



Time Within Wenhua Shi

Curated By
Joonhee Park

Sense(s) of Time	[2018]
Waveline	[2016]
Wish You Were Here	[2019]
Water Walk	[2016]
Fishing, Those Who Are Willing to Hook	[2015]

JAN. 18. 2019 - FEB. 16. 2019
Walford Art Gallery
Wheaton College
Wheaton, IL

Acknowledgements

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Wish You Were Here was made possible in part with support from Joseph P. Healey Research Grant at UMass Boston.

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Exhibition View: Sense(s) of Time
Screen 1/4

Time Within

by LU Yangqiao (2019)

Wenhua Shi's intrepid image-making has taken him from the terrain of analog poetics to the frontier of virtual reality, engaging with a wide array of mechanisms and aesthetic possibilities. True to form, the five projects in exhibition *Time Within* take on five different media: 16mm film, video, VR, video game, and realtime computer generative video installation. One unifying characteristic of the five pieces is a surprising union of Zen mind and frolic gesture. This manifests as an engagement with the mundane and the minimal that goes beyond a respite from the sensory assault of modern media culture to search for unexpected epiphanies and discoveries of hidden delights.



Sense(s) of Time
Screen 2/4

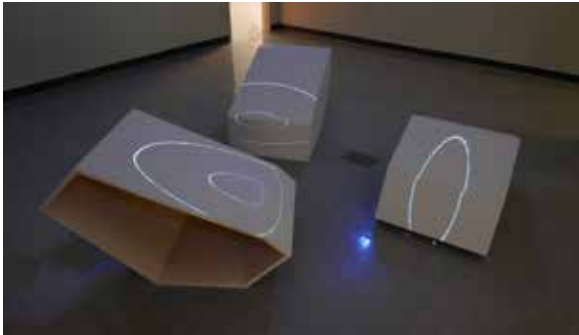
All shot on 16mm film, *Sense(s) of Time* (2018) is Shi's love song to the basic cinematic material: light, grain, texture, rhythm, and flickering of the screen. This four-channel projection displays images that are ostensibly simple: wooden panels, windows covered with rain drops and fog, a soccer ball wearing snow, a toy appearing and disappearing on the floor as the lighting changes throughout a day... Shi's intense attention to the texture of daily object evokes the contemplative eye and meticulous composition of avant-garde masters such as Nathaniel Dorsky and Peter Hutton. Everything is touched by a transcendental filmic light that transforms the extreme banality to sublimity while accelerated speed releases the invisible energy of earthly elements. The visual artist in Shi calmly follows the



Wall: Sense(s) of Time
Screen 2/4 & Screen 3/4
Front: Waveline

immanent sensuality of minimal imagery, and the sound artist in him avidly orchestrates the music of lyrical landscape.

Shi's landscape takes on a more abstract life in *Water Walk* (2016 - 2018) where two GoPro cameras are strapped onto two paddles as a local boatwoman rows from one side of the East Lake (Wuhan, China) to another. Although the boatwoman is operating the paddles, the result is similar to a mechanized vision. Clouds and the sun are devoured by bubbles and green tinted water again and again as the cameras move in and out of the water. Footage is played on two facing monitors, synced so that the two paddling actions alternate. In order to enter the work, viewers must surrender their expectations of



Waveline

mimetic vision and viewing engagement to the agency of moving image to engage senses.

Growing up near Yangtze River, Shi has a profound taste for water. The shapeless and colorless material has provided him with infinite impetus for imagination. In *Wave Line* (2016 - 2019), the computer generates wavelike lines and project them onto geometric objects as if rain drops are falling onto rocks. His video game *Fishing, Those Who Are Willing to Hook* (2016), is more of a counter game. Using gesture recognition technology, it challenges the player to be patient and still. The sound of water in *Water Walk* sets up a hypnotic aural stage for *Wave Line* and *Fishing*.... Meanwhile, the geometric objects in *Wave Line* also evoke

