DONG JUN

Art For the People, video work screening

Curator: Dong Jun
Artists: Li Junhu, Yue Luping, Lin Xin, Dong Jun, Zu Weimin, Quan Hongyi, Zhou Yu, Min Tao, Liu Jia, Su Sheng, Xu Li, Zhang Linzi

On the occasion of the 64th anniversary of the Yan'an Forum on Art and Literature, leading artists from Xi'an showed major independent film works from a six-year period between 2001 and 2006. The films document how young people born in the 1970s and 80s understand their lives through the use of those elements of Yellow River culture with which they are most familiar and that have left the deepest impression on them. Within this entanglement of history and traditional culture is a view of the state of this new generation that is presented through the examination and the unfolding of contradictions and conflicts between society and community, collective idealism and the individual. The works were shown in a series of cave dwellings at the former site of the Yan'an University, presenting a unique understanding of creation in the Xi'an art scene.

DAN MILLS

(Miss) Understanding the Long March, prints, 2004

Combining maps and diagrams, and superimposing images and text onto the maps, the project investigates the Long March events, its history and legend, and also explores how we learn, understand, and interpret historic events. It is my attempt to understand and visually interpret the
Long March from the perspective of a Westerner. Characters, letters of the alphabet, visual symbols, and diagrams are vehicles we use to record the events of history and to tell its story.

For the reader and viewer, the information is also understood through existing knowledge, cultural understanding, and one’s own ways of comprehending information. For example, when viewing a basic map of your own country, printed in your language, the viewer may subconsciously (or not) fill in information that that he/she knows has been omitted. Print the map in another language, or depict a distant country, and much of this experience disappears. By layering esoteric and ambiguous symbols onto the map, the meaning, and the viewer’s understanding, is even less clear. Thus the artist’s take on the Long March alludes to conditionality and subjectivity in the interpretation of history.

**LuChezar Boyadjiev**

*Was It Worth It?* postcard, 2002–2006

This work, originally proposed in 2002, was distributed as a postcard questionnaire along the historical route of the Long March. Participants were invited to answer the question “Was it Worth it?” regarding the Long March—with the best answer being awarded by the artist a bottle of Johnny Walker Black Label. Through an interactive movement across time and space, this work explored the different psychological geographies created by the experiences of the Long March by reconstructing experiences, narratives, and collective consciousness. The work was distributed to the general public in Yan’an, the final site of the historical Long March.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Editor's Note</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Long March Yan'an Project</td>
<td>Lu Jie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Long March Yan'an Project Sites</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Yan'an Forum on Art Education Participants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Long March Yan'an Forum on Art Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Letter from Gao Minglu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>Letter from Zhu Qingsheng</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Sociological Problematics in Contemporary Art Education</td>
<td>Li Gengming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>Aphasia/Loss of Words: Discussion on the State of Contemporary Art Education</td>
<td>Yang Jinsong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>Master's Program in Contemporary Art Curriculum (Proposal)</td>
<td>Cai Guo-Qiang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>Chinese Experimental Art Education: Outline</td>
<td>Qiu Zhijie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>&quot;Total Art&quot; Based on Social Investigation</td>
<td>Qiu Zhijie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>Modern and Revolutionary Art Education in China: A Chronology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>Excerpts from Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art</td>
<td>Mao Zedong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>Artworks for the Long March Yan'an Project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119</td>
<td>Yanchuan County Primary School Papercutting Art Education Curriculum as Proposed by the Long March Project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>122</td>
<td>Long March Yan'an Site Visit Project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123</td>
<td>Chinese Name Index</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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