

## The 2nd VENICE INTERNATIONAL PERFORMANCE ART WEEK

### Ritual Body - Politic Body

Palazzo Mora, Strada Nova, 3659, Venice, Italy

13-20 December 2014

## Performing Civil Struggles: in-between conformity and resistance in Hong Kong (2004-2014)

*a video programme curated by wen yau*

Hong Kong in its post-colonial times has witnessed waves of civil struggles in which artists are been increasingly involved and developing different tactics to critically engage with social reality in the last decade, presenting creative acts of negotiations in-between conformity and resistance. Year 2003 and 2004 marked the historical moments of the city as half a million people took to the street to protest against the governance of Hong Kong. C&G (Clara CHEUNG and Gum CHENG), dressed in traditional Chinese wedding gowns, joined the rally on Handover Day (2004) and gave an example of artists intervening the social scenes through personal action. The Anti-Express-Rail protest (2009) and the Complaint Choir of Hong Kong (2009) were instances of young people including some artists devising affective tactics of "happy protesting". Re-enactment of cycling on the road in Beijing on June 4<sup>th</sup> anniversary (2010) and the Art Citizens March (2011) defending Hong Kong's freedom of speech after artist Ai Weiwei being 'disappeared' in Mainland China also illustrated artists' critical interpretation of their Chinese identity. Individual artists such as Jaffa LAM, Luke CHING, KWAN Sheung Chi and wen yau have explored the cultural clashes they experienced in post-colonial Hong Kong and presented the politics involved among personal, local and national identities in satirical ways. Yuenjie MARU and artist collective Rental United also used their ritual bodies to tackle issues such as gender and institutionalization of art, while Him LO established the People's Pitch (since 2012) as part of his social practices of engaging local communities. Last but not least, young artists have injected their creative forces in the pro-democracy Umbrella Movement (2014) in Hong Kong through their artwork and collective actions.

### Programme

#### Wedding Engagement at the July 1<sup>st</sup> Protest, etc (2004-2014) [05:11]

This is part of the performance art series about marriage by C&G. This series has happened on every July 1<sup>st</sup> in the handover demonstration since 2004. On 2004 July 1<sup>st</sup>, C&G (Clara CHEUNG & Gum CHENG), wearing traditional Chinese wedding gowns, had their engagement ceremony during the demonstration in order to bring some joy to the people being disappointed by the local government, and also to closely connect their own significant event with the important issue for Hong Kong society. In the following years, they joined the rally in creative ways and later on joined by their daughters and friends.



C&G (Clara & Gum) are two Hong Kong artists who have founded the art space: C&G Artpartment in Hong Kong, China, in 2007. With a strong concern over the local art ecology, C&G use their art to respond to social and cultural issues. Also, they help develop new flavors in the local art scene, and provide art education programs for the public in their art space. Their essential goal is to fill up the crack in the current art scene, and allow C&G Artpartment becomes an art space for idea exchanges. //www.candg-artpartment.com/

#### Let us cheers together (2009) [04:27]

*video directed by CHEUNG Tit Leung*

Villages and homes that have taken generations to build and tend – all to be annihilated to make way for the Express Rail Link (XRL). Are we to sit back and allow this to happen, in the name of economic development and Hong Kong-Mainland integration? Wait a minute! We are sending the message back: 'this is OUR land!'

CHEUNG Tit Leung received his PhD for his research on East Asian documentary film festivals. He is the co-founder of the Chinese Independent Documentary Lab and A-copy Workshop, and programmer for the Hong Kong Independent Film Festival.



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### Complaints Choir of Hong Kong (2009) [05:13]

Perhaps let us redefine Tau Sou (Complain) in a Chinese context: 'Tau' (Tou in Mandarin) originally means 'throwing', and later it also related to a subject's active actions, e.g. 'Tau Piu' (Voting); 'Tau Gei' (Mail something to somebody). And it also means linking up of different people or parties, e.g. 'Ching Tau Yee Hap' (Congenial in feelings and thoughts). 'Sou' literally means 'speaking', and this verbal expression usually associated with pessimistic personal feelings, and even social critiques. In the light of these explanations, complains would be something more than it used to be: It would be a joined action, an active participation of the general public; It would be a free, public expression through various art forms, e.g. literature, music, visual arts, etc.



Confucius once said, "The Odes serve to stimulate the mind. They may be used for purposes of self-contemplation. They teach the art of sociability. They can be the ways to complain." Similar to The Odes, Complaints Choir of Hong Kong is a project to encourage singing, or any kind of artistic expressions of the people, by the people, and for the people. And it is also an experiment to rebuild a binding force in a diversified but divided society.