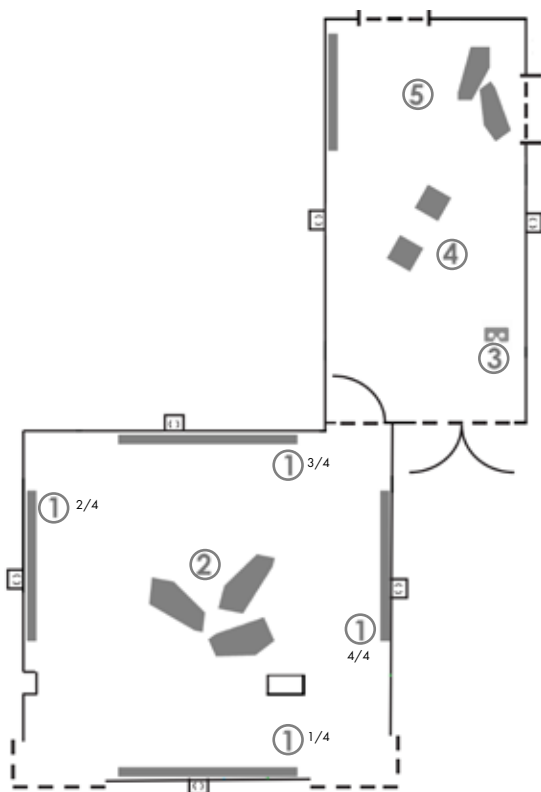


Back: Fishing...
Middle: Water Walk
Front Right: Wish You Were Here

the kind of ancient Chinese rockery that comes to mind when one visualizes an ancient Chinese allegory like the one *Fishing...* is based on. Such connections might be unpronounced but are not lost to the discerning eye. Together, they form a playful phenomenological study of water.

Characteristically, Shi's 360 video VR project *Wish You Were Here* (2018 – ongoing) does not aim to engage or entertain with sensational scenarios. Instead, it situates the viewer in mundane settings while quietly putting forth specific and subtle attributes of the medium. Take the table tennis scene for example. The first thing one sees upon entrance is two men playing table tennis while some others idly chat on the side. Nothing spectacular is happening in this

Walford Galleries



- ① Sense(s) of Time
- ② Waveline
- ③ Wish You Were Here
- ④ Water Walk
- ⑤ Fishing, Those Who Are Willing to Hook



Wall: Sense(s) of Time
Screen 4/4
Left: Water Walk

community room, so you embark on your own observation adventure. Looking around, you find on the opposite side of the room a framed photo is partially blocked by a wall. When you want to walk over to see the photo in its entirety, you realize the reality is virtual and you cannot move. VR operates according to a whole new set of narrative and technical guidelines that differentiate it from conventional filmic experience. Its immersion is like an invisibility cloak that lets the viewer be a ghost in the given space. You are there, you see everything, but nobody sees you. In this revelatory moment, Shi exposes the boundary of the medium and the illusory nature of its experiential authenticity. The viewer is reminded of his passivity in relation to a work of art that, after all, is a construct.

Photo by Gregory Deddo

Sense(s) of Time

時間感





Sense(s) of Time

時間感

Senses of Time depicts the lyrical and poetic passage of time. The work reflects on time and focuses on defining subjective and perceptual time with close attention to stillness, decay, disappearance, and ruins.







4-Channel Video Installation

16mm to HD, Silent, Color

14 minutes Video Loop

Live Performance Version

16mm to HD, Sound, Color

60 minutes

Sound by

Xu Cheng (Shanghai)

Sun Wei (Chendu)

Theatrical Version

16mm, Sound, Color

13 minutes 48 seconds

Part I Prelude: Die Nacht (The Night)

Music by Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

Liz Bouk, mezzo-soprano

Markus Syperek, piano

Part II: Morgen (Tomorrow)

