapid change makes the preservation of historical memory all the more essential in anchoring our communal lives.

PROFESSOR JOHN GOTO
University of Derby



'An Uncommon Past' at the New Media Centre Gallery, SCFAI, Chongqing, China

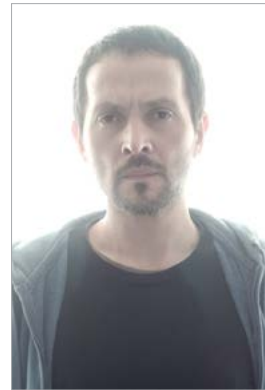
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CESARIO ALVES | MY FATHER & L'ORAGE

The video 'My Father' shows a passport photograph of my father as a young man. I was 18 months old when he was killed in a road accident and I never formed a visual memory of him, except for a few portraits, which I found here and there. This one was taken at Adriano Photographic Studio in Vila do Conde, Portugal, in the 1950's.

The 'L'Orage' series consists of found anonymous glass negatives, bought from eBay UK. These large 13x18 cm negatives (digitally inverted) depict a young child from very early days to just a few years old. The beginning of a story interrupted. A tragic and wonderful interruption that allows for our imagination to replace what is unknown.

Cesario Alves teaches photography at ESMAE / IPP, Porto, Portugal, and is currently a PhD student at the University of Derby.



*“The beginning of a story interrupted.
A tragic and wonderful interruption
that allows for our imagination to
replace what is unknown.”*







“It is no way a race against time, nor an impossible dream of ever arresting it, so much as the very real possibility of - from time to time - transfixing the rhythm of its passing ...”

ROBERT CASSELTON CLARK | THAT FARAWAY LOOK

“It is no way a race against time, nor an impossible dream of ever arresting it, so much as the very real possibility of - from time to time - transfixing the rhythm of its passing...” Robert Casselton Clark

Casselton Clark's That Faraway Look is an installation of over one hundred photo-artworks. The sequencing of what the artist has called 'photographs of almost darkness' builds up a cryptic narrative of nocturnal glimpses. Like a series of fragmented film noir stills, the images evoke an atmosphere of uncertainty, dread and yearning. An evocative ambiguity is sustained throughout, suggesting half remembered dreams or half forgotten memories. Lone protagonists appear fleetingly. There are hints of some kind of unidentified catastrophe. Landscapes are flooded with a crepuscular radiance.

Robert Casselton Clark is Reader in Fine Art at the University of Derby. He is an internationally exhibited artist and writes regularly for the national press.



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HUW DAVIES | THE CHANGING FACE*
AND TWENTY EIGHT MIRRORS*

“Each face has the subjects’ mouth in subtle but varying positions of speech, giving the sequence a sense that the changing face is talking – that some thing is being said but not understood, an unheard voice or ‘other’ language from a section of society that can so often be overlooked.”

The Changing Face and Twenty Eight Mirrors were the product of two site-specific interventions commissioned as part of the Berwick Film and Media Arts Festival. Located in England’s most northerly town, the Festival is an international celebration of the art of film, incorporating a number of distinctive architectural locations as installation sites along the Elizabethan military fortifications.

The Changing Face (Dir: Huw Davies and Marcus Coates, 5 mins, 2007) celebrates Berwick’s contemporary society - specifically its youth. The projected film features a looped series of single heads. The sequence runs at varying speeds. At its fastest the series of faces merge from one to the next, giving the appearance of a single animated face, at its slowest each individual can be recognised. Although the faces change, the eyes always remain in the same position— relating directly to the viewer. Each face has the subjects’ mouth in subtle but varying positions of speech, giving the sequence a sense that the changing face is talking – that something is being said but not

