

Jiang Zhi

Artist Statement and Biography

Artist Statement

In this installation, hundreds of birthday musical greeting cards are mounted on a wall, forming a concert performance-like chorus of birthday songs. As these battery-operated greeting cards run out of battery, the chorus becomes softer and softer, eventually resulting in silence. What the visitor will experience is thus the silence that follows the end of a song, remnants of a concert that has drawn to a close.

In Our Time

Failure, instability, consumption and disappearance. In a silent space, these processes are poetically and aesthetically described: a fully-launched fireworks show, a well-performed birthday concert with no audience, an ordinary yet transient flash of light. These events might be easily ignored by those who pay little attention. Yet, it does not matter. The fireworks cannot be seen, the concert cannot be heard, just as how light is immeasurable.

Are we strong enough to confront the pain of disappearance directly?

The works of Francis Bacon and Edward Munch's *The Scream* have no inherent audience, yet pain is effectively conveyed through the act of a scream. One should wonder why this is possible, and perhaps Hemingway has had the answer all along. He describes us humans as being vulnerable in the face of other's suffering, that even we cannot endure their heart-breaking screams of pain. Susan Sontag might provide an answer to this question as well, that observing others' suffering will differentiate ourselves from the sufferers. We will be assured that we are not suffering from the same acute pain as they are, and this offers an affirmation of our own being as well as a certain visual pleasure.

Artists are the bystanders of suffering.

Artists are the experimenters of suffering.

A discussion of the kind of relationships that exist between the disappearances of others', their suffering and ourselves is intended. How can we demonstrate our agony in public, and subsequently how can we derive 'artworks' from the experience of pain? Questions with regards to the 'what', 'where', 'when' and 'how' of self-affliction and our own hidden pains will be posed.

On February 9th, 2009, the night of the Chinese Lantern Festival, a fireman lost his life in an extinguishing mission. The fire broke out because a government official who worked in public media insisted on launching contraband fireworks at a new and uninspected enterprise site,

even when the police discouraged this clearly risky and illegal action. This accident cost a billion dollars in damages and resulted in the injury of seven firemen and one death. The deceased fireman would have had his thirtieth birthday just two weeks later.

Another story goes like this. On December 26th, 2010, a man noticed a reflective light coming from a piece of cellophane. The next day, the light appeared again, and this time, he recorded the incident. That evening, he received the news that his wife had passed away while she was on a trip back to her hometown. His recording of the reflective light, an artistic endeavor, thus becomes an unexpected symbol of his wife's death, an emotional reminder of the pain he felt upon her demise. The lights in the artwork are evident, yet we cannot hear the inherent screams within.

This man received the same signal twice, but it was already too late before he could attempt to make sense of what the signals meant. He could have done something about it if he had known sooner, but instead he was completely unaware of a loved one's last moments. This feeling of regret can hurt more than the pain that comes with loss, and this is especially so when the suffering stems from the incapacity to make sense of events and becomes something of an exceedingly personal nature.

On September 30th, 2012, a birthday concert celebrating the birth of a newborn will last for the entire night with no audience. On October 1st, audiences can expect to be welcomed by the silence now that the concert has come to an end.

The fireworks, reflective light signals and birth of a newborn in the abovementioned stories are but singular instances amongst thousands of similar events. With every show of fireworks, ray of transient light or birthday song that is missed, we become more aware of the fact that what disappears in our time are never the objects themselves but rather our abilities to make sense of these events. At the same time, we suffer not because of this disappearance, but because we are incapable of perceiving the sense of loss.

The audience becomes the bystanders of suffering. The audience becomes the experimenters of suffering.

Artist Biography

JIANG ZHI

China

Jiang Zhi, born in 1971, comes from Hunan province, China. He currently lives and works in Beijing and Shenzhen, China.

He works with a range of mediums; such as photography, video, and installation. From the early stages of his artistic career, Jiang has been writing novels while taking photographs, which stems from his deep interest in poetry. Jiang Zhi has consciously positioned himself at the intersection of poetry and sociology. He fervently weaves familiar and mundane social experiences into his works, while at the same time maintaining the tenseness between daily life and our reading of the text. Hence, he has consistently avoided unspecific personal emotions and political statements, and shies away from feeble expressions and critiques. In this aspect, Jiang's works are open-ended, supple, and possess a taste of poetic vigour.