Music by Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

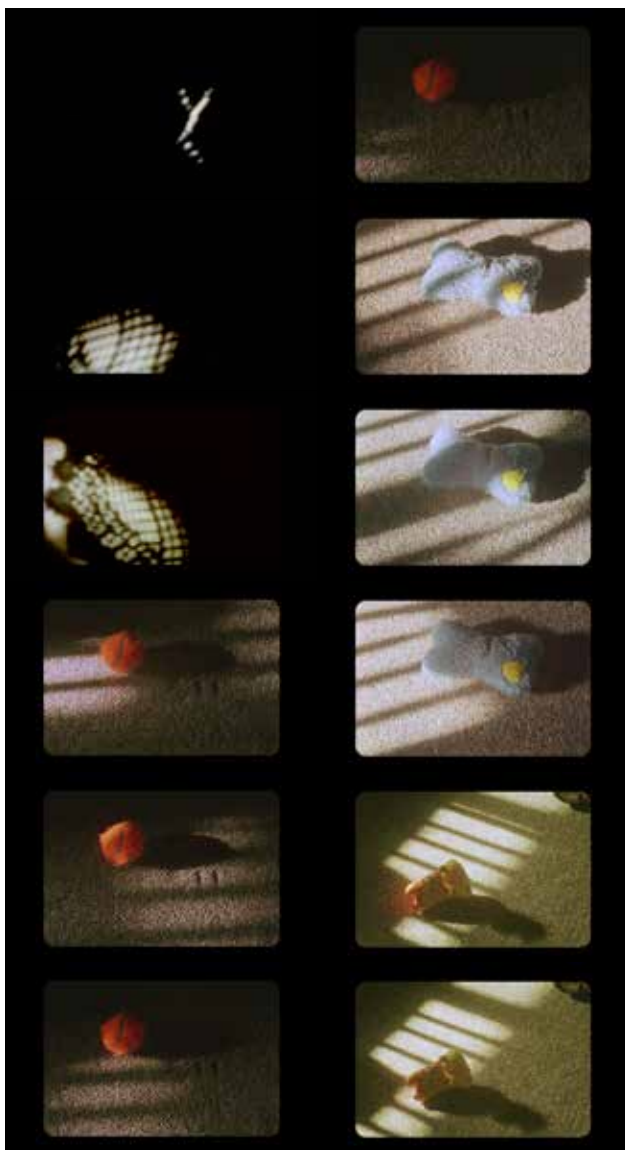
Liz Bouk, mezzo-soprano

Markus Syperek, piano

Part III: Sense of Time

Sound by Dajun Yao





Die Nacht
The Night
Hermann von Gilm (1812-1864)

Aus dem Walde tritt die Nacht,
Out of the forest comes the night,
Aus den Bäume schleicht sie leise,
out of the trees it sneaks softly,
Schaut sich um in weitem Kreise, nun gib acht.
it looks around in a wide circle - watch out.

Alle lichter dieser Welt, alle Blumen,
All the lights of this world, all the flowers,
Alle Farben löscht sie aus
all the colors leave
Und stiehlt die Garben weg vom Feld.
and it steals the sheaves away from the field.

Alles nimmt sie, was nur hold,
It steals all that is dear,
Nimmt das Silber weg des Stroms,
steals the silver of the streams,
Nimmt vom Kupferdach des Doms
steals the color from the church's roof,
Weg das Gold.
steals the gold.

Ausgeplündert steht der Strauch,
Plundered stand the shrubs,
Rücke näher, Seel' an Seele;
draw nearer, soul to soul;
O die Nacht, mir bangt,
oh, the night, I fear
Sie stehle dich mir auch.
it will steal you away from me.

Translation by Liz Bouk



Morgen

Tomorrow

John Henry Mackay (1864-1933)

And tomorrow the sun will shine again,
Und morgen wird die Sonne wieder scheinen
and on the path, I will take
Und auf dem Wege, Den ich gehen werde,
it will unite us lucky ones again
Wird uns, die Glücklichen, sie wieder einen
on this sun-breathing earth.
Inmitten dieser sonnenatmenden Erde...

