



Wu Tien-chang
Never Say Goodbye 再別見說 吳天章
 臺北市立美術館
 TAIPEI FINE ARTS MUSEUM OF TAIWAN

la Biennale di Venezia

56. Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte
 Eventi Collaterali

UNVEILED TODAY

Wu Tien-chang: Never Say Goodbye

Presented by Taipei Fine Arts Museum of Taiwan

Collateral Event of the 56th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia

Opening Reception 7 May 2015 18:30 – 20:00

Preview Days 6 – 8 May 2015 10:00 – 20:00

Exhibition 9 May – 22 November 2015 Tuesday to Sunday, 10:00 – 18:00

Venue Palazzo delle Prigioni Castello 4209, San Marco, Venice, Italy



Our Hearts Beat as One
 Light box installation, 240 x 343.2 cm, Taipei, 2001 – 2015
 © Wu Tien-chang



Farewell, Spring and Autumn Pavilions
 Video installation, 4'10", Taipei, 2015
 © Wu Tien-chang

Taipei, 5 May – 'WU Tien-chang: Never Say Goodbye', Collateral Event of the 56th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, was unveiled today at the Palazzo delle Prigioni, a former prison inside the Palazzo Ducale. Curated by the Taipei Fine Arts Museum, the exhibition explores the atmosphere and particular sentiments of westernisation in post-war Taiwan, whilst also responding to shifts in the historical regime over the past century. Featuring three interactive video installations and two striking light box works by Taiwanese contemporary artist Wu Tien-chang, this is the first time Taiwan have presented work by a single artist at La Biennale di Venezia. The exhibition will be on view from 9 May to 22 November 2015.

Responding to the central theme of "Goodbye", two of Wu's recent video pieces *Beloved* and *Unforgettable Lover*, will be joined by a newly commissioned work for the Venice presentation - *Farewell, Spring and Autumn Pavilions*. Each of these works deals with the inevitability of sorrow and separation and feature young men and women in skin membrane costumes.

In these digital video pieces, Wu combines theatrical effects with magical tricks, handcrafted props and machine-operated scenery to surprise the viewer as the works switch from still photographs to moving images. In the newly commissioned work *Farewell, Spring and Autumn Pavilions*, the character chooses to wave goodbye with a springy step and a carefree manner. Along with the changing scenery and changing costumes, the character seems to say goodbye easily to the past. Actually, he is still standing in the same spot. While the external circumstances change, he himself keeps going around in circles. By shooting with a fixed camera in one take, *Unforgettable Lover* harks back to the handicraft era of film as the male protagonist dances to the rhythm of music while evolving into other characters by changing his clothes, sets and props in front of the audience's eyes. In *Beloved*, Wu wraps the female character in a delicate latex skin to create an idealistic form of the perfect lover – amorously telling the stories of helplessness and sadness of the people coming and going from this world.

For the La Biennale di Venezia, Wu has converted two of his two-dimensional photography works into light box installations. *Our Hearts Beat as One* and *Blind Men Groping Down the Lane* are key serial works marking Wu Tien-chang's venture into digital photography. These images are full of bright and joyful colours, but the figures captured are marginal characters with strangely proportioned bodies or disabilities.

Behind the gleeful, dazzling visuals throughout the exhibition, Wu attempts to symbolize the people of Taiwan constantly haunted by memories and nostalgia of regime changes and post-war westernisation within their society. Capturing characters in mask-like artificial skin membranes and gaudy costumes, Wu attempts to reveal the hybrid nature of Taiwanese identity and depicts the life of those in the lower classes of Taiwanese society who deeply experience the joys and sorrows of human life.

Ms. Fang Mei-ching, Chief Curator of Taipei Fine Arts Museum said, "At the show, Wu uses the flamboyant and kitsch appearances of the ghostly figures in his photography works and video installation as disguises of charm to confide in the past pains that cannot be shouldered by the individual or the entire nation. On one hand, the intricate history of post-war Taiwan is revealed, and on the other hand the romantic aspiration for the future is projected. These seemingly parallel and opposing lines have struck a balance on a perfect crossing point at the presentation, by establishing a memorable dialogue within the exhibition space and venue."