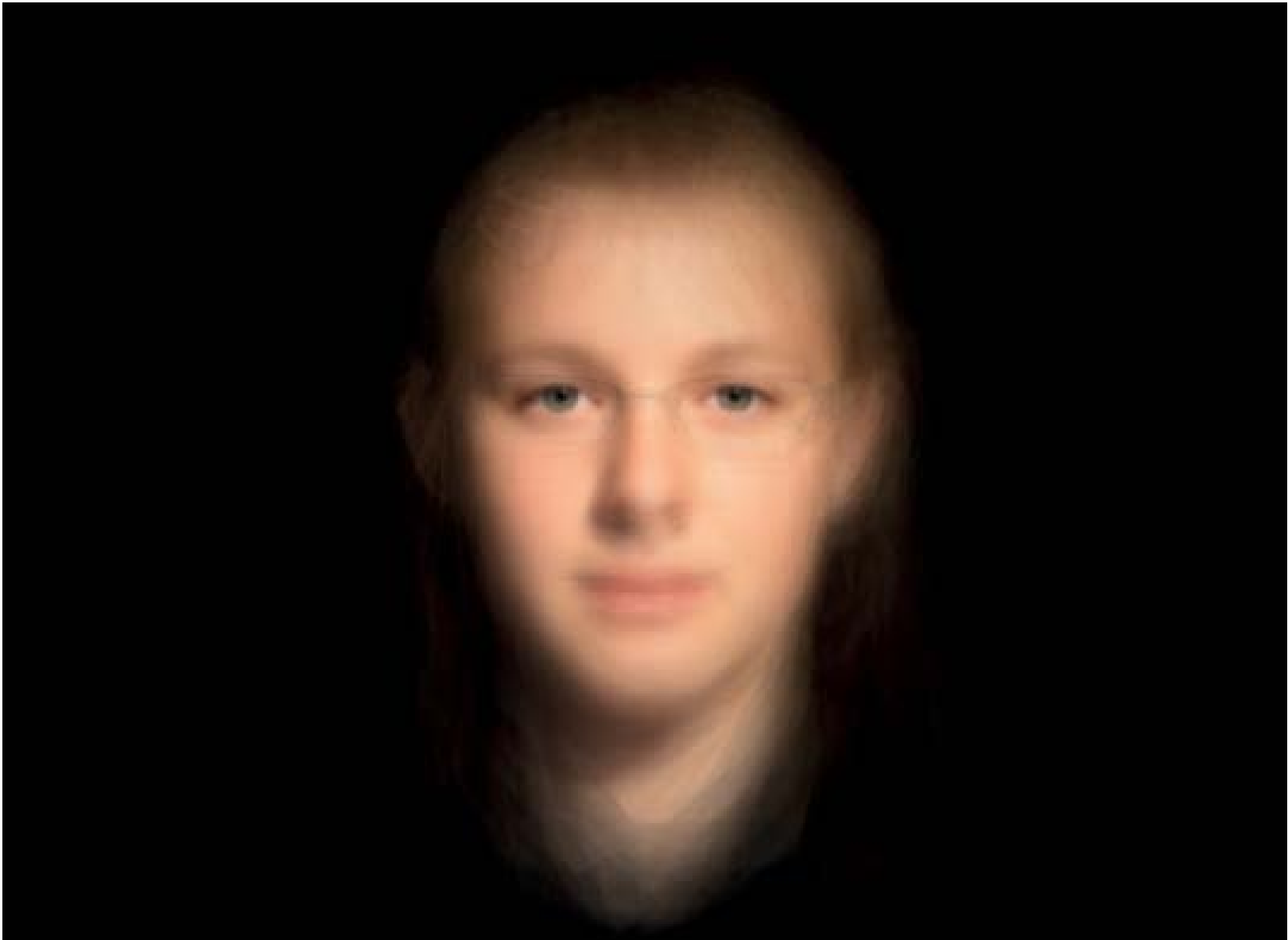
understood, an unheard voice or ‘other’ language from a section of society that can so often be overlooked.

Twenty Eight Mirrors (Dir: Huw Davies and Nigel Atkinson, 3 mins, 2008) is a film choreography for twenty eight mirrors and one apparition. Passers-by capture flickering images of angels with strategically positioned mirrors. This offers a reinterpretation of an earlier installation (entitled ‘Reconfiguration’ which was also produced by the filmmakers) which explored whether the anonymous fate of all permanent municipal site-specific public art in this case a war memorial - could be over come by reconfiguring the artwork.

Huw Davies is filmmaker, curator and academic. He co-founded the Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival in 2004 and was its Artistic Director for five years. He has taught at several Universities in the UK and USA and is currently Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Design & Technology at the University of Derby.

*(in collaboration with Marcus Coates and Nigel Atkinson)





PETER FINNEMORE | EVERYDAY

In 1942 the British filmmaker Humphrey Jennings directed the film *The Silent Village* which re-enacted the events surrounding the assassination of SS Deputy Reichsprotektor Reinhard Heydrich, ruler of occupied Bohemia and Moravia, and the subsequent reprisals of the destruction of the village of Lidice and the murder and deportation of its inhabitants.