Since graduating from the China Academy of Fine Art in 1995, Jiang's works have been included in many exhibitions, such as: *2011 A Thought Arises* (Shanghai Gallery of Art, Shanghai, China) ; *ATTITUDE : An Exhibition by Jiang Zhi*, Platform China Contemporary Art Institute, Beijing, China (2010); *Building Code Violations, Long March Space*, Beijing, China (2008); *La rivoluzione siamo noi*, Isola Art Centre, Milan, Italy (2006); *China Power Station Part 1*, Serpentine Gallery, London, UK (2006); *The 2nd Guangzhou Triennial of Art*, Guangdong Art Museum, Guangzhou, China (2005); *Between Past and Future: New Photography and Video from China*, ICP and Asia Society, New York, USA (2004); *Zone of Urgency*, 50th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy (2003); *The 4th Gwangju Biennale*, Gwangju, South Korea (2002).

Jiang Zhi's catalogue includes *TREMBLE* (2010), *On The White* (2008), *Neurosis and Prattle* (2008), *Shine Upon Me* (2008), *Mu Mu* (1999).

Currently lives and works in Beijing and Shenzhen, China.

Education

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| 1971 | Born in Yuanjiang, China |
| 1995 | Graduated from China Academy of Fine Arts |

Solo Exhibitions

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| 2012 | <i>Strait is the Gate</i> (Magician Space, Beijing)
<i>Jiang Zhi : If This is a Man</i> (Times Museum, Guangzhou, Guangdong)
<i>Jiang Zhi, "Impure Light"</i> (Saamlung, Hong Kong)
<i>Jiang Zhi, "LOVE LETTERS"</i> (M97 Gallery, Shanghai, China) |
| 2011 | <i>A Thought Arises</i> (Shanghai Gallery of Art, Shanghai, China) |

- 2010 ATTITUDE 3 : An Exhibiton by Jiang Zhi (Platform China Contemporary Art Institute Beijing, China)
- 2010 Jiang Zhi – Temperature of the Nerve Endings (Tang Contemporary Art presents Bangkok, Thailand)
- 2010 TREMBLE: Solo Exhibition of Jiang Zhi (Magee Are Gallery. Madrid)
- 2009 ATTITUDE 2: An Exhibiton by Jiang Zhi (Osage Gallery, Kwun Tong, Hong Kong)
ATTITUDE 1 : An Exhibiton by Jiang Zhi (Osage Gallery, Shanghai, China)
“On The White”, Jiang Zhi Solo Exhibition (Osage Gallery, Singapore)
- 2008 “On The White”, Jiang Zhi Solo Exhibition (Osage Gallery, Kwun Tong, Hong Kong)

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2013 Contemporary Art of China, 1990-2012 (Zhong Gallery,)
Pessimism or Resistance ? (Taikang Space, Beijing, China)
Encounters -ART SANYA: 2013 (Sanya, Hainan, China)
Upcoming Exhibition: New Framework: Chinese Avant-garde Photography from 1980s-90s (Blindspot Gallery, Hong Kong)
U.F.O... an International Festival of Glocal Communication (Museum of Site (MOST) Hong Kong)
- 2012 The 9th Shanghai Biennale 2012 – Reactivation (Shanghai Art Museum, Shanghai, China)
The 4th Guangzhou Triennial-The Unseen (Guangdong Art Museum, Guangzhou, China)
- 2011 The Power of Doubt (Times Museum, Guangzhou, Guangdong)
Super-Organism CAFAM Biennale 2011 CAFA Art Museum, Beijing, China)
Moving Image in China: 1988-2011 (Min Sheng Art Museum, Shanghai, China)
The Shape of Time : The Multi-narrative History in Contemporary Chinese Art (Iberia Center for Contemporary Art (ICCA))
SH Contemporary 2011“Hot Spots” (Shanghai Exhibition Center (SEC))
Guanxi: Contemporary Chinese Art (Guang Dong Art Museum, Guangzhou, China)
The Power of Doubt- PHotoEspana (Museo Colecciones ICO)
Fabricator (Beijing SOKA Art Center)
- 2010 Beyond Memory: Contemporary Photography in China (CAFA Art Museum, Beijing, China)
From Modernity to Modernization: Media Art China since 1988 / the 3rd screening program (V2 3rd i project, MK gallery, Rotterdam)