Beloved
Video installation, 3'11", Taipei, 2013 – 2015
© Wu Tien-chang

Notes to Editors

The influences of regime changes over the past century in Taiwan

From the Japanese colony to the anti-PROC military base or even as a resting stop for American soldiers during the Cold War, Taiwan has been a transitional habitat for foreign political powers. Various cultures and products were transplanted from the motherland of these post-war foreign powers into Taiwan. As such, domestic worship of exotic goods also triggered mass production, though often poorly imitated as gaudy counterfeits. Wu was born in the thriving trading port of Keelung and witnessed the becoming and lifting of Martial Law in Taiwan. He deliberately tapped into the gaudy aesthetics of local plebeian cultures to dig out the unsightly ugly truth and scent of death lingering at the bottom society and throughout its immigration history – traumatic experiences that will continue to haunt Taiwan for years to come.

Press Enquires

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About Wu Tien-chang

Grew up in the trading port of Taiwan in Keelung, Wu is renowned for his oil paintings and digital photography, which comment on the socio-political aspect of life. Wu's work reveals the contradictions of the photographic medium, with its apparent reality, yet often contrived and fictitious nature.

In the 80s, Wu used signs, symbols and narratives and combined them with his own interpretation of history to re-examine society, history and politics with two-dimensional paintings. He was seen as a pioneer that broke taboos after the lifting of martial law in Taiwan. In the 90s, he switched to the medium of photography, using mixed media such as shiny velvet cloth, sequins and Christmas lights to create photographic series demonstrating the "TaiKe" (local Taiwanese) aesthetic style.

In early 2000, impressed by the precision, neatness and plastic visual associations of computer images, he started to study and apply digital alteration and compositing techniques. He painted the sets, wrote the scripts, directed the lighting and photography, created props and directed the acting of costumed models, so that the conflicting elements fuse into a chilling and opulent visual style through "staged



photography". Since 2010, he has once again challenged himself, integrating moving images and theatrical space and creating interactive installations featuring a set created with handmade craftsmanship. Through techniques such as one-take shooting, skip frames and high-speed filming, he evokes an uncanny atmosphere through bizarre-looking bodies and an ornamental visual style.

He currently lives and works in Taipei, Taiwan. His works have been shown at biennials in Taiwan (2008, 2014), Taipei (1994, 1996 and 1998) and Venice (1997), at the Fukuoka (1999) and Asia-Pacific Triennials (1996, 1999), at the Centre des arts d'Enghien-les-Bains in France (2007), the K-18 Mutual Acknowledgement Exhibition, Kassel (1992), the Museum of Contemporary Art, Taipei (2014), the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, the National Art Museum of China (2009), the Taipei Cultural Center, New York (2008), Art Hong Kong, Art Beijing and Art Shanghai (2008 and 2011), international photo festivals in Pingyao in Shanxi province, Guangzhou and Hong Kong (2004, 2007 and 2008), and at the "Contemporary Chinese Photography" exhibition in Prague (2003). Received the New Trend Prize of Contemporary Art Trends (1986) awarded by the Taipei Fine Arts Museum, First Prize of the Taipei Biennial of Contemporary Art (1994), the Creation Award of Li Chung-Shun Foundation (1998) and the Jury's Special Award of the 7th Taishin Arts Awards (2009).



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Wu Tien-chang

1956, born in Keelung, Taiwan
Currently works and lives in Taipei

Education

1980 B.F.A., Chinese Culture University, Taipei, Taiwan

Solo Exhibition

- 2014 *Magical Limbo – Solo Exhibition of Wu Tien-chang*, Museum of Contemporary Art Taipei, Taipei, Taiwan
- 2013 *Studio of Pseudo Photography – Wu Tien-chang Solo Exhibition*, Tina Keng Gallery, Taipei, Taiwan
- 2012 *The In-Between Space – Wu Tien-chang Solo Exhibition*, Beijing, China
- 2011 *One Piece Room: Wu Tien-chang – “Luan,”* Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts, Taipei, Taiwan
Staging Memories—Wu Tien-chang Solo Exhibition, Hong Kong International Art Fair, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Center, Hong Kong, China
- 2010 *Shock Shot*, Soho Photo Gallery, New York, USA
- 2009 *Celebration: Tsong Pu – Wu Tien-chang Solo Exhibition*, Art Beijing 2009, Beijing, China
- 2008 *Shock-Shot – Wu Tien-chang 2008 Solo Exhibition*, Main Trend Gallery, Taipei, Taiwan
- 1997 *Tien-chang Wu: The Introduction of Taiwan's Contemporary Art Vol. 2*, MOMA Contemporary, Fukuoka, Japan
Tien-chang Wu 1997, Impression Art Gallery, Taipei, Taiwan
- 1990 *Four Eras*, Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taipei, Taiwan
- 1987 *Syndrome of Hurting*, Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taipei, Taiwan

