

IDA Projects presents 'The Vernacular Terrain'

By Benjamin Milton Hampe

Established in 1999, IDA Projects is the first Tri-Asian centric platform exhibiting, disseminating, and researching cross-cultural identity through creative technologies. More than forty artists world wide including Australia, China and Japan were invited in 2007 to respond to its curatorial directive exploring environmental, cultural, and political place. IDA Projects Director, Stephen Danzig explains the process behind curating 'The Vernacular Terrain':

"We asked each artist to respond to their environment as an open statement. Is it possible to speak of local dialects of the terrain? Are the artists presenting specific viewpoints of the landscape within a contextual language? What are the influences of hyper-techno landscapes found in virtual worlds, gaming, cellular technologies, web culture and so on? What we see in this exhibition is an eclectic view of our world. These artists engage in interdisciplinary practices and hybrid processes that go beyond any single art form."

'The Vernacular Terrain' features new media works from important Australian artists including David Rosetzky, James Lynch, Brendan Lee, Magda Matwiejew and Monika Tichacek. Also included is Chris Barker's experimental software that allows anamorphic projections to blend seamlessly with any surface structure. Drawing comparisons with the Baroque period, Barker blends perspective with architecture, sculpture and painting to produce optical illusions. The ambient, projector-based, artwork has been generated from current trends in three-dimensional computer graphics and photogrammetric research. His work seeks to create a new way of seeing and has the potential to revolutionise these areas of technology while reflecting the long-standing tradition of combining art and science epitomised by the Renaissance.

One of the great film directors of our time, Peter Greenaway from the UK, with Hungarian artist Istvan Horkay will premier six new cinematic works from their epic 'Bolzano Gold/Tulse Luper Suitcases Project' in 'The Vernacular Terrain' exhibition. Steve Danzig recently spoke with Greenaway and Horkay at the Beijing Film Academy:

"Much has already been written about Peter Greenaway the filmmaker, however there is more to him than that. He is an academic, a maker of curious artefacts, a cataloguer of the bizarre and a librarian of the absurd; he originally trained as a painter and is heavily influenced by theories of structural linguistics, ethnography, and philosophy."

Acclaimed French artist Michael Roulier will present his continuous self-editing video *Sub-memory check*.

UK artist Ben Hibon will present his award winning, post-apocalyptic short 'Codehunters'. Premiering at the MTV Asia Awards in 2006, his short combines the best of Eastern and Western animated styles, with fluid visuals complementing this brief glimpse of an intense, dystopic vision. He explores different aspects of the 'Codehunters' world through the lives of characters derived from aspects of Burmese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Thai, and Malay culture. Hibon sets the stage with:

"The port city of Lhek is on the brink of collapse. A Pacific Rim state in a not too distant Asian future with no borders, no meaningful government and little law and order...."

Two of China's foremost contemporary photomedia artists will feature in this year's print exhibition are Maleonn and Cui xuiwen.

Maleonn has emerged as a major cultural figure in Shanghai having developed his unique visual style as a video director. His 'Midsummer Night's Dream' photomedia are elaborate tableaux settings drawing on historical references with contemporary concerns. He explores the evolution of Chinese identity by which contemporary influences intersect with historical

currents. The works are at once playful and macabre and juxtapose widespread feelings of dislocation and unease at the pace of change in today's China. Commenting on his work, Maleonn said:

"My photography...is just like life: unpredictable and full of hints, but no answers.... We [younger-generation of Chinese artists] are trying to understand the deeper meaning of our culture."

Cui Xuiwen is an internationally acclaimed Chinese contemporary artist whose early reputation began with painting and screen acting. Her 'Angel' series of large scale photographs explore the plight of a pregnant, young Chinese girl. The repetitious image of the same young female speaks of hidden social and political structures in a patriarchal society. Her work has dual readings that could be commenting on the government's 'one child' policy' or a deeper investigation of existing political and power structures.

'The Vernacular Terrain' opens at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Art Museum (Photomedia) 1 August, QUT Creative Industries The Block Gallery (New Media) 28 August. International shows include Zaim Art Space (Yokohama, Japan) 23 July 2007, Beijing Film Academy and Songzhuag Art Museum (Beijing, China) 15 November 2007.

To find out more about IDA Projects there website can be found at:
www.internationaldigitalart.com