- COMMUNITY OF TASTES : Chinese Contemporary Art since 2000 (Santiago Museum of the Contemporary Art (MAC))
Looking through Film: Traces of Cinema and Self-Constructs in Contemporary Art (OCT Contemporary Art Terminal (OCAT), China)
Jungle – A Close-Up Focus on Chinese Contemporary Art Trends (Platform ChinaBeijing, China)
- 2009 “Work in Progress: How Do Artists Work?” (**Iberia Center for Contemporary Art**, Beijing, China)
GETXOPHOTO Festival (Getxo, Spain)
Daily Rituals (Shanghai Gallery of Art, Shanghai, China)
"time versus fashion" (The Kunstverein Nürtingen art centre, Germany)
Blackboard -Group Exhibition (ShanghART H-Space, Shanghai)
The Tale of Angels (The Red Mansion Foundation, London, United Kingdom)
SPECTACLE-TO EACH HIS OWN (Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA Taipei)
Guangzhou Photo Biennial (Guang Dong Art Museum, Guangzhou, China)
Photo Beijing 2009 (National Agricultural Exhibition Center, Beijing, China)
TRAFFIC-Art Highway (Musée des beaux-arts et d'archéologie, Besancon, France)
- 2008 Drawn in the Clouds – Asian Contemporary Art (Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Helsinki, Finland)
Mediations Biennale 2008 (Poznan, Poland)
COLLECTIVE CONSCIENCE (The Carlton Studios, Melbourne, AUSTRALIA)
China Gold, Contemporary Chinese Art, (Museum of Maillol, Paris, France)
2D/3D: Negotiating Visual Languages (PKM Gallery, Beijing, China)
The Oriental Rainbow: An Index of Images in China's Urbanization Process (Magee Art Gallery, Madrid, Spain)
Guangzhou Station--Special Exhibition for Contemporary Art of Guangdong (Guangdong museum of art, Guang Zhou, China)
Building Code Violations (Long March Space, Beijing, China)
"THERE IS NO I IN TEAM" Contemporary Chinese Artists' Work (Civic Centre, Barras Bridge Newcastle upon Tyne, UK)
FOTOFEST 2008-CHINA: Photography from China 1934-2008, FotoFest Headquarters (Houston, USA)
La Cina e' Vicina- China Next Door (Palazzo delle Arti, Napoli, Italy)
- 2007 Shanghai Art Fair of International Contemporary Art Exhibition “Best Discovery Section” (Shanghai Exhibition Center, Shanghai, China)
China & India (Summerscene 2007, Salzburg, Austria)
NoNo: Self-curated exhibition of latest artworks by 11 individual artists (Long March Space, Beijing, China)
The New Literati (Osage Gallery, Singapore)
- 2006 The 5th International Ink Painting Biennial of Shenzhen (He Xiangning Museum of Art, Shenzhen, China)

- 2005 The 2nd Guangzhou Triennial of Art (Guang Dong Art Museum, Guangzhou, China)
 Berlin Asian-Pacific Film Festival (Berlin, Germany)
 5th Asian Film Symposium & Inaugural Forum on Asian Cinema (The
 Archaeology of the Future - The Second Triennial of Chinese Art (Nanjing, China)
 The 29th Hong Kong International Film Festival (Hong Kong, China)
 The 6th Asian Cinema Festival (France)
- 2004 21th World Wide Video Festival (The Netherlands)
 Between Past and Future: New Photography and Video from China (ICP and Asia
 Society, New York, USA)
 Shanghai Biennale - Techniques of the Visible (Shanghai Art Museum, Shanghai,
 China)
 The 22nd Turin Film Festival (Turin, Italy)
- 2003 Zone of Urgency: The 50th International Art Exhibition of the Biennale di Venezia
 (Venice, Italy)
 Remembering / Lifetime / Beijing (Tokyo Art Project, Beijing, China)
 The 10th Biennial of Moving Pictures (Geneva, Switzerland)
- 2002 The 4th Gwangju Biennale Exhibition (Gwangju, South Korea)
 The First Guangzhou Triennial of Art, Guangdong Art Museum (Guangzhou, China)