3X3X6 TAIWAN IN VENICE
SHU LEA CHEANG 鄭淑麗

La Biennale di Venezia
58. Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte
Eventi Collaterali

Taipei Fine Arts Museum News Release **May 8, 2019, Venice**

3X3X6 www.taiwaninvenice.org
Collateral Event of the 58th International Art Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia

Artist
Shu Lea Cheang

Curator
Paul B. Preciado

Promoter and Organizer
Taipei Fine Arts Museum of Taiwan
www.tfam.museum

Soon after the World Wide Web was made available for public access in 1990, artist Shu Lea Cheang, armed with her creativity and imagination, embarked on a journey to expand new media beyond known functions of digital communication, connecting virtual networks with spaces in the real world and initiating a series of creative, performative, and action-based projects.

Her piece *BRANDON* (1998–99) became the first work of "net art" (a movement also known as "net.art," led by artists who work in the medium of the Internet) to be commissioned and collected by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York. Internationally recognized as an Internet art pioneer, Cheang explores the changing relationships between technology and body politics in the age of late capitalism and globalization. Her films, installations, interactive interfaces, and live performances reflect on the power of images and fictions to subvert normative representations of gender, sexuality, and race.

For Taiwan's collateral presentation at the 58th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, Cheang will create a new work inspired by the history of the exhibition venue, Palazzo delle Prigioni, which first served as a prison in the sixteenth century. The work's title *3x3x6* refers to today's standardized architecture of industrial imprisonment: a 3 x 3 square-meter cell constantly monitored by 6 cameras. *3x3x6* speaks to the realities of imprisonment constructed physically and by the presence of digital surveillance mechanisms. In light of these folded conditions, the artist transforms the Prigioni into a high-tech surveillance system to rethink how contemporary technologies of communication and surveillance are shaping identities.

Related to ten cases of imprisonment due to gender, sexual, and racial nonconformity, both past and present, including Giacomo Casanova, Michel Foucault, and Marquis de Sade, *3x3x6* questions the legal and visual regimes that have formed sexual and gender norms over time. Specifically, Cheang's exhibition looks to the conditions of incarceration that are becoming increasingly omnipresent in today's world: for example, the inescapable big data used in technological surveillance and the application of facial identification for social control. She uses the site of Venice's old prison to create a glitch in its histories via a real-time interface that the visitor is invited to join.

3x3x6 spans four rooms of the Prigioni with an immersive, multidimensional installation. Departing from the architecture of the panopticon invented by Jeremy Bentham in the late eighteenth century, Cheang constructs the exhibition around a rotating and inverted surveillance tower: her panopticon is a newly developed 3-D camera surveillance system that simultaneously projects the portraits of the ten case studies. The exhibition challenges the usual positions of observer/observed. From the moment the visitor elects to enter the exhibition they become implicated within the system—their faces are scanned and their image later modified. Here, gender and racial morphing become queer digital strategies to disrupt the tradition of colonial and anthropometric identification techniques, which extend from Alphonse Bertillon's criminological photography of the nineteenth century to today's facial recognition technologies. Connected to the Internet, 3x3x6 in turn allows visitors (physical and virtual) to send selfies and images to the exhibition system. The exhibition visitors are thus *inside* the total surveillance apparatus.

What unfolds next is a succession of ten short trans punk fiction films. To produce these digital videos, Cheang conducted research on ten historical and contemporary cases of people incarcerated for what has been considered gender and/or sexual crimes. But instead of using a documentary strategy, Cheang draws on various media to render her digital narratives: cinema and comic culture, queer photography and special effects, and video games. She makes use of legal documents and historical reports as well as metaphors, fake news, myths, and fantasies. Cheang short-circuits linear time and brings into the conversation characters from different eras and cultures, creating a time out of history or a history out of time, where disjointed narratives meet. Normative notions of gender, race, and sexual identity are also challenged—the actors have attributes that differ greatly from the characters and so question preconceived biases and existing conventions.

At the end of the exhibition visitors are directed into a control room where imagery and data converge. By revealing the mechanisms behind the work, Cheang asks us to examine the distance between surveillance and desire—when an individual experiences pleasure and voluntarily participates in observing another, are they not too being exposed to surveillance?

