

**PRESS RELEASE**

**La Biennale di Venezia – 50th INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION**

**Dreams and Conflicts: The Dictatorship of the Viewer**

**Preview: 12 (Press)-13-14 June, 2003 –Open hours 10.00-20.00**

**15 June - 2 November- Open hours 10.00-18.00, Closed on Mondays (except 16 June)**



**TAIPEI FINE ARTS MUSEUM OF TAIWAN  
LIMBO ZONE**

**INAUGURATION COCKTAIL 14 June at 19.00**  
**Palazzo delle Prigioni, Castello 4209, S. Marco, Venice, Italy**  
**(Boat station S. Zaccaria, Hotel Danieli)**

5th participation of Taipei Fine Arts Museum of Taiwan  
Artists: Shu-lea Cheang, Daniel Lee, Ming-wei Lee, Goang-ming Yuan  
Project: Limbo Zone  
Commissioner: Tsai-lang Huang, Director of Taipei Fine Arts Museum of Taiwan  
Vice-Commissioner: Paolo De Grandis, Arte Communications  
Chief Curator: Fang-wei Chang, Taipei Fine Arts Museum  
Guest Curator: Shu-min Lin

Dreams and Conflicts: The Dictatorship of the Viewer. There is a gap, a zone between these two entities. This year Taipei Fine Arts Museum of Taiwan includes works from four artists who explore and reflect this area - one that can be called the Limbo Zone. It is part of the human experience to dream, to imagine. We strive to make our aspirations reality. Realizing our dreams is, in a sense, our destiny, our art. Utopian dreamers have attempted to generate created whole eras, whole states as well. As our humanity insures our imperfection, these dreams lead to inevitable conflict. These conflicts comprise the greatness and the failures of human history. The phenomenon is nothing new, yet the experience of it is constantly re-enacted.

What happens when our dreams change, when our vision of the world and its possibilities and our definitions no longer apply? What happens when the world changes - when the boundaries between nations change or become insignificant? What happens when institutions once vested with respect and authority are exposed as corrupt and unreliable? Recent events have spurred these changes. They have introduced new levels of economic stress, doubts about the benefits of technological advancement, fears about physical security.

Limbo is hanging suspended in a world without boundaries or limits. It is an endless nightmare, neither light nor dark, and emotionally unstable. Events appear to be unclear, undefined. Present day life can be experienced as constant transition, constant anxiety, and constant- unclarity. Limbo. Like the rest of the world, Taiwan is experiencing a dizzying rate of change - Technological, economic, social and political. How do we take this in? How do we perceive these and how do they affect our sensibilities, our sense of who and what we are. We may feel a growing gap between our inner and outer world, the present and past, and a general disorientation. It is as if we are hanging suspended in time and place, somewhere between heaven and hell, between the conscious and unconscious, and distrustful of our perceptions.



How much of the past is useful or relevant as we survey Limbo? The vagaries of memory and the passage of time conspire to weaken our understanding of the past. There are new species, new inventions that seem to push the limits of our old knowledge and understanding. New paradigms are unproven, and the past keeps echoing in the present. People want to predict the future, and hope for a better world.

Authority to manipulate and deceive can use this desire; it can also lead to a turn to the supernatural, to the world of spirits or of chance. So our sense of past and future becomes confused. Our Limbo is an eternal present. Perhaps our adaptive, survival instincts bring us to familiarize, domesticate and eventually express Limbo. We eventually learn its contours, shapes and forms. Four Taiwanese artists, all very active internationally, have been selected for this exhibit. In concept and through their media, each has created an individual visual code. A language from Limbo. These artists are Shu Lea Cheang, Daniel Lee, Lee Mingwei, and Yuan Goang-ming.

Yuan Goang-ming's work, titled *Human Disqualified*, was pieced together from 300 photos of the Ximen District in Taipei - omitting people. He has compressed all that fades in and out of visibility by means of a moving light and phosphor powder. The German appellation Doppelgänger would describe the result. A double image - a public space devoid of the public. A haunting vision of an urban space made ghost-like. Is it the past, the future, or like Limbo itself, somewhere else?

*The Sleeping Project* is a conceptual piece of Lee Mingwei. It is an exploration of boundaries using the idea of sleep as a starting point. The essential intimacy of falling asleep, with its release from the conscious is shared with a randomly selected stranger. It is a non-sexual experience, but one that does open the door to an exploration of encounter. What do you bring to the meeting? What does it mean? How do the boundaries of personal space and contact shift or hold up during the experience? It is a nightly experience of the random and the human. [\\*performance 1](#)

Daniel Lee's work, *108 Windows* and *Origin* are both about transformation. In *108 Windows*, sound from the bells of Han-Sun Temple confer a blessing to the entices engaged in the circle of reincarnation. It is a temple to a world outside of time and space. In *Origin*, the transformations are evolutionary. Again, the present is comprised of parts of the past. Here hybrids are created from existing species. Things real become not quite real. Both pieces raise the question where did we come from and how did we get to the present Limbo Zone.