A provocative starting point within this series is the video *Shadow Maker* made from archival footage that shows SS Obengruppen Führer Reinhard Heydrich taking a photograph. We are not sure what he is recording or in what context, and this is disturbing. It is a simple act yet, as the sequence is slowed down and looped, the initial banality of the image becomes increasingly malevolent.

This selection of black and white photographs and film comes from a body of work entitled *Everyday*. This was a gallery commission to produce a personal response to the film and to the actual historical events that the film was based upon. The images are based around everyday domestic scenes of the universal environment of the everyday family home. Here the home becomes a time capsule, an intersection point between individual lives being shaped within history. It becomes a container of personal and collective cultural memory. In these photographs it is a meditative space to consider the passing of human presence, with narratives that relate not only to Lidice, but ultimately to us all. The produced artwork explores collective ways of remembering and specifically generational memory as a vital means of continuing to know the past.



Peter Finnemore is an artist working within photographic art, multi-media installation, performance and video. He has exhibited in solo and group exhibitions both nationally and internationally, including representing Wales at the 51st Venice Biennale (2005). Peter is a currently Visiting Professor in Photography at the University of Derby.

“The images are based around every day domestic scenes of the universal environment of the everyday family home. Here the home becomes a time capsule, an intersection point between individual lives being shaped within history.”




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FLETCHER, PARKER & WATSON | QUICKENING

'The dream of motion haunts the visual arts from the classical period to the present day.' (Lynda Nead, 2007, *The Haunted Gallery: Photography Film and Painting c.1900*, Yale University Press, 45)

Quickening is a series of full-length, life-sized video portraits through which we seek to destabilize the boundaries between the animate and inanimate, the past and the *'passed away'*.

We use the latest digital imaging technology to breathe life into the frozen frame. Through the introduction of subtle colour and digitally-manipulated movement, the portraits *'quicken'* to evoke the poignancy and trepidation of the longed-for return of the lost soul.

Historian Helmut Gernsheim described the nineteenth century photographer Margaret Julia Cameron as the 'photographer of souls'. The aim of Quickening is to allow the soul, or the spirit, to return to the arrested subject. Each portrait involves an imagining of the experience of *'returning'* from the pictured person's emotional point of view.

Jane Fletcher is a photographic historian who writes regularly for the photographic press as well as contributing to various anthologies and exhibition catalogues. Christine Parker is a film writer/director currently working on her PhD. Stephen Watson is an independent director/cinematographer/editor with BigTime Films. All three work in the Faculty of Arts, Design and Technology at the University of Derby.

'The dream of motion haunts the visual arts from the classical period to the present day.'



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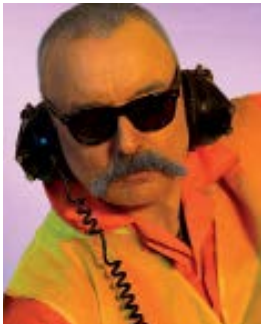
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JOHN GOTO | DANCE TO THE MUZIK OF TIME

A great change during my lifetime, which I have celebrated in my work, has been the increased cultural diversity of the UK. In the post-war period migrants came to Britain from the Caribbean, India and Pakistan, living alongside the Irish and European communities already established in the country. More recently new citizens have come from Africa, Eastern Europe and Asia to settle in Britain.

In the aftermath of the London bombings (2005), there were calls for the establishment of a Museum of Britishness, from amongst others the Prime Minister; and for British history to be taught in a traditional manner in schools. This crude attempt to reassert a fixed chauvinistic history was completely contrary to my own views. I consider history as a site of negotiation, a platform for debate, where the relationship between the past and the ever-changing present is constantly rethought. I decided, therefore, to test the limits of traditional British history by re-running it within the cultural frameworks of contemporary migrant communities.

I worked with troupes of Kathak Indian dancers, break-dancers and young Bollywood stars. Using historical sites in the East Midlands, we cover a thousand years in twelve pictures.

John Goto is Professor of Fine Art at the University of Derby. His work has been exhibited internationally since 1981. He is represented by galleries in Paris, Munich and Seoul.

'I consider history as a site of negotiation, a platform for debate, where the relationship between the past and the ever-changing present is constantly rethought.'