And to the shore, the wide, wave-blue one,
Und zu dem Strand, dem weiten, wogenblauen,
we will be quiet and slowly descend together,
Werden wir still und langsam niedersteigen.
Dazed, we will look in each other's eyes
Stumm, werden wir uns in die Augen schauen,
and on us will sink the silence of happiness.
Und auf uns sinkt des Glückes stummes Schweigen.

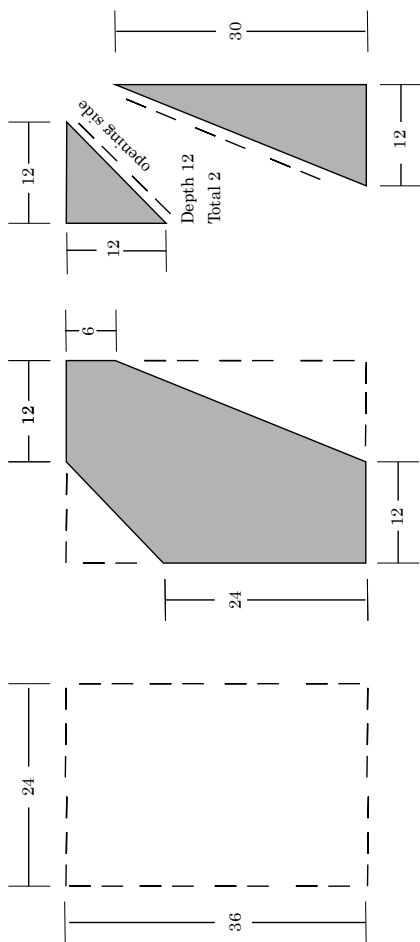
Translation by Liz Bouk

時間感



Waveline

波形線



Hexagonal Prism Plane Section



Waveline

波形線

Computer Generated Installation

Software: Processing, Madmapper

Custom Made Wooden Hexagonal Prism(s)

Data Projector, Mac-mini

Waveline is a computer simulation of water dripping, which refers to the old Chinese idiom of water wearing away stone (滴水穿石).

Rock, especially the scholar's rock (Gongsi 供石), is shaped by the force of nature, is often featured as one of the important subjects in traditional Chinese paintings. *Waveline* reflects on this practice in the digital age.

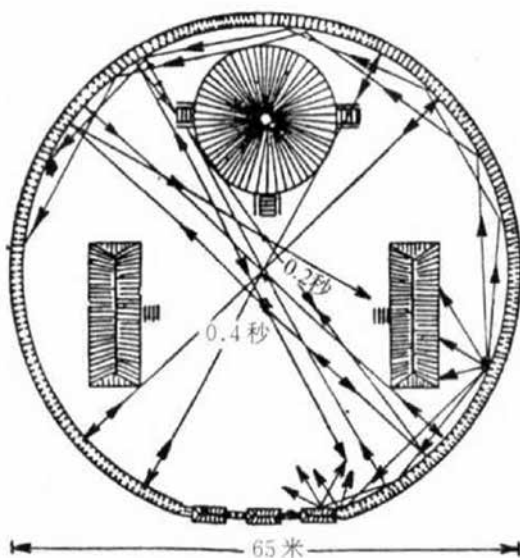




Hexagonal Prism made by Gregory Deddo

Wish You Were Here

回音壁



Echo Wall Sonic Principle Diagram



Wish You Were Here

回音壁

VR & Video Installation

Unity, Ricoh Theta V, Oculus Go

Unity Programming by Haikun Huang

Originally, *Wish You Were Here* was inspired by the ancient Temple of Heaven, which is a traditional site for the ritual and praying for the good of the community. It is also famous for its circular surrounding structure, Echo Wall. Small whispers are able to bounce across the yard to reach the other side. This immersive experience can be recreated with virtual reality (VR). The VR part of the project has expanded and captured the artist's own living space and his surrounding city spaces using a 360 degree camera. An echo is suspended and moves through space separated from its original origin and this work reflects the artists feeling of floating in two different cultures.



