

# Screening

curated by Erika Tan

## Mediated Materials

Selected by Erika Tan, the programme will focus on extending ideas developed from two of her early works that take the idea of 'journeys' to China to think about distance, time, archives and mediation. Erika will be screening the works of Dinu Li, Chun-yu Liu, susan pui san lok alongside *Journeys of Remembrance* (2008) and *Shot Through* (2008) as a form of palimpsestic production - forcing connections between works through their simultaneous projection.

Dinu Li, *Nation Family Traylor*, 2017, single-channel video, 2' 03"

Dinu Li, *Family Village*, 2009, STD single-channel video, 6' 21"

Chun-yu Liu, *Sumatra*, 2014, single-channel video, 8' 04"

susan pui san lok, *Trailers* (RoCH), 2015, single-channel video, 4'

susan pui san lok, *an(g)archivery*, 2018, 2-channel video, 10' 30"

Yeu-Lai Mo, *Service, Kissing, Licking*, 1997, STD video

Erika Tan, *Journeys of Remembrance*, 2008, STD single-channel video, 16' 08"

Erika Tan, *Shot Through*, 2008, STD single-channel video, 16' 35"

## Dinu Li

*Nation Family Trailer*, 2017  
single-channel video, 2' 03"



*Nation Family Trailer* is a project by artist Dinu Li in collaboration with his own cousin over a seven-year period. Together, they have revisited a former labour camp where Li's relative was sent as a nineteen-year-old to work in a rubber plantation. Now one of the most popular holiday destinations for China's booming domestic tourist industry, the cousin's past life is recounted in *Nation Family*, by a former comrade and a female peasant. Shifting through fragmented time zones, various renditions of Doctor Zhivago's theme tune haunts the woodlands and vacant hotel rooms, building to an illogical grand finale of a disco dance routine.

Filmed in unnamed destinations, *Nation Family* examines the complexities of individual and collective identities as lived experiences meanders through a web of contradictions and figments of the imagination. Anecdotes of a cousin's toil, dedication and unstinting loyalty to the party line are jettisoned by conflicting accounts of his regular escapades and unique idiosyncrasies, allowing him to imagine music from a make-believe radio self-made out of brick and bamboo shoot. *Nation Family* considers the potential for place to accumulate dormant histories, awaiting evocation.

**Dinu Li**

*Family Village*, 2009

STD single-channel video, 6' 21"



Architecture and the vernacular are the subjects of *Family Village* (2009), as artist Dinu Li considers the duality between the local and the global. Interweaving video footages of Sichuan's ancient forests with an animated narrative of a boy on his raft collecting bamboo. The story unravels in bewilderment and disorientation as the boy returns home to discover it had been usurped, transformed beyond recognition, and replaced by an idyllic English village. Throughout the entire video a Chinese translated version of *Pure Imagination*, from *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*, can be heard ceaselessly recited by children as a beckoning mantra.

*Family Village* was originally inspired by a local newspaper article about a Christmas card from a Dorset based British master planner, sent to his counterpart in Sichuan, China. Upon receiving the card, the Sichuan based planner felt enchanted by the card's front cover image of Dorchester, replete with traditional English architectural details, giving birth to a duplication in housing some 7775 kilometres away. *Nation Family* elicits discourses surrounding economic, social and political contexts associated with place. Li's resulting video sits at the intersection of cultural anthropology, presenting place as an 'incompletion', constantly in a state of emergency.

## Chun-yu Liu

*Sumatra*, 2014

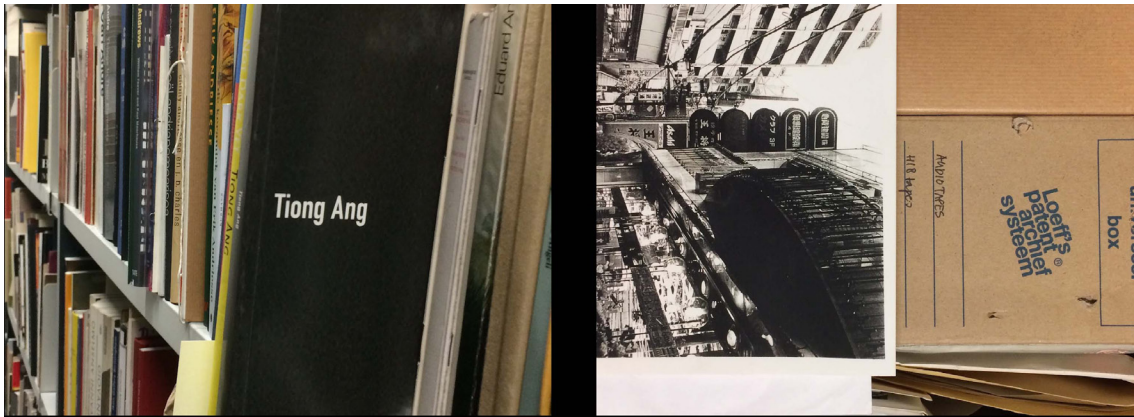
single-channel video, 8' 04"



'Sumatra' is an artist video about the artist's father's early experience in Sumatra, Indonesia before he moved to Taiwan due to the turbulence in the late 50s. The work's narrative is structured with inspiration from Lewis Carroll's 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland' and tells a, though seemingly fictional, factual story about rural Sumatra, the turbulence, the subsequent diaspora and the lost identity. It also explores memory and its substitute, representation, and the exotic that blurs the boundary between reality and fantasy. The video's output consists both archival still images from the Internet and film scenes from 'In the Mood for Love' and 'A City of Sadness' and the famous Indonesian song 'Bengawan Solo'.