Pilgrims at St. Hugh's Shrine, Lincoln Cathedral, 1280



Constructing 'Curve' Theatre, Leicester, 2008



SOOKYOUNG HUH | THE BIRD CATCHER*

This artistic project addresses the legacy of Sten Bergman (1895-1975), one of Sweden's greatest travel writers, explorers, zoologists and ornithologist. The project begins to explore how both Nature and 'other' societies are filtered through cultural lenses.

The images are from his dairy, which was written during his Korean expedition in 1936-7. It is an explicit diary based on his scientific research, everyday experiences and discoveries; detailed information like the place, number and sex of the captured wild animals, cultural observation, names of new encounters, and shopping lists. Using this diary he wrote Korean Wilds & Villages after he returned to Sweden, which was published in 1938 in Sweden and UK.

During the expedition he captured about 300 birds, which he sent to the Swedish Natural History Museum, after accompanying taxidermist Harald Sjöqvist treated them. Some of the species he collected now no longer exist either in Korea or neighbouring countries due to the affect of climate change, brought about by the radical modernisation and industrialization of the Korean peninsula.

The whole set of his diary can be found in Royal Academy of Science in Stockholm where Huh and Larsson were granted permission to read and work with the diary. All Bergman's bird collection, including some of Korea's last bird species, have migrated to the museum's drawers. The blank layer of paper is the knowledge that passes from generation to generation, to be written in the context of history.

Sookyoung Huh (b.1975) is an artist and curator who was born in Seoul, Korea and now works in the UK. She is currently a PhD student at the University of Derby. Björn Larsson (b.1966) is a Swedish artist based in Stockholm, with whom Sookyoung collaborated on this project.

'The project begins to explore how both Nature and 'other' societies are filtered through cultural lenses.'

*(In collaboration with Björn Larsson)

