

“The Far West”

**Public seminar
Networking event**

**Friday 26 October 2007
11am – 5.30pm
Arnolfini, Bristol
UK**

ARNOLFINI

relational

KURATOR

ArtProjects and
Solutions



Dear Participants,

CURATORIAL RESIDENCY AND “THE FAR WEST” SEMINAR

Over the past two weeks, Zhang Wei, Director of Vitamin Creative Space, an innovative space for participatory and experimental art projects in Guangzhou, China, has undertaken a curatorial residency co-hosted by Arnolfini and Relational, Bristol, as part of the series of International Curatorial Research Residencies initiated by the Curatorial Network.

Zhang Wei’s residency, and this concluding seminar, are platforms for the research and discussion of ideas feeding into “*The Far West (Trading Company)*” project, taking place in the summer of 2008 (21 June - 25 August).

“*The Far West (Trading Company)*” engages with the changing economic relationship between East and West, and the new context for international contemporary art, so as to unpack existing cultural perspectives in the UK specifically. The economic centre of the world has shifted to the East. The distant lands once described by a Western empire as the Far East have rapidly become the manufacturing engine at the heart of a new global economy. Globalisation has transformed our cultural geography as well, super-ceding the old colonial landscape of nation-states and continental differences to replace it with a universal terrain of consumerism and trade. The new conditions of mobility and exchange require a greater degree of self-criticality to enable reciprocal understanding of cultural difference and inter-connectedness.

“*The Far West (Trading Company)*” is an international exchange project curated and produced in partnership by Tom Trevor, Arnolfini (Bristol), and Lu Jie, the Long March (Beijing), with Zhang Wei, Vitamin Creative Space (Guangzhou) and Zoë Shearman, Relational, (Bristol) who are developing ‘off-site’ projects.

Zhang Wei’s residency and “*The Far West*” seminar have been co-produced by Arnolfini and Relational as part of the Curatorial Network programme.

THE CURATORIAL NETWORK

Zhang Wei’s residency and this seminar are the second of the Curatorial Network programme. The Curatorial Network runs a series of international curatorial research residencies, seminars and international group visits for curators based in South West of the UK. It also offers an online curatorial resource and discussion forum.

The Curatorial Network is a collaborative initiative involving partner art institutions and independent curators to contribute to the development of curatorial practice through critical debate and exchange. It explores the metaphor of ‘network’ in relation to curating and extends it to discuss properties, complexities and dynamics of curatorial networks and collaborations.

Curatorial Network is managed by KURATOR (www.kurator.org) and ArtProjects and Solutions (www.artprojectsandsolutions.com) and funded by Arts Council England.

For further information on the Curatorial Network, details of the programme and to join the discussion list, see <http://www.curatorial.net/>

PROGRAMME

26 October 2007

"The Far West" seminar
The Light Studio
Arnolfini
11am – 5.30pm

Zhang Wei will discuss the topic with an international panel of curators: Zoe Butt (Curator and Director of International Programmes, Long March, Beijing, China), Alistair Hudson (Deputy Director, Grizedale Arts, Cumbria, UK), and Professor Sarat Maharaj (Co-Curator of Documenta XI and of the 2008 Guangzhou Triennial "Farewell to Post-Colonialism"). The seminar will be chaired by Tom Trevor (Director, Arnolfini).

- 10.30 Registration, tea and coffee (in the Light Studio)
- 11.00 Introduction by Tom Trevor
- 11.10 Keynote presentation by Zhang Wei
Questions/discussion
- 12.05 Presentation by Zoe Butt
Questions/discussion
- 1.00 Buffet lunch (provided to all participants in the Reading Room)
- 2.15 Presentation by Professor Sarat Maharaj
Questions/discussion
- 3.10 Presentation by Alistair Hudson
Questions/discussion
- 4.05 Tea/coffee break (in the Light Studio)
- 4.30 Panel discussion
- 5.30 Close.

At 5.30, participants are welcome to join a 30 minute introductory tour of 'Port City' by Tom Trevor, Curator of the project (in the galleries)

BIOGRAPHIES

26 October 2007

“*The Far West*” seminar
The Light Studio
Arnolfini

Curator-in-residence and keynote speaker:

Zhang Wei

Zhang Wei is Director of Vitamin Creative Space, Guangzhou, China. Vitamin Creative Space was founded in 2002, as the first alternative space in the Pearl River Delta. Many international artists have accepted invitations to the Guangzhou space to participate in a range of projects, while Vitamin has played an instrumental role in introducing Chinese contemporary art to the world.

