WU TSANG

Μέτοικε

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Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi is pleased to present Wu Tsang's third solo exhibition at the gallery, bringing together two moving-image and multichannel sound installations *On our way to the general strike* (2026) and *La gran mentira de la muerte* [The big lie of death] (2024). Together, the works form a culmination of multiyear research into the expanded myth of Carmen — a complex figure once popularized by Georges Bizet's 1875 opera, who has haunted over a century of music, stage, and cinema. This body of work reflects Tsang's iterative, exhaustive practice of returning to stories that transcend our time and geography.

For nearly a decade, Wu Tsang has pursued an expansive study of Carmen, in collaboration with poet Fred Moten and the interdisciplinary collective Moved by the Motion. Drawn to the mythological dimensions of Bizet's tragic four-act opera, set in southern Spain, her research developed further through a multiyear residency at Schauspielhaus Zürich, and through collaboration with BNV Producciones and a wider community of flamenco artists in Seville. Long drawn to ways of being that elude control and confinement, Tsang treats Carmen's myth, musicality, and shifting subjectivity as a fundamental, unresolved question — one that circles back to an enduring desire to forge new narratives and mythologies for our own lives.

The newest work, a video essay titled *On our way to the general strike* (2026), assembles a montage that traces the protagonist's circulation between stage and screen, popular imagination and historical record. A chorus in the film asks, "How do you get a figure that stands in for both the commune and the individuated interiority?" For Tsang and her collaborators, Carmen embodies this doubleness — at once collective symbol and singular subject, endlessly sourced, cited, and reinvented across time and place. Their fascination with the figure ultimately leads not to a definitive portrait but to an abandonment of character and plot in favor of collaboration itself: Carmen becomes an allegory, a vessel through which storytelling, filmmaking, politics, and art can be focused and unfocused anew.

La gran mentira de la muerte (2024) translates this research into an encounter with the performative worlds of flamenco and bullfighting. Conceived for MACBA's gothic Capella in Barcelona and co-produced by TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Hartwig Art Foundation, and the National Gallery of Victoria, the film and multichannel sound installation considers how Carmen, flamenco, bullfighting, and cinema each stage death as spectacle and ritual. Real and imagined forms of mortality become entangled with the act of looking, implicating the spectator within the cultural and cinematic traditions through which violence is rehearsed, aestheticised, and enacted.

Together, these two installations contribute to a broader body of work in which Tsang has returned to Carmen across opera-theatre, film, sound, and live performance, reflecting the artist's truly interdisciplinary practice. These iterations include the opera-theatre production Carmen, created with Moved by the Motion and presented at Schauspielhaus Zürich and the Holland Festival, as well as a series of Compositions presented at Tate Modern and Festival D'Automne Paris, and strike, a multidisciplinary live improvisation commissioned by NTGent Theatre. Across the exhibition, Tsang treats the archive not as a repository of stable meanings but as material to be inhabited, displaced, and recomposed. Foregrounding Carmen's resistance to capture, the two installations ask how inherited narratives might be undone — and how new mythologies and forms of collective life might emerge in their place.