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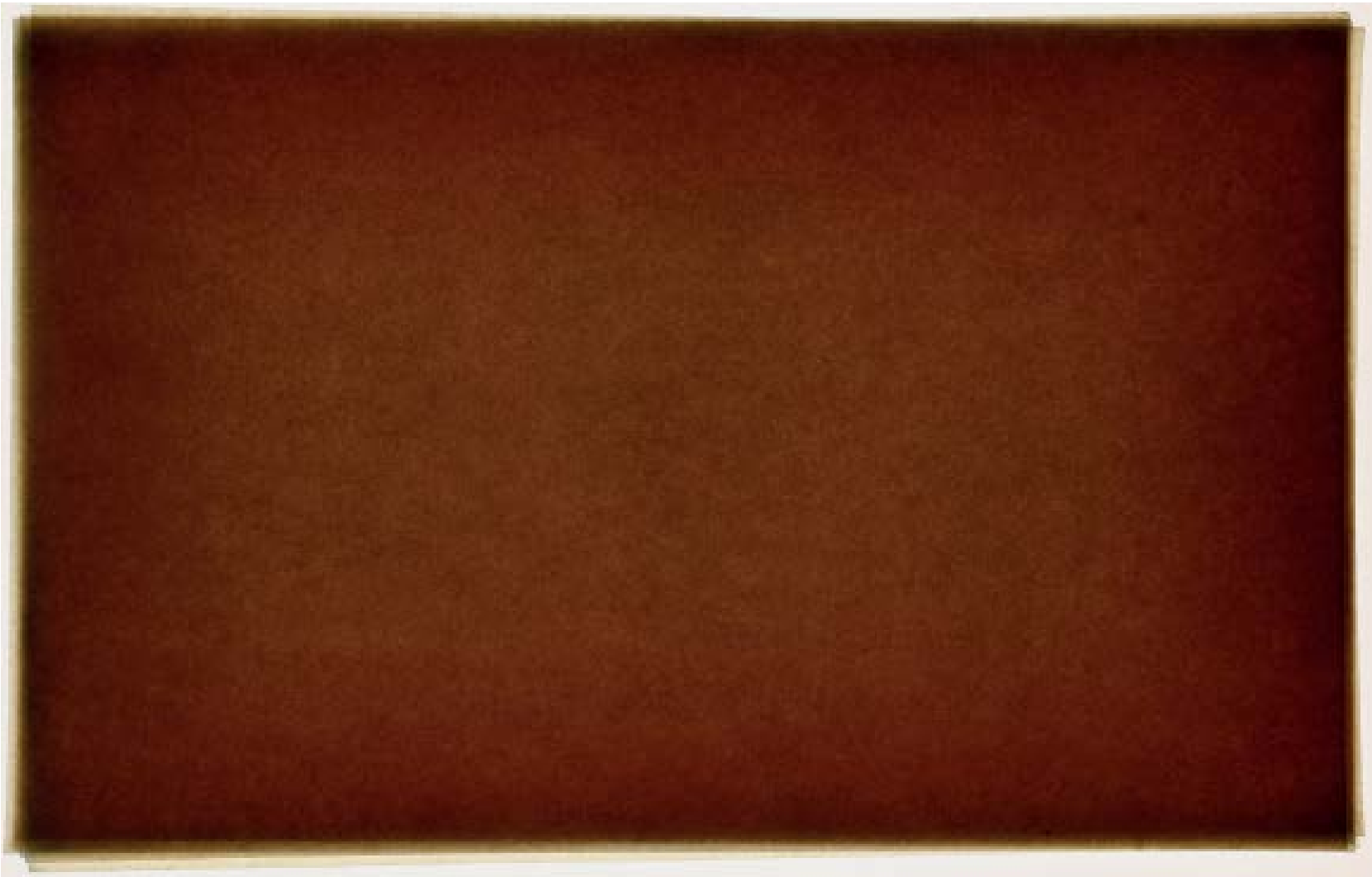
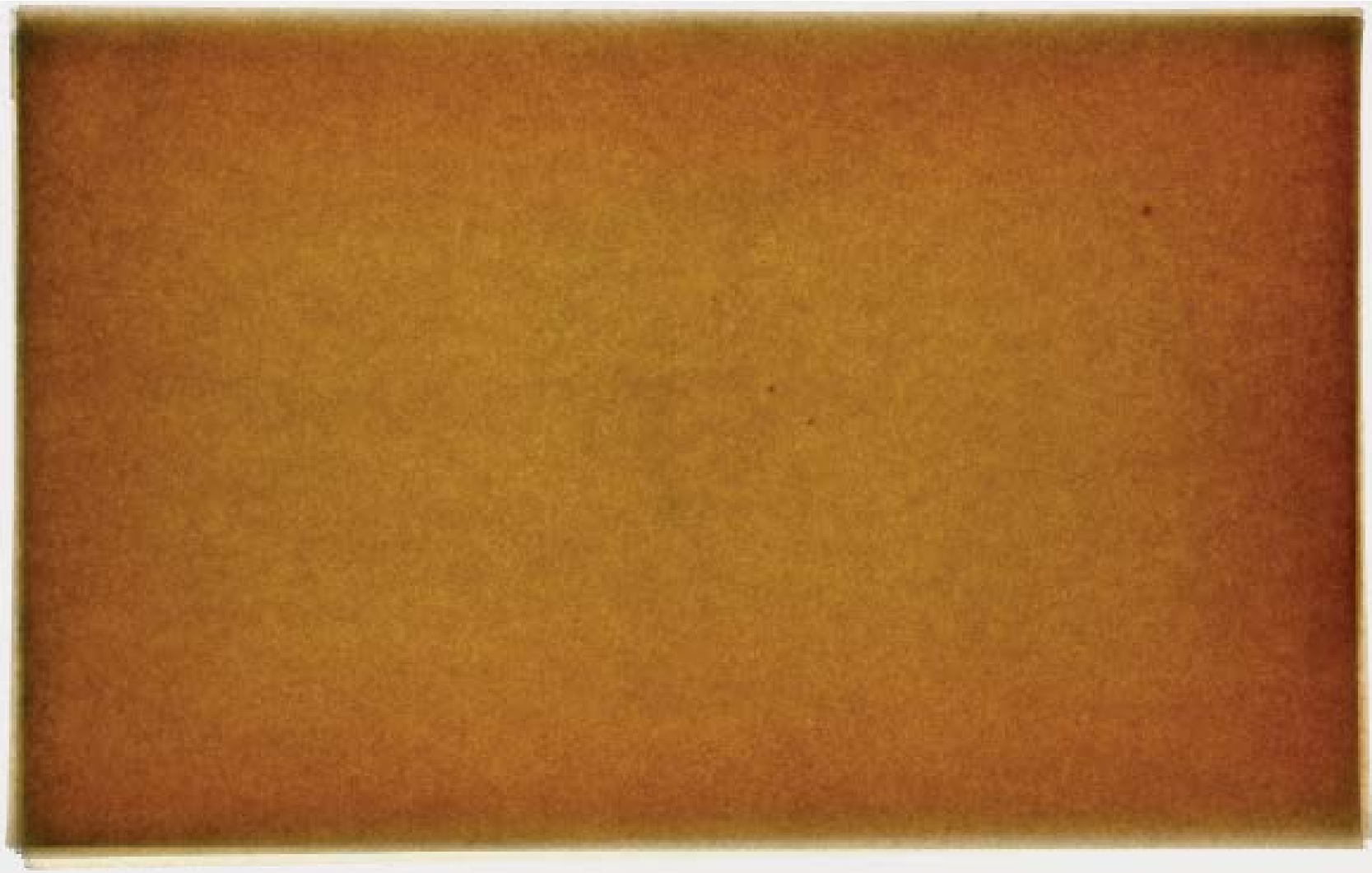
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VERED LAHAV | THE GARDEN