Vitamin dedicates itself to contemporary art-exchange and to analysing and combining different forms of contemporary cultures. Just as vitamins are essential to life, Vitamin Creative Space believes contemporary art is the key to enriching our lives and sustaining our society. It is a space of physical and spiritual unity: the “Space” develops through non-stop exploration within the transforming Chinese context, both practically and theoretically. Life is a process of endless movement and extension, and the floating energy of life is consistently represented in the activities presented in this space.

Vitamin is a space for Chinese contemporary art which continuously concentrates on the present age, because contemporary art pieces are full of vitality and possibility. It is a space for cultural exchange in which people with different cultural backgrounds will meet together and discuss the problems of their living environment, and it is a space for the creation of individuality which encourages across-the-border activities and dialogues between creators from different realms.

Projects include *Chu Yun, Heman Chong, Zheng Guogu, Frieze Art Fair* (2007), *Cao Fei, Lyon Biennial and Istanbul Biennial* (2007), *Cao Fei, Chu Yun, Duan Jianyu, Hu Xiangqian, Liu Chuang, Zhou Tao, China Power Station Part II*, Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo, Norway (2007), *The Sole Proprietor and Other Stories* by Heman Chong, Guangzhou, China, and *From Sleeping to Swimming*, London UK (2007); *Through Popular Expression*, Sittard, Netherlands, Birmingham UK, Cluji and Bucharest, Romania and Singapore (2006); *Back to Zhong Guo – Fools Move Mountains*, Guangzhou (2005); *Object System: Doing Nothing*, Madrid, Spain and Thessaloniki, Greece (2004); *Asian Field* by Anthony Gormley, Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Chongqing, China; *Playing at Home/Playing Away: The Maze of Reality*, 50th Venice Biennale (2003).

www.vitamincreativespace.com

Seminar speakers:

1. Zoe Butt

Zoe Butt works for the Long March Project in Beijing as Director of International Programs and Curator, Long March Space. Previously as Assistant Curator of Contemporary Asian Art at the Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia, she assisted in the development of the Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT) and key acquisitions for the Contemporary Asian art collection, and other associated gallery programs. For over 10 years she has been researching contemporary Asian art and has both independently and collaboratively curated exhibitions and contributed to various art publications both in Australia and overseas that have reflected the dynamic art of this region.

Embracing contradiction -The Long March Project

An awareness and respect for where one is standing in relation to its conscious surroundings should inform the manner in which you speak or act. To begin to speak is to express a desire to know, to act is to express a desire to understand. This liminal space between knowing and understanding is a varied experience that is fundamentally anchored in context – from where do these two points greet each other and from what pathways have they arrived? This will be a discursive set of thoughts, sprung from the methodology of the Long March Project, which will discuss the concept of 'difference' and 'locality', in reference to 'Long March Project - Chinatown', an ongoing international artistic experiment, creating spaces where historical, social and cultural contradiction is challenged and provoked.

www.longmarchfoundation.org

2. Professor Sarat Maharaj

Sarat Maharaj was born in South Africa and educated in one of the segregated universities of the Apartheid era. He did his PhD in the UK on the Dialectic of Modernism and Mass Culture: Studies in Post War British Art (University of Reading. 1985).

He was appointed lecturer at Goldsmiths' College, University of London in 1980 and was made Professor of History & Theory of Art in 1997. He is currently Professor of Visual Art and Knowledge Systems, Lund University, Sweden and Visiting Professor, Goldsmiths' London.

He was the first Rudolf Arnheim Professor, Humboldt University, Berlin (2001-02) and Research Fellow at the Jan Van Eyck Akademie, Maastricht (1999-2001).

He was a co-curator on the Documenta X1 team (Kassel. 2002) and will be one of the curators of the Guangzhou Triennial, Guangdong, China 2008.