[//www.complaintschoir.org/hongkong/complaintschoir\\_about\\_hongkong.html/](http://www.complaintschoir.org/hongkong/complaintschoir_about_hongkong.html/)

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### Cycling To The Square (2010) [04:00]

*organized by Wooferten & the neighborhood;*

*concept by: LEE Chun Fung and CHUNG Wai lan*

Starting with the idea of "community activism", which aims to link up the neighborhood around Woofer Ten, a community art space based in a grass-root community in Hong Kong, "Cycling To The Square" is an art action in remembrance to the Beijing Tian'anmen Democratic Movement in 1989.



**LEE Chun Fung** is an artist and curator based in HK. He graduated from Fine Arts Department, the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2007. He has curated art projects such as FENG YU PIAO YAO AI GUO SHI— art response to June 4th 20th anniversary (2009) , 2 or 3 things I know from June Forth(2010). He is a member of community/art space Wooferten.

**CHUNG Wai lan** is an artist based in Hong Kong. She graduated from Academy of Visual Arts, Hong Kong Baptist University in 2009. After studies, she was a project coordinator in Wooferten (2009-2011). Her works have been showed in Hong Kong, Macau and Guangzhou.

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### Art Citizens March (2010) [02:25]

*video produced by Kacey WONG*



On April 23<sup>th</sup>, 2011, around 2,000 art practitioners joined the Art Citizens March after Chinese activist/artist Ai Weiwei being intercepted by government officials in Beijing and Hong Kong graffiti artists spray-painted Ai's icon in streets being investigated by the Hong Kong Police Crime Unit. The Art Citizens March voiced people's concerns over white terror that authorities in China and Hong Kong are promoting. Artists are using visual, sound, performance and other means to express idea of "VOICE OUT" or making sound 'Art Fears Not!' 'Truth Is No Crime!'

**Kacey WONG** is a Chinese visual artist based in Hong Kong. He works with sculpture, installation, performance, photography, and sound work. His experimental art project investigates the poetics of space between men and their living environment. He has also curated many art exhibitions exploring issues of space and city. He is also Assistant Professor from the School of Design, Hong Kong Polytechnic University. [// www.kaceywong.com/](http://www.kaceywong.com/)



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### Working in Kwun Tong (2008) [08:12]

Kwun Tong used to be an industrial area and has changed a lot due to a shift in the structure of manufacturing industry in last decade. I built a corner of the street on the rooftop of my studio, and the corner is dedicated to the disappeared streets. One day, my friends and I were taking this corner to the street and show them outside a park in Kwun Tong.

### Heroes behind the Halo (2007) [02:52]

I made a 2-minute installation with the Lin Zexu statue in East Broadway Street, New York City, 2007. From the front, the installation looked like a grant hero with halo; but from the back, there were many people helping to set up such illusion for the hero.

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**LAM Laam, Jaffa** is a sculptor specializing in large-scale site-specific works of mixed-media sculptures and installations, which are mainly made from recycled material, e.g. wood crates, old furniture and used fabric.

She has been involved in numerous public art and community projects in Hong Kong and often further re-works her artwork in various residency programs overseas. Her works convey transnational senses, exploring issues related to local cultures, history, as well as social and current affairs in her process of traveling.  
[//www.jaffalam.net/](http://www.jaffalam.net/)

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**Cross Border Criminal** (2007-2008) [4:30]

Law conveys a region's collective memory. 'Breaking the law' is often a displacement of human behaviour in physical space. Firework is banned in Hong Kong but not in Macao; keeping live poultry is banned in Hong Kong, but not in China. Hong Kong people bear in mind these minor 'crimes' because of the Summary Offences Ordinance, which is an efficient trial process. What interests me is the different value judgement of the behaviours in these crimes in different countries and the image of Hong Kong built out of these differences.

Cross Border Criminal is a project to break the law of Hong Kong legally by travelling to different countries.



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**CHING Chin Wai Luke** was born in Hong Kong in 1972. He received a MA degree from the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He sees himself as a spontaneous observer of the city. He tries to deconstruct the spectacle city, observe it, and then build a "museum" of the city which is in-between that of everyday life and the spectacle, by his works of art.

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**doing it with Mrs Kwan... making Pepper Spray** (2012) [05:16]

by *KWAN Sheung Chi*

**To defend the core values is the core of the core values** (2012) [05:58]

by *KWAN Sheung Chi & WONG Wai Yin*

The artists aim at encouraging public participation in contemporary art. Through the acts of voting and decision-making, the issue of Hong Kong core value and relevant issues are raised.