This work took me back to my home, a place I left many years ago. It is a small desert town in Israel. The journey made me re-consider the past and present. Thinking about the distance between my earlier life and my current life in the UK, helped inspire the way in which I made this film installation.

The title of this piece, The Garden, may refer to a place of vision, death and rebirth, a land of innocence and at the same time a place of forbidden ways. The garden is perhaps even an allegory for femininity.

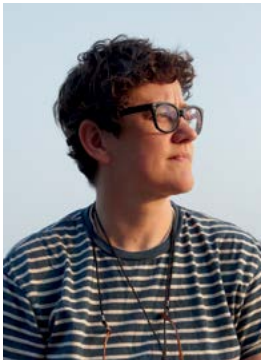
‘The Garden, may refer to a place of vision, death and rebirth, a land of innocence and at the

‘same time a place of forbidden ways.’

Vered Lahav is photographer and installation artist. Recent solo exhibitions of her work have been held in Germany and the UK. Vered is a Senior Lecturer in Photography at the University of Derby.







HEIKE LOWENSTEIN | HEIMAT

Löwenstein's series Heimat is located within the wider context of German history and explores the difficulties inherent in making a personal photo-study in such an over arching and pervasive context.

The concept of 'heimat' is specifically German. People are bound to their 'heimat', their place of birth, by childhood memories, their language, traditions and acquired affinities. Heimat's elliptical, ambiguous images can be seen to be operating in much the same way as a detached, distanced language. Heimat is placed within a broad spectrum of examinations of history and memory.

Framed in this way, Löwenstein's pictures demonstrate how the straight photograph can transcend the limitations of merely recording 'that which was there'. Moreover this photo series occupies the same contemplative space usually associated with language, and so shifts the medium from essentially descriptive to analytical, enquiring and reflective.

Löwenstein's Heimat places photography practice as a part of the various ways in which we attempt to make sense of and reconcile the contested space of memory, history and identity formations.

German born, UK based photographer Heike Löwenstein's field of enquiry is photography concerned with meaning of place and the representation of identity. Heike is Programme Leader in Photography at the University of Derby.

'The concept of 'heimat' is specifically German. People are bound to their 'heimat', their place of birth, by traditions and acquired affinities. Heimat's elliptical, ambiguous images can be seen to be operating in much the same way as a detached, distanced language.'





Part II-Köln 2007



Part V-München 2007



‘Weep, O mine eyes, and cease not . . . that I may drown me in you,’

LOUISE K WILSON | DOCUMENTATION OF A RECORD OF FEAR
LAB 6: WEEP O MINE EYES (2005)

Once a secret military testing site and now a nature reserve, Orford Ness (in Suffolk, England) temporarily played host to a series of audio and video works exploring aspects of broadcast and transmission. A choir was recorded performing madrigals in some of the dilapidated lab buildings, once used for environmental testing of the atomic bomb. The human presence singing songs of love and an awareness of the passing of time provided a poignant counterpoint to the stark and disturbing interiors. Lab 6, for example, was a combined centrifuge and vibration facility built in 1966 to subject electronic missile components to gravitational forces and (random) vibration tests. The acoustics in the centre of the bare centrifuge space were, however, demonstrated to act as a remarkable performance space. In one of the video works, a solo female singer performs. Her (purificatory) recitation of “Weep, O mine eyes, and cease not . . . that I may drown me in you,” was strangely apt in the pool-like recess of the centrifuge pit. Two audio recordings made on opposite sides of the pit at separate times were edited together to prompt thoughts of subjective interpretation over time – as the singer’s nervousness effected different durations of the song.

Louise K Wilson is a visual artist who makes installations, live works, sound works and single channel videos. Louise completed her PhD at the University of Derby this year.







