

Press release of 10 January 2014

Wenfeng Liao and Bignia Wehrli: «Sternenberg»

In their first joint exhibition, Wenfeng Liao and Bignia Wehrli present photographs, drawings and videos that are as much interwoven with the Chinese way of thinking as they are with Bignia Wehrli's home town of Sternenberg. While Liao explores man's interaction with his surroundings and the essence of things, Wehrli translates transient movements and everyday traces into images. The artists make hidden realities visible and allow the everyday to be viewed in a new light.

The starting point for the work of Chinese artist **Wenfeng Liao** (*1984) is the precise investigation of his social environment, to which he responds with subtle artistic gestures. For example, he lays a marbled stone from Sternenberg upon his heart and films how both move in tandem («My stone is my heart»). Almost as large as the artist's own heart, the stone appears to come to life through the latter's beating, bonding artist and place of origin. The arched bridge Liao has built over a stream appears almost idyllic until, at second glance, one realises that it is made of worn shoes («Bridge No. 1»). Only the artist's tracks mark his presence in this romantic-looking landscape but he connects what was previously apart and proves that sometimes – despite the circumstances – new ways can be found using the simplest of means. By adding his own imagination to a chosen context, Liao not only changes reality but opens up existing places, things and systems to new meanings and perceptions.

The Swiss artist **Bignia Wehrli** (*1979) already got to know China and its language as a child and studied art and calligraphy in Hangzhou. Encounters with the foreign and distant influence her work as much as the symbolism of Chinese characters and their closeness to painting. Similar to the many meanings of Chinese characters deciphered through reading, Wehrli's works often appear to be only coded marks or signs of hidden realities. For instance, a series of mysterious circular pictures resemble images of the moon. In actual fact, Wehrli has turned a pencil sharpener into a pinhole camera and let light pass through the tip onto photographic paper to form a quasi-miniature cosmos («The length of two pencils' light»). The invisible is also present in Wehrli's works. Whereas the imagination of the viewer supplements the invisible in Chinese landscapes, with Wehrli the invisible appears as an implied space behind the visible and can be reached only through the imagination. A shaky picture of the stars, for example, actually shows Wehrli's heartbeat, transferred via the camera on her chest to the stars in the viewfinder, their distant light producing a mystical photograph («The heart moves the stars»).

In their work, inspired by traditional Chinese thinking, Liao and Wehrli unite microcosm and macrocosm, man and nature, calmness and movement, emptiness and fullness in a harmony of opposites. With an inquisitive, critical and sometimes playful vision, they transform everyday places and subjects into poetic, surprising and inspirational images.

You and your friends are warmly invited to the exhibition preview on Thursday 23 January 2014, from 17.00 to 20.00. Wenfeng Liao und Bignia Wehrli will be present.

The exhibition runs from 24 January 2014 to 8 March 2014.

Opening hours: Wednesday to Friday 12.30 to 18.00, Saturday 11.00 to 14.00, or by appointment.

Closing event with two performances on Saturday 8 March 2014 at 14.00. Wenfeng Liao presents «Drilling Stars» and Bignia Wehrli «How much does the way from Hangzhou to Zurich weigh?».

Further information available from:

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Wenfeng Liao

Education

Since 2013 Postgraduate M.A. Course, Institut für Kunst im Kontext, Berlin University of the Arts (DE)
 2002 – 2006 Bachelor of Arts, Total Art Studio, China Academy of Art, Hangzhou (CN)

Solo exhibitions

2012 «Minute Gesture», OV Gallery, Shanghai (CN)
 2010 «1467+», Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research, Zurich (CH)

Selected group exhibitions

2013 «AUSSTELLUNG 8», GIZ-Haus Berlin (DE)
 «17ZWEI-A» Public Art Project, Hardbrücke, Zurich (CH)
 2012 «Time of the Dragon», Rauma Art Museum, Rauma (FI)
 «Hunters and Hunted», Villa Rot Museum, Burgrieden-Rot (DE)
 «N-Minute Video Festival», March Art, Shanghai (CN)
 2011 «Think Art – Act Science», The San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco (USA)
 «From Interaction to Micro-Sociology: The Dual Thread of Media Intervention into Art in
 The Netherlands and China», Art Issue Projects, Beijing (CN)
 2010 «Think Art – Act Science», Arts Santa Monica, Barcelona (ES)
 «SHANGSHUI-BOTH WAYS when art meets science», Stadtgalerie im PROGR, Bern (CH)
 2008 «Intrude: Art & Life 366», Zendai Museum of Modern Art, Shanghai (CN)
 2007 «The Third Lianzhou International Photo Festival», Lianzhou, Guangdong (CN)
 2006 «Chinese Contemporary Art in Chinese Space – Yellow Box», Qingpu, Xiaoximen,
 Shanghai (CN)
 «New Folk Movement – Reconstruction of The Public Life – Contemporary Art Exhibition
 of The Second Art Festival of Song Zhuang», U Space, Beijing (CN)
 2005 «Archaeology of the Future – The Second Triennial of Chinese Art», Nanjing Museum,
 Nanjing (CN)

