

Feb. 5<sup>th</sup>, 2010



CHENG RAN 程然, *Rock Dove 野鸽*, 2009  
Single channel video 单频录像, 5 min

## *The Tell-tale Heart*

Cheng Ran, Martha Colburn, Feng Mengbo, Li Ming, Hiraki Sawa, Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Zhang Ding

Curated by Leo Xu

February 27 through April 11, 2010

**Opening reception: February 27, Saturday, 6-8 p.m.**

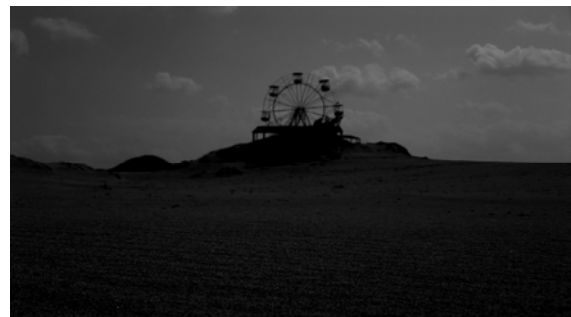
**Venue: James Cohan Gallery Shanghai**

**1/F, Building 1, No.1 Lane, 170 Yue Yang Road, by Yong Jia Road**

James Cohan Gallery Shanghai is pleased to present *The Tell-tale Heart*, a tribute to the classic short story by American 19th century novelist and poet Edgar Allan Poe. The exhibition showcases recent video works by artists from China, America, Japan, and Thailand that explore the diversity and possibilities of narrative forms.

*Morakot (Emerald)*(2007), a video installation by the award-winning Thai filmmaker-video artist **Apichatpong Weerasethakul**, intertwines memory with intimate experience. *Morakot* is a derelict hotel in the heart of Bangkok that opened in the 1980s when Thailand experienced accelerated economic growth and Cambodians poured into Thai refugee camps after the devastating conflict between Vietnamese and Cambodian forces. The setting is a dilapidated hotel room filled with floating feathers and haunted by ghostly figures in bed. Inspired by the Danish writer Karl Gjellerup's 1906 Buddhist novel, *The Pilgrim Kamanita*, the protagonists are reincarnated as two celestial stars who re-tell their stories to each other until they no longer exist. *Morakot* revisits fictitious memories bound to the history of the hotel through three voiceovers, each whispering their sorrows and eternal wait for love.

Mysterious stories continue to unfold in the dreamscapes mapped by Japanese-born, British-trained artist **Hiraki Sawa**. Known for artificial landscapes and displaced worlds, shifting between domestic and imaginary spaces, Sawa has ventured outside the confines of his home that have provided settings for his well-known earlier pieces like *Spotter* and *Hako*. *Out of the Blue* (2008), a projected diptych, is shot in natural settings—where a Ferris wheel exists in a desert oasis, or a tiny house with electric light nestles in the root of a tree. In a shadow-filled room an empty birdcage sways. On the adjoining screen, people incrementally accumulate and descend from a massive white sand dune. The viewer is jostled between two worlds. By meticulously combining images both



HIRAKI SAWA, *Out of the Blue 出乎意料*, 2008  
Dual channel video with audio 双频有声录像, 13 min 20 sec

## JAMES COHAN GALLERY SHANGHAI

fabricated and from real world elements, *Out of the Blue* engages the viewer's imagination to question a sense of place and discernible reality.

*Rock Dove* (2009), a short video by Hangzhou-based emerging artist **Cheng Ran**, begins with a flock of doves roosting in the dark inside a factory building. This five-minute work is a subtle and unsettling dance enacted by the flock. The video reaches its dramatic peak with the birds' eruptive and chaotic response to the sudden illumination of the factory's fluorescent lamps. Another emerging artist from Hangzhou, **Li Ming**, brings us the celebration of youth and intimacy in his video *XX* (2009), where two boys, seated on a rock, cling to each other while exchanging their T-shirts. The slow and painstaking process becomes a seemingly innocent physical dialogue, addressing both the ambiguity of their relationship and sexuality.

Experimental narrative modes are notable in the ambitious nine-channel video installation *The Dream of Yabulai* (2008) by Shanghai-based **Zhang Ding**. This work has been re-orchestrated as a site-specific work and is situated under the gallery's staircase. The supporting structure of the work is an open wooden lattice framework suggesting unfinished architecture. Within the framework are the nine video screens. The central screen shows a monkey assigning identify-specific props or costumes to eight actors who then assume their new roles on one of the individual screens. The subsequent eight different role-plays depict various themes, unveiling a composite of new behavior in a "micro-society" while attempting to visualize key ideas or events in human history, such as mapping territory, the creation of theory, science, energy, art, religion and war.

Two other tell-tale hearts inhabit the world of animation. Beijing-based **Feng Mengbo** is a Chinese video-new media veteran. His recent video game installation *Long March: Restart* revisits his earlier piece, *Long March: Game Over*. The artist pushes his experiments further by integrating the elements of Chinese model operas with late 1990's pixel aesthetics. Appropriating 1980-90s vintage video games (Super Mario, Contra, Street Fighters, etc), *Long March: Game Over* relates a Don Quijotesque odyssey in a punkish manner.



FENG MENGBO 冯梦波, *Long March: Restart* 长征: 重启, 2008  
Interactive video game installation 互动录像游戏装置, Dimension variable 尺寸可变

New York and Amsterdam-based animation filmmaker **Martha Colburn** offers a kaleidoscopic view of modern life in her recent animation *One & One is Life* (2009), where Hollywood stereotypes as Wonder Woman, car crashes, and policemen are seen in a montage of conflict that drives a violent and uneasy world. Unfolding in a precise, deliberate pace—and accompanied by its melancholy soundtrack—*One & One is Life* tallies up its tale of grief, culminating with symbols of hearts fleeing away.

For further information, please contact Leo Xu at [lxu@jamescohan.com](mailto:lxu@jamescohan.com) or call +86-21-54660825 x 602.