Shu Lea Cheang, *Garlic = Rich Air* is a piece set in the year 2030. Garlic has become the currency of exchange. It may be virtual, real, or in the form of credit cards. It is a foil to our present economic system, raising questions of value and the meaning of money. What is something worth? How is a currency used? What is an object value? The piece includes a performance component of barter with gondoliers in Venice. It exists in a futuristic, after the crash marketplace. [\\*performance 2](#)

Shu-min Lin

### Information

#### Organization

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\*special events, performance, please see the immediate release 1 + immediate release 2

### **Performance 1. Lee Mingwei- The Sleeping Project**

The English word "sleep" is rather straightforward, denoting the normal and daily loss of consciousness we all require in order to function properly when we are not asleep. Even in its metaphorical usage, it only suggests a lack of awareness or understanding, as when certain Eastern texts speak of the unenlightened as being "asleep," or describe enlightenment as a kind of "awakening."

This straightforwardness is mysteriously lost, however, as soon as we follow the word "sleep" with the preposition "with." Suddenly, and through no fault of its own, "sleep" takes on a distinctly sexual connotation. I suspect this is due to our Victorian heritage, which went to great lengths to avoid speaking directly about body parts and functions ("legs" became "limbs", "belching" became "eructation"), and which, in its (at least public) avoidance of sexuality (a repression which undoubtedly gave sex an enormous amount of extra power), could apparently not imagine how any two (and no more than two) mature individuals could possibly sleep together without having some sort of sexual contact (or perhaps they felt any contact in bed was by definition sexual).

In "The Sleeping Project" artist Lee Mingwei invites us to reexamine our feelings about the differences between "sleeping" and "sleeping with." What does it mean to spend a night with a stranger--conversing, preparing to sleep, lying down in proximity, sharing one's unconscious hours with someone largely unknown, and encountering him or her after this night's sleep and other interactions? What happens to a "one-night stand" when it is treated with respect, reflection, and careful forethought (the artist and gallery will require a preliminary interview for the security of all involved). What, indeed, does it mean to spend the night together for spiritual and intellectual rather than sexual reasons, and what does it say about our culture that such a spiritual encounter does not even come to mind when we think of "sleeping together"?

Meditation traditions (and hypnotists) have long been aware that the moments before and after sleep are special--we are more suggestible and more in touch with inner material and process at these times--and these periods can be used to facilitate profound changes in our psychic functioning. What does it mean to share such vulnerable times with another, especially an unknown other, or do we really share such moments at all with someone to whom we do not feel close? Is it possible for two strangers to shape an evening and night into an open, profound, and mutually influential encounter?

Each night, a participant sleeper will be chosen by lottery. He or she will be asked to bring some objects that would normally be found around their usual place of sleep--a book, clock, photo, etc. Also, their conversations will be recorded throughout the night. Next morning, the participant will leave these objects on the nightstand, along with his or her attire from the previous night. During the remainder of the exhibition, these personal objects and the recorded conversations will be presented to gallery visitors, providing sparse but potentially fascinating clues to the anonymous



overnighters who have slept there.

## Performance 2

12-13-14 June, 2003

Shu Lea Cheang  
*GARLIC=RICH AIR*  
Net. Installation.

<http://www.rich-air.com>

2030

< Consider an " AFTER THE CRASH" SCENARIO >

Garlic is ordained as the new social currency in year 2030.

WANTED but scarce in the prevailing GM produce world, organic garlic is the golden bulb, the stinking rose, much sought after when the harvest time comes in the summer season. Garlic credito trueque (exchange) club reenacts the stock market exchange on the Net. Digital pixels and bytes are the trading commodities for garlic credito. The virtual garlic accumulated can be redeemed by organic garlic when the crops are made available to the public in the marketplace.

GARLIC=RICH AIR models after Argentina's credito trueque club when it's peso currency failed in the late 20th century and the country's economy was only sustained by locally certified credito as currency alternatives.

GARLIC=RICH AIR sets up its rule of the game for online garlic trading. Through the public's engagement, the exchange rate of digital immateriality are in constant fluctuation. The project further questions the exchange rate between material and immaterial goods with the virtual and actual garlic economy.

### Acknowledgement:

Garlic=Rich Air was first conceived with a "Challenge to the Fields" Award from Lyn Blumenthal Memorial fund for Independent Media in 2002. The project's streaming server is supported by Artstream.org/Standby program of New York City. Organic farmer Tovey Halleck provides the garlic for thought.