Student workshop exhibition: Triptych by Dong Liang



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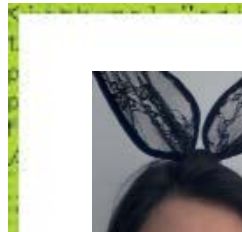
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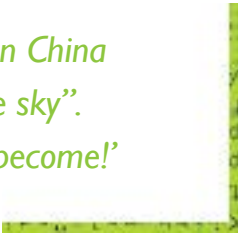


CHEN MENG SHA | SKY

There is a traditional saying in China “eating is as important as the sky”. How darkened our ‘sky’ has become! To our daily diet is often added this or that additive or preservative. Recent scandals involve ‘drainage oil’, ‘poisonous milk powder’, ‘poisonous rice’, ‘Clenbuterol powder’, ‘methanol beer’, ‘glue noodles’, ‘shoes yoghurt’* and so on.

Which food can we safely trust any longer? I cannot help being deeply worried by this situation.

“There is a traditional saying in China
“eating is as important as the sky”.
How darkened our ‘sky’ has become!”



* ‘Shoe yoghurt’ refers to the illegal use in yoghurt of industrial quality gelatin, extracted from the leather of old shoes.

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DONG LIANG | CONTRACTS

The contracts I have recorded here are about 100 years old, and were preserved by my grandfather. Their content mainly relates to land ownership and business deals. These receipts and contracts show the old traditional social credit system in China*. Here, I use photography to record documents relating to both my family's history and our country's traditions.

*The social credit system Dong Liang refers to brought reliable cooperation among traders based on their credit worthiness. A similar system is currently being reintroduced.

*'The contracts I have recorded here are about 100 years old, and were preserved by my grandfather. Their content mainly relates to land ownership and business deals. These receipts and contracts show the old traditional social credit system in China.'**



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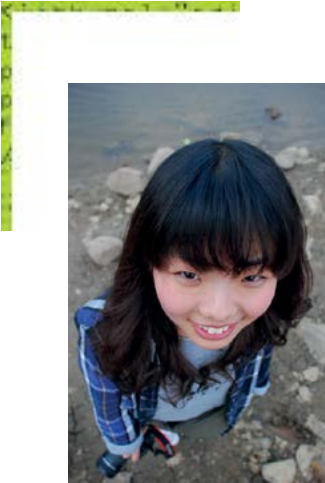
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FANG KEJIE | NEW MORNING

When I was a child, some people in my hometown got up at four or five o'clock in the morning in order to make breakfast for a living. Owing to the tremendous change in our social environment, their old buildings have been demolished. The place in this picture, which I took last year, was one such old street. The man was making breakfast. At that moment I felt as if I was returning to my childhood, it was so vivid. But to facilitate the town's development, it too has been pulled down. So now we can only look for these memories in pictures.

'When I was a child, some people in my hometown got up at four or five o'clock in the morning in order to make breakfast for a living. Owing to the tremendous change in our social environment, their old buildings have been demolished.'

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GAO ZHIBIN | THE MODEL

My subjects are plucked from the realm of public sculpture, where these great thinkers find themselves elevated on plinths.

'I selected and rearranged them, changing their exhibited state and alienating them from their original contexts - thereby bringing them down to earth. Now freed, I test whether the public will form new connections and think about them differently.'





KEXIN LIU | PEOPLE CAN'T SETTLE FOR VAGUE IMAGES ANYMORE

Vague images no longer satisfy people's curiosity. Most people like to be told clearly. But does this make it any more real? For me, I can't stand to be told. You have to find out for yourself.

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LEONG MAN PAN | THE CITY GRAVEYARD



destroy,
rebuild,
die,
die out,
and then again,
re-engineer,
reconstruct.





LI RONG FENG | AN HISTORIC PLACE

Chongqing is an historically complex city. By chance I noticed a factory behind a heavy, strong wall, but there were no signs of life and the chimney was not smoking. This half abandoned place interested me, and so I took a closer look. I discovered that in the 1960s the factory produced large quantities of armaments but it wasn't well situated, being too remote, and began to decline. Now crumbling and covered in grass, the site is silent and makes me a little sad. I can feel the disappearing process. Using photography I decided to temporarily halt it, and share this place with you.

‘This half abandoned place interested me, and so I took a closer look. I discovered that in the 1960s the factory produced large quantities of armaments but it wasn’t well situated, being too remote, and began to decline. Now crumbling and covered in grass, the site is silent and makes me a little sad.’

