

Cheng Ran

In Course of the Miraculous

Exhibition in Beijing: 25.4.–12.7.2015

Opening: Saturday, April 25, 2015, 4–7 pm

Galerie Urs Meile is pleased to announce the opening of *In Course of the Miraculous*, the latest exhibition by Cheng Ran. The show will feature a series of the artist's works made during his two-year residency at the artists' residency program of the Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten (Royal Academy of Visual Arts) in Amsterdam in the Netherlands. The artworks are in a variety of media including texts, video works and installations. The title is derived from Dutch artist Bas Jan Ader's famous performance piece *In Search of the Miraculous* from the 1970s, and the exhibition considers the coexistence of real and false to open up an "exploration" of this thematic practice. For the artist, it is also a bold, experimental attempt to "explore" the language of film and the aesthetics of the shot. Cheng Ran's main medium is video, and he has often parodied, distorted and reinterpreted the classical, but more recently his interests have extended to other media such as objets trouvés and sound performances.

This exhibition will feature an "unfinished" film without narratives, showing the artist's preparations, the right and wrong assumptions made while shooting the film, and the changes that happened along the way in his ideas and practice. As the central part of the ongoing *9-Hour Film* project, *Storyboard Film* borrows the cinematic technique of storyboarding: showing planned and altered shots, combined with the sound of murmuring. Together they form an abstract film of non-existent images, and from this perspective, *Storyboard Film* is like a secret channel drawing the audience into imagining a film, and its enormous and rich narrative possibilities. Cheng Ran has also specially designed a viewing space that evokes a cinematic feeling, which importantly allows him an exploration of time, space and the relationship with the audience. *9-Hour Film* project is supported by K11 Art Foundation and Erlenmeyer Foundation, and when the film is finished, it will premiere in Europe at the Istanbul Biennial in September 2015.

A sailboat installation that was exhibited at the Rijksakademie OPEN in Amsterdam, the Netherlands in December 2014 will get its first showing in Beijing. It has been rebuilt under specially arranged film lighting. Also, constituting fragmentary clues about this mysterious film, large-format light box photography, numerous objets trouvés, manuscripts and props are displayed as well.

The large four-screen video *Before Falling Asleep* (2013, super 16 mm film transferred to single channel HD video, color/sound, Part 1: 5'55"; Part 2: 4'11"; Part 3: 4'; Part 4: 4') was shot and produced in the Netherlands. This artwork was inspired by classic bedtime fairytales; the four parts were adapted from Aesop's fables and Ivan Krylov's stories of the same title. By anthropomorphizing the characters in the tales, conversations between the pond and the river, two pigeons, the fire and the tree, as well as the butterfly and the flower, touch on progress and stagnation, truth or lies, choosing or missing, and being faraway or at home. Cheng Ran is most interested in the narrative technique of using objects as metaphors, or using objects to express an aspiration, and the boundary between dreams and reality that cannot be expressed, as well as the overlap between the ideas in the stories and that state of trance occurring moments before falling asleep, when a child is between real life and dreamland. In terms of the design of the space, the collage carpet pieces with text provide more possibilities and metaphors on the space, story and language: it echoes from afar his solo exhibition of the same name, *The Last Generation*, which was based on a novel and presented at Galerie Urs Meile Beijing in 2013.

To accompany the exhibition, the gallery will produce a publication that documents the objets trouvés, sketches and prints, and will be co-designed by independent designer Mei Shuzhi.

Cheng Ran was born in 1981 in Inner Mongolia, China and currently lives and works in Hangzhou. At the end of last year, he completed the two-year program of the Residency Artists Studio Project at the Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. This exhibition marks his fifth solo exhibition at Galerie Urs Meile. The artist's most recent group shows include: *The Tell-Tale Heart*, chi art space, Hong Kong (2015); *CINEMATHEQUE*, chi K11 art museum, Shanghai, China (2015); *Inside China*, K11 Art Foundation Pop-up Space, Hong Kong (2015); and *Inside China*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France (2014). Other group exhibitions include *Decorum: carpets and tapestries by artists*, Power Station of Art, Shanghai,

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China (2014); *Degeneration*, Australia China Art Foundation (ACAF), Sydney, Australia (2014); *Degeneration*, OCT Contemporary Art Terminal (OCAT), Shanghai, China (2013); *ON/OFF: China's Young Artists in Concepts and Practice*, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), Beijing, China (2013); and *The 1st CAFAM Future*, CAFA Art Museum, Beijing, China (2012). This year, Cheng Ran will take part in a number of international exhibitions and art projects including the Istanbul Biennial and the group exhibition *Van Gogh Letter* to be held at the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam. Cheng Ran was also shortlisted for the 2014 OCAT - Pierre Huber Prize.