Awards and Honors

- 2009 Taishin Arts Awards, Taishin Bank Foundation for Arts and Culture, Taipei, Taiwan
- 1998 Won Creation Award of Lee Chung-Shun Foundation, Taipei, Taiwan
- 1994 Prize of Taipei Biennial of Contemporary Art, Taipei, Taiwan
- 1986 New Trend Prize of Contemporary Art Trends in Taiwan



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Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taiwan

Founded in 1983, Taipei Fine Arts Museum (TFAM) is Taiwan's first museum of modern and contemporary art. Located in Taipei, the museum occupies over 20,000 square meters of space, of which 11,741 square meters are devoted to exhibitions. The inception of the TFAM was a response to the budding movement of modern art in Taiwan. Over the past decades, TFAM has dedicated itself to the development of modern art in Taiwan while staying abreast of ongoing trends in contemporary art. TFAM has been hosting the Taipei Biennial since 1998, inviting internationally-renowned curators and artists to cooperate with the local artistic circle. In 2014, TFAM invited Nicolas Bourriaud, the eminent French art critic, scholar, and the author of "Relational Aesthetic," to curate The Great Acceleration for Taipei Biennial, which has received enthusiastic responses from worldwide. The shows held over the past decades have increased the visibility of Taiwan and expanded the global networks on the world stage.

Since its inception, TFAM has not only been a platform for exhibiting artworks from Taiwan and overseas, it has also been an initiator of exchange between the Taiwanese and international art worlds. In the recent years, major retrospective and solo exhibitions of internationally renowned artists from Asia were held, these include *Cai Guo-Qiang: Hanging Out in the Museum* in 2009, *Ai Weiwei Absent* in 2011, and *Xu Bing: A Retrospective* in 2014.

Taipei Fine Arts Museum has organised the presentation of the artists from Taiwan at the Venice Biennale since 1995. Collateral Event of the 56th International Art Exhibition 'WU Tien-chang: *Never Say Goodbye*' is the first solo show determined by a selection committee and held by TFAM.



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Collateral Event of the 56th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia

Major solo exhibition by leading Taiwanese Artist WU Tien-chang

Presented by Taipei Fine Arts Museum of Taiwan

Press Preview Hours: Tuesday 5 May at 12:00 – 17:00



吳天章 Wu Tien-chang

永協同心，燈箱裝置，240 x 343.2 cm，台北，2001 – 2015

Our Hearts Beat as One, Light box installation, 240 x 343.2 cm, Taipei, 2001 – 2015

Sforzo coordinato, Light box installation, 240 x 343.2 cm, Taipei, 2001 – 2015

© Wu Tien-chang



吳天章 Wu Tien-chang

瞎子摸巷，燈箱裝置，240 x 478 cm，台北，2008 – 2015

Blind Men Groping Down the Lane, Light box installation, 240 x 478 cm, Taipei, 2008 – 2015

I ciechi e l'elefante, Light box installation, 240 x 478 cm, Taipei, 2008 – 2015

© Wu Tien-chang



吳天章 Wu Tien-chang

心所愛的人，錄像裝置，3'11"，台北，2013 – 2015

Beloved, Video installation, 3'11", Taipei, 2013 – 2015

Amore mio, Video installation, 3'11", Taipei, 2013 – 2015

© Wu Tien-chang



吳天章 Wu Tien-chang

難忘的愛人，錄像裝置，4'30"，台北，2013 – 2015

Unforgettable lover, Video installation, 4'30", Taipei, 2013 – 2015

Amante indimenticabile, Video installation, 4'30", Taipei, 2013 – 2015

© Wu Tien-chang



吳天章 Wu Tien-chang

再見春秋閣，錄像裝置，4'10"，台北，2015

Farewell, Spring and Autumn Pavilions, Video installation, 4'10", Taipei, 2015

Addio alle armate, Video installation, 4'10", Taipei, 2015

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