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LUO CHAOQUN | GRANDMA

I took this photograph in Chongqing's old town. The ninety-three year old grandma sits alone next to an empty bamboo chair, about to clean her big leather shoes. The room is shabby but she keeps it clean and tidy. Her daughter, who is a tailor, is in the market with her sewing machine making clothes to order. She also weaves baskets to earn money. Grandma can only drink porridge. The family's finances are quite tight.



‘The ninety-three year old grandma sits alone next to an empty bamboo chair, about to clean her big leather shoes.’





SONG XIAONING | WIMM

This photograph comes from a series I made about life as a student. In the series I explore some of the common anxieties and social problems we face. The pressure to succeed is relentless, and here the girl endlessly chases her exam results and diplomas. This is far from the spiritual state I desire.

'I explore some of the common anxieties and social problems we face. The pressure to succeed is relentless, and here the girl endlessly chases her exam results and diplomas.'





WANG CHUN & SONG XIAONING | CHONGQING TIME-LAPSE

This time-lapse video is all about the city of Chongqing. We focus on the relationship between the mass of humans and the city. It gives a sense of the speed of change and excitement in our modern megalopolis. We hope it will give you not only some idea of Chongqing city, but also modern China. It took about 6,000 black and white photographs to build our time lapse-video.

'We focus on the relationship between the mass of humans and the city. It gives a sense of the speed of change and excitement in our modern megalopolis.'



重慶·重慶

XIONG RUI | GREAT LEAP FORWARD



With the introduction of a series of programs for the modernization of countryside, and the massive growth of urban centres, we find ourselves in the midst of a new kind of ‘Great Leap Forward’*

“The aim was to transform a mainly agrarian society into an industrial one.”

*Xiong Rui refers here to Chairman Mao Zedong’s modernization drive between 1958 and 1961, known as the Great Leap Forward. The aim was to transform a mainly agrarian society into an industrial one. The tragic consequences of the Great Leap Forward are well documented.



Above:
The Chase from
Country City series

Left:
Urban Sculpture from
Country City series



ZHOU YUAN | LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

If the ecological environment continues to be polluted, we will live on an earth that is beyond recognition. Although the sky might remain blue, unseen poisonous gases will seriously damage the earth's health. The people who live on earth are not only the makers of pollution, but also the victims of pollution. This double identity leaves earth persons disoriented. If the future of the planet is like this, I hope the future comes slowly.

'The people who live on earth are not only the makers of pollution, but also the victims of pollution. This double identity leaves earth persons disoriented.'

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Huw Davies introducing work from the exhibition.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS |

We would like to thank Zhang Jie (Vice Chancellor SCFAI) and Zhang Xiaotao, (Dean, Department of New Media Art, SCFAI) for their commitment to this project and kind hospitality. Zeng Tu (Artist and Lecturer, SCFAI) who was instrumental in establishing the initial links between our two institutions and to Louise Clements (Artistic Director QUAD & FORMAT International Photography Festival, Derby) for originally introducing us to him and to Yan Yan (Director of the 501, Arts Centre, Chongqing). Nancy Yu (Project Manager, University of Derby, based in Beijing) who played a pivotal role in organising and facilitating this project. Chen Bing (Assistant Director, Cultural & Education Section of the British Consulate-General, Chongqing) who supported and promoted the exhibition as part of the British Council ‘UK Now’ Festival in China, for which we are extremely grateful.

We would also like to thank the SCFAI students who participated in the workshop and also helped fabricate and install the exhibition. Their contribution is exemplary. Zhou Yuan and Tang Yiming for providing excellent translations of our talks and lectures. Liu Tao (Director of Hu Xi Commune Artists Society) and his team provided technical support.

At the University of Derby we would like to thank Tracy Allanson-Smith and Laura Taylor for the excellent catalogue design. Also thanks to David Bush, Print Production Supervisor, and Debbie Martin, Design Studio Supervisor. Professor Philip Plowden (Pro Vice Chancellor), Nick Slade (Director of the International Office), Sarah Connor (PA to the Dean) and other administrative staff in the ADT office for travel and logistical arrangements.

Most importantly we would like to thank all the participating artists, in the UK and China, who trusted us with their fine works, and who so enthusiastically supported this project. Its success is due to them.

HUW DAVIES & JOHN GOTO |
University of Derby



Workshop participants with John Goto