



Ullens Center for
Contemporary Art
尤伦斯当代艺术中心

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Exhibition Dates:

21 August – 19 October 2015

Exhibition Venue:

Long Gallery

Press material also available for
download from the UCCA website

New Directions: Tao Hui

Released on 20 August 2015

Drawing from folklore and films of his childhood, Tao Hui creates immersive video-installations bending boundaries of fiction and reality.

On August 21, the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) presents “New Directions: Tao Hui,” a solo exhibition composed of three works, new and existing, that through narrative structure and performance take viewers on an emotionally charged journey to an otherworldly realm.

Filmed in an abandoned building *The Acting Tutorial* convenes a troupe of amateur actors in the rehearsal of extreme scenarios—a violent break up, a house fire, intense labor pain. Under the teacher’s cool direction, their howls and hysteria are a cathartic exercise reminiscent of the Moreno school of psychotherapy. As the narrative continues, imaginative limits are breached and a brutal reality is exposed as the actors viciously burn a fallen comrade. Here Tao Hui uses a low budget means to achieve the effect, drawing attention to the scene’s artifice.

In *1 Character & 7 Materials*, viewers can use wireless headphones to listen to an exhausted narrator retell her life’s story. Fleeing her small village for the city, the young woman, in spite of her tenacity, gradually grows nostalgic. A torrid love affair with her music student results in one child and a failed marriage. Unable to bear the consequences, she ends her life on the banks of a river. Tao Hui here places an empty pavilion in the exhibition space equipped with a microphone hinting that the recording of her “real life” experiences eventuated in her premeditated end. A large screen toggles among disparate and outlandish narrative scenes, including a group of ethnic minorities standing in a grave during a storm, a corpse interviewer, and an immortal riding a yacht at the center of a river. The juxtaposition of these images plays on the viewer’s imagination in an installation that through video and sound creates an immersive psychological experience.

In the multi-channel video installation *Excessive*, Tao Hui again draws viewers in with a narrative of conflict. A young girl’s extra finger causes enormous grief in her family, leading her to cut it off with a kitchen knife and burn it to ashes. Here, Tao Hui eliminates the backdrop of each scene, leaving only the characters with a few props. This technique brings emphasis to the actors within the piece. In the exhibition space, Tao Hui leaves a decorative box housing the ashes of the incinerated finger with a screen at the back projecting the act of the burning. These physical annotations allow the artworks to transgress the virtual into the real.



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In “New Directions: Tao Hui,” each story is a highly plausible scenario in contemporary China, and Tao Hui’s visual language mimics the familiar style of Chinese soap operas, responding to the visual culture specific to an era while unwaveringly questioning the boundaries of fiction. Having grown up in a mountain village surrounded by verbal transmissions of folklore and tales of bizarre happenings that befell his neighbors and friends, Tao Hui’s experiences cast an eerie shadow over his work, revealing the strangeness of reality.

About the Exhibition

New Directions: Tao Hui, the second installment of the New Directions series, is accompanied by a monograph supported by Post Wave Publishing Consulting with essays contributed by Yang Zi and Yung Ma. The new media art production partner is CP Denmark and WTi Group. Exclusive sponsorship of sound equipment comes from GENELEC. New Directions is initiated by UCCA Director Philip Tinari. “New Directions: Tao Hui” is curated by Felicia Chen.

About the Artist

Tao Hui (b. 1987, Yunyang) received a BFA from the oil painting department of Sichuan Fine Arts Institute in 2010 and is currently based in Beijing. He has received the “2008 Contemporary Art Special Mention” from the Sichuan Fine Arts Institute. He has been invited to submit work to the 18th and 19th editions of Sesc_Videobrasil, São Paulo. His solo exhibitions include “1 Character & 7 Materials” (AIKE-DELLARCO, Shanghai 2015). Group exhibitions featuring his work include “Essential Matters—Moving Images from China” (Borusan Contemporary, Istanbul, 2015) and “UP-YOUTH, China Young Artists Exhibition” (Times Art Museum, Beijing, 2014).

About New Directions

New Directions is an ongoing series of project-based exhibitions by young artists from Greater China. Planned for an initial run of ten periodic installments, the series offers a platform for artists to realize a first institutional solo exhibition and bilingual monograph. Building on UCCA’s longstanding commitment to emerging practices, pioneered by shows including “ON | OFF: China’s Young Artists in Concept and Practice” (2013), “Breaking Forecast” (2009), and the **Curated By...** series (2010-2012), New Directions aims both to broaden the institutional exhibition system for new art in China today, and to highlight its richness and complexity for audiences in Beijing and beyond.

About the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art

The Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) is an independent, not-for-profit art center

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serving a global Beijing public. Located at the heart of Beijing's 798 Art District, it was founded by the Belgian collectors Guy and Myriam Ullens and opened in November 2007. Through a diverse array of exhibitions with artists Chinese and international, established and emerging, as well as a wide range of public programs, UCCA aims to promote the continued development of the Chinese art scene, foster international exchange, and showcase the latest in art and culture to hundreds of thousands of visitors each year.

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