

Empty Gallery  
3 Yue Fung Street  
18th & 19th Floor  
Tin Wan, Hong Kong

## *Shocking Asia*

C. Spencer Yeh

December 9, 2017 - February 10, 2018

Empty Gallery is pleased to present *Shocking Asia*, New York based artist C. Spencer Yeh's first solo exhibition in Hong Kong. For this exhibition, Yeh has synthesized a selection of new and old moving-image works into an immersive installation spanning both floors of the gallery.

On the upper floor, Yeh presents a new 7-hour video work entitled *Shocking Asia*. Drawing its title from the series of 1970s "mondo" films of the same name directed by German exploitation filmmaker Rolf Olsen— in which European film crews go to Asia on a pseudo-ethnographic quest to document the perversity, barbarity, and backwardness of the 'Far East' - *Shocking Asia* operates as a kind of speculative reanimation of the logics of oriental spectacle as they manifest in modern-day tourism to Southeast Asia. Yeh's film takes the form of a series of episodic travelogues shot whilst traveling in Thailand, Myanmar, Singapore, and Malaysia. Guiding us through tourist sites ranging from the Drug Elimination Museum in Yangon, Myanmar to Elephant Nature Park in Chiang Mai, Thailand these videos combine the disarming directness of self-shot mobile phone footage with a range of formal strategies drawn from the domains of slow cinema, verite, and exploitation films in a tireless exploration of the vacationer's gaze. Yeh's quasi-ethnographic documentation of tourist behaviour and attractions ultimately reflects on the absurdity of tourism within a globalized world as well as the complex questions of complicity and privilege which characterize this particular leisure activity. For this presentation at Empty Gallery, Yeh has staged *Shocking Asia* as a multi-projector installation within a succession of lounge-like chambers — complete with custom beanbags and cushioned settees for the audience.

On the gallery's lower floor, visitors are confronted by an older group of videos taking Yeh's practice as a self-taught vocal improviser as both material and subject. Working with extended techniques, Yeh explores issues of linguistic embodiment as well as the relationship between utterance and identity. Reconceptualized as a multi-channel arrangement in which mouths, throats, and faces emerge from the darkness of the gallery, these works foreground the gross physicality of Yeh's visage in a manner which is both raw and intimate.

### **About C. Spencer Yeh**

C. Spencer Yeh is recognized for his interdisciplinary activities and collaborations as an artist, improviser, and composer, as well his music project Burning Star Core. His video works are distributed by Electronic Arts Intermix and he is a contributing editor to Triple Canopy and BOMB magazine. Yeh also volunteers as a programmer and trailer editor for Spectacle Theater, a microcinema in Brooklyn NY.

Recent presentations of work include "Two Workaround Works Around Calder" at the Whitney Museum NYC, "Modern Mondays" at MoMA NYC, "Sound Horizon" at the Walker Art Center Minneapolis MN, "Closer to the Edge" in Singapore and "Crossing Over" in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia, "The Companion" at the Liverpool Biennial 2014, the Berwick Film and Media Arts Festival, "Tony Conrad Tribute" at Atelier Nord/Ultima Festival in Oslo Norway, "Great Tricks From Your Future" at D-CAF in Cairo Egypt, Kinomuzeum at Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw Poland, and LAMPO at the Renaissance Society in Chicago IL. In 2015 he was an Artist-in-Residence at ISSUE Project Room NYC, and was included in the performance program for Greater New York at MoMA/PS1. A new project on vinyl record, "The RCA Mark II," was recently published by Primary Information.