His specialist research covers Marcel Duchamp, James Joyce and Richard Hamilton. His expanded research, writing and publications cover, Visual Art as Knowledge Production, Textiles, Cultural Translation and Difference in the global system

3. Alistair Hudson

Alistair Hudson has been Deputy Director of Grizedale Arts since 2004, developing projects such as Romantic Detachment, PS1MoMA; The Coniston Water Festival; Seven Samurai, Echigo Tsumari Triennial, Japan; Virtual Grizedale, A Foundation Liverpool and a public art strategy for Egremont, Cumbria. He was educated at Goldsmith College 1988 – 1992 and has previously worked at the Henry Moore Institute (1993-94), Anthony d'Offay Gallery London (1994-2000) and The Government Art Collection (2000-04) where, as Projects Curator, he devised a public art strategy for the new Home Office building with Liam Gillick.

Grizedale Arts is a research and development agency for artists and creative practitioners, based in the Lake District National Park. Whilst its origins are in the early 1970's as a forest sculpture park, it has recently acquired a significant reputation for pioneering new approaches to artistic production and exhibition alongside its established residencies. This programme is distinct from others, as it actively engages with the complexities of the rural situation and places process and ideas above the requirement for finished artistic product. Its priority is to generate ideas and pilot schemes which can be taken up by others, having a constructive role in the development of culture and society.

The organisation is now embarking on a new phase in its development, building a new headquarters building at Lawson Park, a historic Lakeland hill farm in a dramatic position overlooking the Crake Valley and the Coniston Fells. From this new site, Grizedale Arts is constructing a model for a new kind of art institution; taking the form of a dispersed network of activity, which works beyond the established structures of the art world and aims to rethink the way culture is used.

Current projects include the development of Lawson Park and Low Parkamoor farms; *The Seven Samurai* project for the remote Japanese Village of Toge; a public art strategy for Egremont, the main service town for Sellafield Nuclear Power Plant; *Agrifashionista.tv*, an online tv station created with artists and a project for the village of Nanling in partnership with Vitamin Creative Space.

www.grizedale.org

Hosts:

1. Arnolfini, Bristol, UK

Arnolfini is one of Europe's leading centres for the contemporary arts. Through a mixed arts programme of exhibitions, 'off-site' projects, live art & dance, sound/music, film, literature, talks, on-line and educational activities, it provides a platform for experimentation across the disciplines and for emergent practice of international significance. Arnolfini is revenue funded by Arts Council England and Bristol City Council.

www.arnolfini.org.uk

Tom Trevor

Tom Trevor is Director of Arnolfini, Bristol. He studied Fine Art at the Ruskin, University of Oxford, and Goldsmiths' College. He has co-curated context-based projects for the Institute of International Visual Arts, Wellcome Trust, Camden Arts Centre and Freud Museum. He was Co-Director and Director of Spacex, Exeter (1999-2005), where he curated exhibitions and 'off-site' projects by Lois Weinberger, Sigalit Landau, Christine & Irene Hohenbuchler, Jayne Parker, Angus Fairhurst, Oladele Bamgboye, Peter Fend, William Kentridge, Luke Fowler, Shizuka Yokomizo and Mika Taanila. He has placed a particular emphasis upon socially-engaged, context-based work. He curated *Generator*, and *Hortus*, for the Liverpool Biennial, and multi-site projects including *The Visible & the Invisible*, for inIVA, *Patterns*, and *Homeland*, for Spacex. He has placed a particular emphasis upon socially-engaged, context-based work. His most recent curatorial project is *Port City: On mobility and exchange*, currently presented at Arnolfini.

2. Relational, Bristol, UK

Relational is a contemporary art commissioning agency that works with artists on context-led, socially engaged and participatory projects.

Zoë Shearman

Zoë Shearman is Director of Relational. Formerly, Director of Visual Arts at Riverside Studios, London (1990-1994), where she curated solo exhibitions and 'off-site' projects by Louise Bourgeois, Yoko Ono, Judith Barry, Bethan Huws, Tania Kovats, Jaki Irvine, Marysia Lewandowska, Hermione Wiltshire, Simon Patterson and Matt Collishaw, and Co-Director of Spacex, Exeter (1999-2001). As an independent curator, she co-curated the multi-site projects *The Visible and the Invisible*, for inIVA; *Patterns*; and *Homeland*, both with Spacex, and projects for Camden Arts Centre, the Freud Museum and the Architectural Association, London. Most recently, she commissioned a series of interventions by Raimi Gbadamosi, Melanie Jackson, Jyll Bradley, Lisa Cheung and Fiona Kam Meadley, currently presented at Plymouth Museum & Art Gallery as part of *Human Cargo*, a project which brings together contemporary art and current museum practices.