Residency

2011 Helsinki International Artist-in-residence Programme (FI)
 2010 At the Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research (WSL), as part of
 the Artists-in-Labs programme, Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK), Zurich (CH)

Selected Works

1. Wenfeng Liao, *My stone is my heart*, 2011, still from video work, 1:39 min.
2. Wenfeng Liao, *Bridge No.1*, 2013, photograph, 80 x 80cm.
3. Wenfeng Liao, *Cyclic Fight*, 2013, drawing, 60 x 40 cm.
4. Wenfeng Liao, *Water Cutting*, 2013, animation, 1:19 min, silent.

Bignia Wehrli

Education

2007 – 2009 Master student of Monika Brandmeier, Academy of Fine Arts, Dresden (DE)
 2000 – 2005 Diploma of Fine Arts, Academy of Fine Arts, Dresden (DE)

Scholarships

2005 – 2007 Chinese government scholarship, calligraphy studies, China Academy of Art, Hangzhou (CN)
 2005 – 2006 DAAD graduate scholarship, Total Art Studio, China Academy of Art, Hangzhou (CN)
 2004 Erasmus scholarship, Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris (FR)

Solo exhibitions

2012 «TRIKLANG», together with the Dresden composer Peter Andreas, Lichthof im Sächsischen Ministerium der Finanzen, Dresden (DE)
 2011 «Von Heiletsegg bis Allenwinden», Projektraum am Weissen Hirsch, Dresden (DE)
 2009 «Laufschrift/ Berliner Alphabet», Art in Architecture project, degewo Wohnhaus Berlin (DE)

Selected group exhibitions

2013 «Dezember-Ausstellung: Überblick», Kunstmuseum and Kunsthalle Winterthur (CH)
 «AUSSTELLUNG 7», Berlin Art Junction, GIZ-Haus Berlin (DE)
 2012 «Pavillon Visionnaire», Benin Biennale, Porto Novo (BJ)
 «Ausbeute 2012. Regionales Kunstschaffen», Kunst(Zeug)Haus, Rapperswil (CH)
 «Shoe Fetish», Dada Post, Berlin (DE)
 «Reading Distractions», with Evgenija Wassilew, Das Gift, Berlin (DE)
 «Via Padova Altrove», with Anna Forlati and Carrozzeria Margot, Bureau for Art Nerds (Swiss Institute), Milan (IT)
 2011 «Artist in Transit», Kunsthalle am Hamburger Platz, Berlin (DE)
 «Why We Walk: Wit and Meanderings», 91mQ Art project space, Berlin (DE)
 «SEEING THINGS», Kleine Humboldt Galerie, Berlin (DE)
 «Collecting Identities: I stay therefore we are», a project by Collezione di Carrozzeria Margot, Oslo Pavilion, Venice Biennale, Venice (IT)
 «, claque!» with Evgenija Wassilew and Judith Karcheter, Berlin (DE)
 «Invisible City», Southern Railway Station, Shanghai (CN)
 2010 «Ab Januar bis dann. Fabio. Eine Geschichte in Postkarten», performance/reading with Judith Karcheter and Judith Hampel, Theater am Gleis, Winterthur (CH)
 «Achtung frisch gestrickt», Textilmuseum St. Gallen (CH)
 2009 «Helen and Bright», SchaltER, Berlin (DE)
 2008 «Intrude: Art & Life 366», Zendai Museum of Modern Art, Shanghai (CN)
 «Imagination Transfers», Longmarch Space, Beijing (CN)
 «BrandKlasseMeier», group exhibition at Künstlerhaus Dortmund (DE)
 2006 «Moving Studio 2», part of the Four Cultures Festival, Lodz (PL)
 2005 «Fluchtpunkt», action at Dresden Airport in cooperation with Svea Duwe, Dresden (DE)
 2004 «Camminare sui capelli», group exhibition «Impermanence – the fragility of time», Scuola Grande di S. G. Evangelista, Venice (IT)
 2002 «Reflexionen», installation as part of the PALMHAUS-Project for premieres of contemporary classical music, Schloss Pillnitz, Dresden (DE)

Selected Works

1. Bignia Wehrli, *The heart moves the stars*, 2013, photograph, 39 x 60 cm.
2. Bignia Wehrli, *The Length of Two Pencils' Light*, 2012, photographic series.
3. Bignia Wehrli, *Auf die Tanne gehen/The trace of my hands and feet ascending a pine tree*, 2013, photograph, dimensions variable.