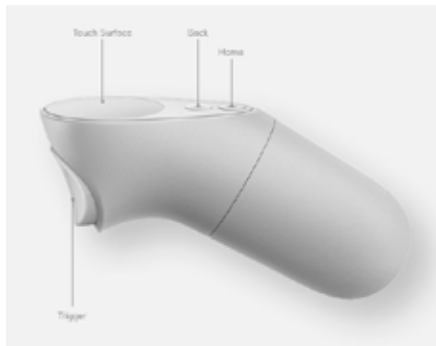


360 degree Panorama images



Technical Instructions for Gallerists

- Turn on Oculus Go: the On or Off button is on the top of the headset. Hold for 2 seconds to turn on/off the gear. The button on the left is the volume control.
- Set the orientation of the controller and headset using your right hand to hold on to the controller, while looking through the viewfinder. Hold on to the set button for 3 seconds to complete the orientation, which is the last button on the top of the controller. The dialogue box will guide you through the orientation reset. The other side of the controller is a trigger.
- Enter the Oculus Go main Menu. You will see all menu items appear on the bottom of the screen through the viewfinder.
- Select Item Library by pointing the controller to the item and clicking the trigger, Then navigate to a left pull down App Menu and select Unknown Source
- Select VideoPlayer360, then the project Main Interface will display.
- Now you the headset and controller is ready.



Oculus Go Controller Diagram

Instruction for the audience

- The controller: please use your right hand to hold the controller with the flat surface with two buttons on the upside.
- The trigger (the button on the opposite side) is the one that you will use the most.
- The large circle button can be used as a selection tool. The middle button with a left arrow sign is a return button.
- The last button with an O sign is a back button and will also help you set the orientation (front) of the headset.
- Point the controller to the project logo and click the trigger to enter the project
- You will see several icons, such as ping pong pads, a piece of Stone, a Steam cooker, etc.
- if you point to a grey area near the icons, you can use a left and right swift motion with the large circle selection tool to navigate across all the icons. In total there are nine icons.
- Point at the icon and click the trigger button to enter the panorama view of the scene(s).
- Each panorama scene has at least one hidden button. You can move around and look through the viewfinder to find those hidden entrances.
- Once you find one, point at the hidden entrance and you will see a short 360 video of that scene.
- Push the exit icon to return to the panorama scene.
- Point to the 9 cubes button to return the icon selection menu.

