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ALICE WANG
**THE FALLACY
OF MISPLACED
CONCRETENESS**

JULY 18 TO SEPTEMBER 7, 2013

AGM
ART GALLERY OF MISSISSAUGA

Memory is a dynamic system, not a storage system; it's a repetition of rhythms, these rhythms are all - part and parcel - of the ongoing flow of present experience.

Alan Watts

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"let me take a photo of you."

FOREWORD

It is always a pleasure to work with an emerging artist as well as an emerging guest curator who have strong vision. Calling upon her family's history in China, Alice Wang explores the intersection between memory and history and creates a powerful meditation about the stories we hear and the stories we tell. This exhibition is driven by guest curator Erik Martinson's vision, and his instinctive grasp of such stories will take him far.

The exhibition is possible with collaborative support of AGM staff members: Gail Farndon, Tina Chu, Erin Rutherford, Jaclyn Qua-Hansen, Melanie Gausden, Laura Carusi and support from Sana Saleem, Nives Hajdin and Aisha Simpson.

Stuart Keeler
Director | Curator
Art Gallery of Mississauga

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THE FALLACY OF MISPLACED CONCRETENESS

A jumble of letters in the centre of the frame slowly detangles from impenetrable inertness to the legibility of words: *The fallacy of misplaced concreteness*. The letters refuse to hold their ordered pattern, as if knowing the meaning of the phrase they depict, quickly fleeing to the edges, scattering traces. On the heels of these disbanded pixels are more words that read: an incomplete work in three parts. Alice Wang's video, mirroring her title sequence, moves from densely layered history to shared memories unpacking this history, to the dispersal of meaning across the frame of the moving image, calling into question the construction of sight, and consequently how the past read through memories remains fleeting.

Part I: On set. Zhenbeibao Western Film Studio. A handheld camera follows a guide through the Cultural Revolution set, lingering longer on the displays than any of the other tourists, who come in and out of frame taking their own pictures. A recorded phone conversation between a daughter, Alice, and her mother describes existence before, during, and after the Cultural Revolution. Her grandfather and grandmother figure

ALICE WANG (ARTIST)

Alice Wang (b. 1983) is an artist and filmmaker based between Toronto and Los Angeles. She received her BSc from the University of Toronto, BFA from the California Institute of the Arts, and MFA from New York University. Since 2012, Alice has been living and working in Paris through the support of the Carla Bruni-Sarkozy Foundation. She has exhibited at The Armory Center for the Arts (LA), Deutsches Haus (NY), Immanence (Paris), and the Moscow Museum of Modern Art, among others. Alice was recently a Villa Aurora Fellow in Berlin. She will be having a solo exhibition at Detroit gallery in Stockholm this fall.

ERIK MARTINSON (GUEST CURATOR)

Erik Martinson is an independent curator based in Toronto and has been a member of the Pleasure Dome programming collective since 2006. He has curated film/video programs and exhibitions for Art Star 3: Video Art Biennale at SAW Gallery (2007), Vtape's Curatorial Incubator (2009), Rendezvous with Madness Film Festival (2010, 2011), The Images Festival (2012) and A Space Gallery (2012), plus numerous events and screenings with Pleasure Dome. Erik is co-editor of The Institute of Immaterialism with Cressida Kocienski. He has worked in video distribution at Vtape as the Submissions and Outreach Coordinator since 2005.



prominently in the recollections, in particular the ripple effect of the grandfather's covert work for the communist government that had him pose as a wealthy businessman overseas, this perceived privilege caused problems for the family. Labour, of the valued and unvalued kind, is discussed and distinguished. Her mother was the subject of a photo for a newspaper while picking cotton, suddenly she became a poster child for proper youth discipline and work ethic, her determination overstated in the caption; she became an everywoman. The tourists in the video footage pose for their own photo-ops, in the context of the film studio set these photos taken speak not of the contrived heroic narrative of the communist party during the Cultural Revolution, but of a country again in transition, of ideological hybridization. The artifice of the past performed for the present in this act of taking photos echoes the memory recall of the mother in the phone conversation, now imagined in the daughter's consciousness as post-memory, and further constructed for the viewer as if posturing for tourist snaps.

Part II: Optical Lens Production Line. A tour of a factory facility reveals the construction of mechanized sight. The precision measurements and care required to represent the lived world accurately through making these lenses is astounding given the many ways any given viewer may miss detail in a recorded image, moving or still. Better than the human eye, or at least, better than what can be remembered from what the eye sees.

Part III: On location. Another mode of cinema production, in the lived world, but no less constructed. Hand held horizons through the car window. Factories, their stacks, bounce along. Inside the conveyor line of products is shown. Outside a cobblestone courtyard in front of a church, wedding photos taken as workers replace stones underfoot. Alice speaks in voiceover, her memories. Living with her grandparents she learned of past lives and secrets. The bunker of the German Imperial Qingdao Fort, Qingdao where her grandfather grew up, is a garrison of history. An old camera, like a clock on the inside, needs to be tuned. Much like a memory.

Erik Martinson
Guest Curator

XIT-RM

Emerging artists & cultural producers in the Greater Toronto Area and the Mississauga region are showcased in the XIT-RM. Six artists annually are selected with a published catalogue and accompanying critical text. Exhibitions, which honour the Mission and Mandate goals of The AGM, are selected by the Curatorial Team.

The emphasis is on contemporary art and critical engagement. The exhibition space is dedicated to the vision of highlighting regional talent. The exhibition features its own opening/vernissage as well as tie closely with regional universities and link in with the educational components of the AGM Resource Room and the new Artist Professional Practices Series.

IMAGE CREDITS

1, 2, 3 *The fallacy of misplaced concreteness*
(details from video stills) 2012.
Courtesy of the artist.

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Engage. Think. Inspire. This phrase opens the dialogue at the AGM. The Gallery connects with the people of Mississauga through the collection and presentation of relevant works from a range of periods and movements in Canadian art. Expressing multiple ideas and concepts, this visual art translates into meaningful cultural and social experiences for all audiences. The AGM employs innovative education, artist projects and other forms of dialogue to advance critical enquiry and community connection to the visual arts.

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