susan pui san lok

an(g)archivery, 2018  
2-channel video, 10' 30"



*an(g)archivery* is a partial portrait of an archive-within-an-archive, and the archive-as-artist, or the artist-as-archive. *an(g)archivery* moves through the remains of the Gate Foundation (1998-2006), housed within the Van Abbemuseum collection. The artist uses a camera-phone and scanner to note the dispersed traces of another artist, Tiong Ang, their paths first crossing a year earlier at the 1st Asia Biennial and 5th Guangzhou Triennial, called Asia Time. Ang traverses both the Gate and Van Abbe, between catalogued and uncatalogued dimensions of the museum. Gaining institutional recognition in the mid-1990s as a new young Dutch artist, Ang went on to collaborate in prominent independent projects in the 2000s, exploring the 'non-Western', 'migrant', 'foreign' and 'other'. The Gate's commitment to 'non-Western' artists, particularly from Asia, is both visible and obscured between the museum's narratives of the 'modern' and 'contemporary'. Meanwhile, Ang moves from sculptural and painterly objects to situation comedy, to film and performance collaborations, both occupying and escaping the museum.

**susan pui san lok**

Trailers (RoCH), 2015  
single-channel video, 4'



*Trailers* samples the trailers, title sequences, theme songs and publicity shots from twenty or so film and television adaptations of Louis Cha/Jin Yong's *The Condor Trilogy* (1957-1961), a wuxia martial arts epic, whose numerous media translations attest to its enduring popularity, and an alternative view of 'global' culture. Intercut with panoramic street views across Britain, fantasies of flight and dreams of weightlessness haunt the everyday.

*Trailers* is part of a body of work called *RoCH Fans & Legends*, including moving image for gallery and online, animated drawings, vinyl wallpapers, an 8-metre concertina multiple, and a freebook, available at <https://spsl-projects.net/roch-fans/rochfansandlegendsfreebook/>

*RoCH Fans & Legends* was commissioned for solo exhibitions at QUAD and the Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art, including a screening with live sound collaborations at HOME, in partnership with Animate Projects and the University of Salford. Supported using public funding by Arts Council England, and additional funding from Middlesex University.

## Yeu-Lai Mo

*Service, Kissing, Licking*, 1997  
STD video



In 1997 whilst at the Royal College of Art she created an installation called 'Yeu-Lai's House' where she deconstructed the traditional Chinese takeaway and challenged expectations. As part of this series of work, Mo produced a video called, 'Service, Kissing & Licking', where said actions are acted out on a screen, miming welcoming gestures, acts of kindness, smiles and servitude that one should expect from the girl behind the counter. These actions go on for a couple of minutes in the video and the girl's action then changes to kissing the counter repeatedly, bending forwards in a formal way kissing her surrounding counter top for yet another minute or two. Her actions are then become more extreme, she now goes further to licking the counter in the same manner. These actions are then repeated and the video is looped into a continuous motion of service, kissing and licking.

## Erika Tan

*Journeys of Remembrance & Shot Through* are a returning to the material and otherwise, of past and multiple journeys to China. Exercising an archaeological ambition, the video works carefully unearth, re-trace, and assemble a range of memories, thoughts, subjective interpretations and wild speculations that eventually become the means through which a personal psycho-geography of 'China' is developed. From the writings of Sontag, Derrida, Kristeva, Foucault and Barthes and from the memories and accounts of family members, the work seeks to look at the production of China, through and with difference, from a distance.

## Erika Tan

*Journeys of Remembrance*, 2008

STD single-channel video, 16' 08"



*Journeys of Remembrance* (2008) uses photographs taken in 1993 during a trip made by the artist, with her father and brother to their ancestral village in Fujian Province, China. With the passing of time, the authorship of these images has become obscured and their status as aide-memoir exposed for the subjectivity inherent in looking at, reading, and giving voice to the photographic 'record'. The image becomes yet another source of subjective interpretation, voiced through narratives told, simultaneously translated and fumbled through by the 3 speakers - in Hokkien, Spanish, Portuguese, English, and Mandarin - or their approximate and often faltering equivalents.



**Erika Tan**

*Shot Through*, 2008

STD single-channel video, 16' 35"



“In our dream world, is not China precisely this privileged site of space? In our traditional imagery, the Chinese culture is the most meticulous, the most rigidly ordered, the one most deaf to temporal events, most attached to the pure delineation of space; we think of it as a civilization of dikes and dams beneath the eternal face of the sky; we see it, spread and frozen, over the entire surface of a continent surrounded by walls.”

- Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, 1973

*Shot Through* was made from footage shot in Shanghai during a residency in 2004. Not the first visit or the second to China, but still the ambiguous and ambivalent relationship felt on the first trip to ‘ancestral’ lands continues. The existence of more cars, tower block skylines, free-flowing fashion, and all that the Western Press celebrated in the years post-communism did little to change this very personal experience of having a relationship to an ‘unknown’ or ‘overly-known’ location. The work looks at the way in which China becomes a cipher through the written text of others. *Shot Through* ‘interrogates’ the writings of philosophers and theorists such as Derrida, Barthes, Sontag, and Kristeva who had certain fascinations with China and made short visits followed up with written interpretations, theorising and ponderings which now circulate and form part of China’s global textual patina.