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**KWAN Sheung Chi** was born in 1980, Hong Kong. He obtained a third honor B.A. degree in Fine Art from The Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2003. He failed in applying the MFA programme from the CUHK in 2004 and 2007. His artworks haven't widely exhibited around the world, and he has never participated in any major exhibitions held internationally.  
[//kwansheungchi.com/](http://kwansheungchi.com/)

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**WONG Wai Yin** graduated from The Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2004, and The University of Leeds, UK (Master of Fine Art) in 2005. Wong experiments with a variety of media, ranging from painting, sculpture, collage, installations and photography. She has exhibited her works extensively in Hong Kong, as well as in Japan, U.S.A, Singapore, and Guangzhou. [//wwy.hk/](http://wwy.hk/)

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**I'll\_\_\_\_\_forget** (2005) [03:37]; **Civil Left/Right Series** (2007) [05:08];

**Nessun Dorma!** (2011) [01:41]

These series of work showed the artists' reflection upon her relations with Mainland China, especially a decade after the 1997 Handover. June 4<sup>th</sup> has been a historical scar and learning to be a 'Chinese' appears to be a playful yet satirical act to perform.



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As a cross-media artist, researcher, curator and writer, **wen yau** has been concentrating on performance/live art and time-based media in the last few years. Her works often grapple with cultural difference and intimacy in public space. Currently she is doing her PhD at the Academy of Visual Arts at the Hong Kong Baptist University, researching performative practices in postcolonial Hong Kong art and activism. [//www.wenyau.net/](http://www.wenyau.net/)

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**+Y-doB** (2008) [04:35]

This is a work of live body sculpture which intends to overturn social construction of gendered body. He is nude but not naked. He shows no sex organ but big breasts. This work illustrates the artist's reflection upon hermaphroditism, asexuality and gender diversity.





**Yuenjie MARU** is a performance artist based in Hong Kong. He is a contact improvisation and environmental improvisation dancer. He has since 1999 started his solo performance or the so-called performance art and live art. He named his body of work as "MARULIVEART" which concern about love, human being, social issues, environment and so on.

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**Exhibition (2011)** [02:56]

By turning the artists' studio into an entire showcase, the artists displayed their art pieces alongside themselves, as motionless artists standing on pedestals. It offered visitors not only an opportunity to enjoy viewing their art, but also a much closer look at the artists themselves, the creators of the art.

**Performance C (2012)** [03:02]

This was a live "Artists as Janitor" performance with the artists dressed in suits and performing the janitor's 'cleaning' work in their studio. There was a constant flow of viewers in and out of the studio (and bringing in endless dirt and dust) during the non-stop performance, making the entire process an endless cleaning loop.



**Foot Massage (2014)** [02:33]

Several reflexology professionals were hired to give free foot massage services to visitors during ArtWalk. This was an experience-orientated piece, as the collective tried to disconnect the senses of seeing, hearing and touching by simultaneously distorting the audience's senses. The foot massage business is known for its 'seediness' in some places in Asia and the artists emphasised such a notion as a social symbol to create a paradoxical tension (participants heard 'heavy breathing') while reminding participants of the purpose behind the event (reflexologists providing a simple foot massage).

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**Rental United** is the name of a studio shared by three artists, Damon TONG, Stephanie SIN and Timothy ZAU since 2009. It is also the name of the artists collective by the three, focusing on art interventions.  
[//www.rentalunited.hk/](http://www.rentalunited.hk/)



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**People's Pitch (2012-)** [09:59]

'People's Pitch' is a project that concerns public space and community development with football games. We play footballs and hang out; and by that we meet with different folks from different communities or groups of people. We believe this is not just about a football game. From the materials required in the game to uniforms of different teams, all these would not happen without the help from friends and the communities. We hope to enjoy football in the simplest way and at the same time to promote and discover small shops with characteristics in different communities.

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**Him LO** is a Hong Kong-born artist. His work is mainly a quest of the form of existence in the city. He focuses in the relations between the ego and physical. Through violent and dark expression, he expressed time with a sense of emergency. He is currently the curator of Hong Kong Story House. [//www.himlo.com/](http://www.himlo.com/)

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**The Art of Protest (2014)** [09:58]

*video produced by AJ+*

In late September 2014, thousands of Hong Kong students boycotted classes and took to the streets. Protesters have held mass rallies and sit-ins across the city for weeks, demanding full democracy in the 2017 election of the territory's leader. But barricades and megaphones are not the only tools being used to pile pressure on the Chinese government. AJ+ follows three people deploying a different tactic: art. Kyle is rushing to create a canopy of tear-gas-stained umbrellas above the occupied streets. Vangi builds low-cost houses in a city desperate for affordable homes. And Yanyu uses calligraphy to comment on the political system she dreams of changing. Will their art help shape their city's future?



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