Shu Lea Cheang states: "With this exhibition we explore the possible strategies for resistance against highly controlled societies, the self-affirming dignity against repression, and the variable versions of self-granted pursuits for (un)happiness." Through her works, Cheang bridges queer/transgender activism and hacktivism—seemingly divergent and unrelated strategies—and by pushing the boundary that defines normality and anomaly reimagines a brand new practice of liberation. Curator **Paul B. Preciado** comments: "*3x3x6* explores the relationship between political punishment and sexual enjoyment, between modes of seeing and processes of subject production. The exhibition aims to reinvent desire and pleasure beyond hegemonic norms, inverting the watchful eyes of our panoptic society to partake in an empowering collective vision."

A publication with new critical essays by Preciado, Matthew Fuller, Dean Spade, and Jackie Wang on Cheang's work will complement the exhibition. On May 11, as part of the opening events of the exhibition, Cheang and Preciado will host the public program "The Failures of Electronic Discipline: A Symposium of Gender and Sexual Outlaws." Taking place at the historic site of the Psychiatric Hospital Museum on San Servolo island, which was until the 1970s an institution of confinement for the so-called mentally ill, the event will involve critics, academics, and writers including Fuller and Jack Halberstam, as well the performers who embody the characters of CASANOVA X, SADE X, FOUCAULT X and D X. Between fiction and history, critical theory and utopia, the event takes shape as a queer performative encounter of dissidents of the patriarchal and colonial regime.

3X3X6 TAIWAN IN VENICE
SHU LEA CHEANG 鄭淑麗

La Biennale di Venezia
58. Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte
Eventi Collaterali

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

Opening Hours
Tuesday to Sunday, 10 a.m.–6 p.m.
Also open on May 13, September 2, and November 18, 2019

Guided Tours
May 11–August 27, 2019: twice a day during opening hours

Pre-opening
May 8–10, 2019, 10 a.m.–8 p.m.

Press Conference and Official Opening
May 9, 2019, 6 p.m.–7 p.m.

Public Program—Open to All
The Failures of Electronic Discipline: A Symposium of Gender and Sexual Outlaws
May 11, 2019, 4 p.m.–7 p.m.
Psychiatric Hospital Museum of San Servolo
Isola di San Servolo, 30100 Venice

Participants (in order of appearance)
Enrico Wey as CASANOVA X, Performer
Paul B. Preciado, Curator
Félix Maritaud as FOUCAULT X, Performer
Audrey Tang, Poetician and Taiwan's Digital Minister
Matthew Fuller, Media Theorist
Shu Lea Cheang, Artist
Liz Rosenfeld as SADE X, Performer
Jack Halberstam, Cultural and Gender Theorist
Khaleb Brooks as D X, Performer
Aérea Negrot as B X, Performer and Musician

Web
3x3x6.com

Online Participation
APP http://3x3x6.com/app
Submit your selfie dance video!
In solidarity with Maedeh Hojabri, an Iranian teenager arrested for posting a dance video on Instagram in July 2018, Shu Lea Cheang has created the app #3x3x6 as part of the exhibition where the public all around the world can upload their selfie dance videos to open up an opportunity for visitors to use personal smartphones and apps critically. By constantly uploading data from the visitors and entering it into the image flow of the exhibition, Cheang extends 3x3x6 outside of its physical location, not only blurring the limits between the museum and the web, the artist and visitors, as well as producers and receivers, but also questioning individual freedom, intimacy, collective agency and participation.

Press Contact
Yu-mei Sung yumei@tfam.gov.tw
Tzu-chin Kao tckao@tfam.gov.tw

Press Images
https://reurl.cc/p6krd
#3x3x6 #ShuleaCheang #PaulBPreciado #TaiwaninVenice #TaipeiFineArtsMuseum #BiennaleArte2019 #MayYouLiveinInterestingTimes

OFFICIAL SUPPORT
文化部 MINISTRY OF CULTURE
外交部
TAIPEI 臺北
台北市文化局 Department of Cultural Affairs Taipei City Government

PROMOTER AND ORGANIZER
臺北市立美術館 TAIPEI FINE ARTS MUSEUM OF TAIWAN