Water Walk

水上行舟



Production Stills by Li Juchuan



Water Walk

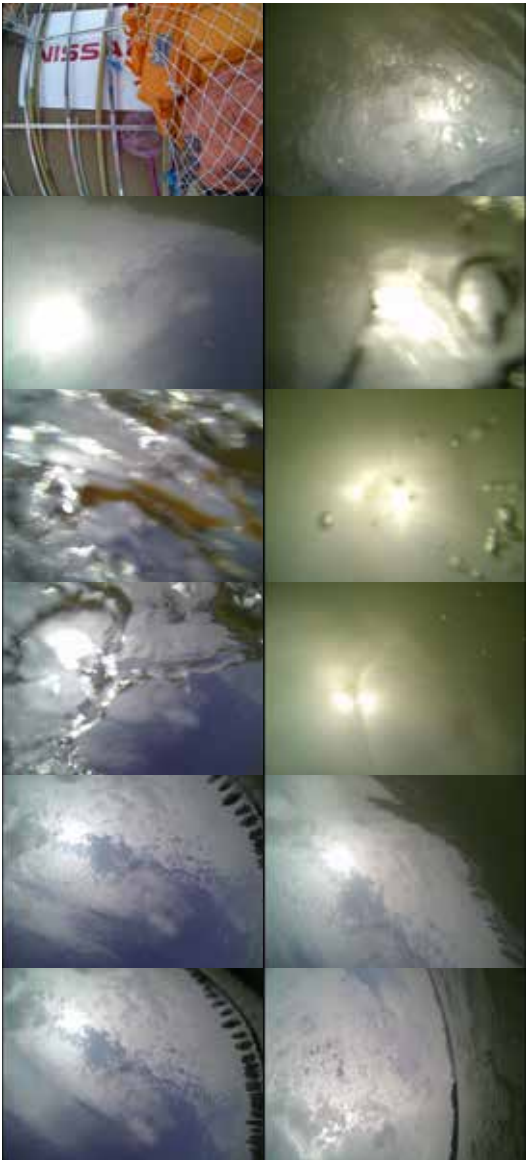
水上行舟

2 Channel Video Installation

GoPro Cameras, CRT Monitors, Media Players

Row the Boat
White Pagoda in the Distance
Floats Gently
A Breeze Blowing

Water Walk is a trip down memory lane, based on the lyrics of a 1950's Chinese children's pop tune. This piece, a two channel video installation, was created with two single long takes, shot with two goPro cameras mounted on boat paddles as they are rowed on East Lake. The piece attempts to bring the issue of radical city development into focus. The high value lakefront real-estate is the driving force in shrinking the lake area while industrial pollution is still present. The children's song is a stark contrast to the realities of urban transformation.



Left CRT Monitor



Right CRT Monitor

Fishing, Those Who Are Willing to Hook

太公釣魚



Fishing, Those Who Are Willing to Hook is a slow-paced conceptual game addressing the temptation new-media devices present. The game is inspired by a 3000 year-old Chinese proverb about Jiang Ziya. He would patiently fish in an unusual way by hanging a straight fishhook, without bait, three feet above the water tempting the fish to take the bait. This peculiar style finally



Fishing, Those Who Are Willing to Hook

太公釣魚

Computer Game Installation

Software: Processing, Madmapper

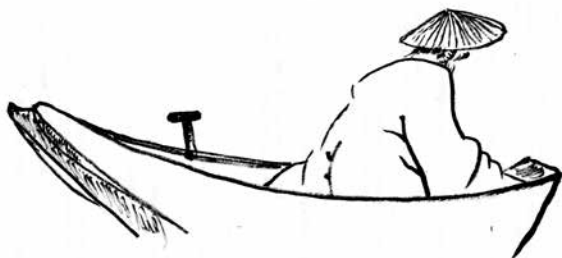
Custom Made Wooden Hexagonal Prism(s)

Data Projector, Mac-mini, Leap Motion

Programmer: Sak Lee



caught the Duke's attention and Jiang Ziya was invited to the court and ended up managing the estate. Today, people use this old idiom to describe someone who willingly falls into a trap or does something without minding the result. Unlike most computer games, Fishing, Those Who Are Willing to Hook is defined by its long duration and the players' motionlessness.



Fishing, those who are willing to hook

Game concept sketch
Ink on paper

Instructions

Start: Place one finger 5 inches over the black square.

Paddle: Use your fingertip to direct the red or blue dot over the boat. Gently move your fingertip to drive the boat towards the water spirals.

Fishing: Hold your fingertip at the center of the boat.

Scoring: Jiang Ziya only caught one fish, I hope you can catch more.



Photo by Mark Williams



Wenhua Shi

Assistant Professor of Art
College of Liberal Art
UMass-Boston

Wenhua Shi pursues a poetic approach to moving image making, and investigates conceptual depth in film, video, interactive installations and sound sculptures. His work has been presented at museums, galleries, and film festivals, including International Film Festival Rotterdam, European Media Art Festival, Ann Arbor Film Festival, Athens Film and Video Festival, Pacific Film Archive, West Bund 2013: a Biennale of Architecture and Contemporary art, Shanghai, Shenzhen & Hong Kong Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism, and the Arsenale of Venice in Italy. He has received awards including the New York Foundation for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, and Juror's Awards from the Black Maria Film and Video Festival.

Yangqiao Lu

Independent programmer, freelance writer, and former Associate Director of the Brattle Theatre, Yangqiao Lu holds an M.A. in Cinema and Audiovisual Studies from Université Sorbonne Nouvelle - Paris 3 and an M.A. in Arts Administration from the Ohio State University. She has extensive experience working in the film community in the U.S. and China, from assisting researchers in the library of Anthology Film Archives during her student years to working on the final edit with Zhao Liang on *Behemoth* in Beijing and programming the films of Chinese experimental filmmaker Sandy Ding for Balagan film series in Boston. Currently, she lives in Cambridge and writes in Chinese and English on the art of cinema and moving image. Her writings can be found in ArtForum China, Brooklyn Rail, and LEAP magazine.

Joonhee Park

Associate Professor Joonhee Park joined Wheaton College in the Fall of 2008 to teach New Media and Digital Cinema. He studied Film Studies at Hanyang University, Seoul, Korea and received the M.F.A degree in Film Production from Ohio University.

Joonhee worked as a military intelligence officer, commercial film producer, and film professor before joining the Wheaton College Art and Communication faculty. Films he directed and contributed to have been screened worldwide at festivals from Croatia to New York. As an active filmmaker and media artist, his research interests lie in visual storytelling, personal media and digital art.

Xu Cheng

Xu Cheng is a sound artist based in Shanghai. Cheng works with varied forms of sound-art: installations, music, performances. In 2012, *Scape-Sequencer*, a A/V work for Live performance of Cheng won the Award of Distinction in Prix Ars Electronica in Austria. He is the founder of "play rec" -- a sound-art/electronic music label in China.

Nicky Ni

David Gracon

Sun Wei

Sun Wei is an artist who uses sound and installations as sampling carriers. Its creation involves the field recording of environmental soundscapes, live performances, and environmental sound installations. He has been featured and performed in experimental events in China.

Liz Bouk

Dajuin Yao

Ph.D. ABD, and M.A. from the Department of the History of Art, U.C., Berkeley. Currently professor of Art and the director of Open Media Lab at the China Academy of Art, Hangzhou, China.

For decades, Dajuin has been promoting experimental music through radio shows, websites and teaching. He has curated large-scale international new media events since 1990's. In 1997 Dajuin founded China Sound Unit, which is devoted to documenting and recontextualizing Chinese urban sound phenomena with a series of recordings, performances and installations. Each installation covers one city and makes use of various historical, spatial and aural analogies. Dajuin is also the producer of the sound art record label Post-Concrete. He has developed full curricula in sound art in China and Taiwan, which never existed before. His work crosses over sound art, installation art, net art, and performance, and has been performed, shown and released worldwide.

Shi Sheng

Yan Zhou

L I K E
W A V E S
A G A I N S T
T H E
S A N D

An audiovisual performance by Shi Wenhua
Saturday, January 26, 5–7 p.m.

LITHIUM
1502 S Halsted, Suite 200 Chicago, IL 60608



Touring Screenings

Like Waves Against the Sand

Curated by Nicky Ni, Yan Zhou, Shi Zheng

Saturday, January 26, 2019

Lithium Gallery

1932 S Halsted, Suite 200

Chicago, IL

Sense(s) of Time

Hallways Microcinema

Curated by David Gracon

Sunday, January 27, 2019

Urbana-Champaign

Independent Media Center

202 S. Broadway Ave

Urbana, IL

LITHIUM is a Chicago-based gallery in favor of thought-provoking audiovisual art that includes duration as a dimension and unfolds over time.

Hallways Microcinema

Since 2013 Hallways Microcinema has been a do-it-yourself (DIY) space located at an undisclosed location in downtown Champaign, Illinois. This underground venue hosted semi-regular screenings of hard to find experimental and documentary film and video works; ambient and experimental music; poetry readings, performance art and lectures far outside of the academy and traditional art institutions. David Gracon is the primary programmer (although the space was always open to collaboration and others also pitched events) and host of Hallways Microcinema. To date 22 events have been programmed.

The Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center is a grassroots organization committed to using media production and distribution as tools for promoting social and economic justice in the Champaign County area.