

在这个世上, 我们 In this world, we

ANTJE EHMANN AND HARUN FAROCKI

LI JINGHU

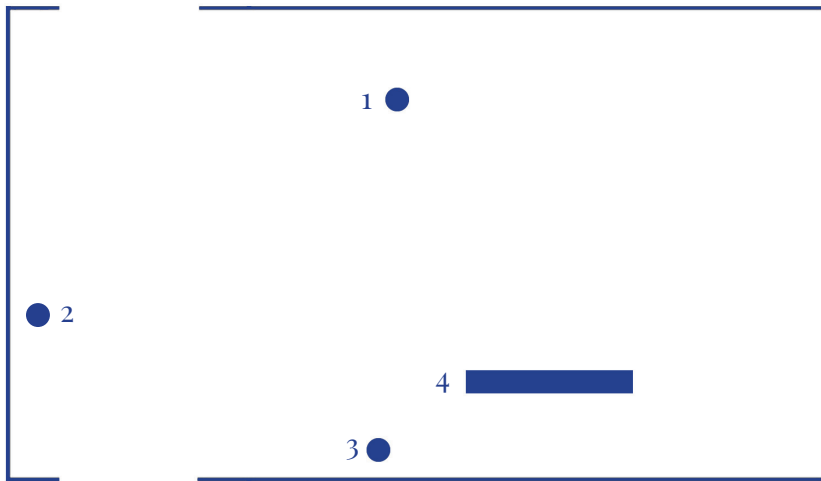
LIU CHUANG

CHINA LABOR WATCH

APRIL 07, 2019– MAY 26, 2019

CCS Bard Galleries

Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College



1. Antje Ehmann and Harun Farocki
Labour in A Single Shot (Hangzhou),
 2014
 15 single-channel videos on loop,
 variable run times
 Courtesy of Antje Ehmann

- Mingshen Group, *Knock the Peanut Candy*, 01:56 mins
- Mingshen Group, *Chemical Fiber*, 01:36 mins
- Mingshen Group, *Street Artists*, 01:40 mins

- Minsheng Group, *Figurine Blower*, 01:59 mins
- Jing XIE, *Docker*, 01:10 mins
- Mingsheng Group, *Calligrapher*, 01:40 mins

- Xindi Group, *Glasswork*, 01:09 mins
- Xindi Group, *Wool Quilt for IKEA*, 01:50 mins
- The Tourists, *The Ponds Mirroring the Moon*, 01:47 mins

- Chaoran LI, *Welcome to Wall Street*, 01:12 mins
- Jun LO, *The Shoemaker*, 01:58 mins
- Di HU, *Subway Security*, 01:47 mins

- Ke YANG, *Special Restaurant*, 02:00 mins
- Mingshen Group, *Shadow Play*, 01:05 mins
- The Tourists, *Workers Leaving Intime Mall*, 01:54 mins

2. Li Jinghu
Waterfall, 2016
 Mixed-media installation with
 15 mobile phones, videos, electric
 phone chargers, wood
 Courtesy of the artist

3. Liu Chuang
Love Story, 2006-2015
 Reproductions of archival materials
 C-prints
 Courtesy of the artist

4. China Labor Watch
 Copies of Investigative
 Reports and Pay Stubs
 Courtesy of China Labor Watch

In this world, we is an exhibition exploring visual representations of Chinese rural migrant workers through videos, printed images, reports, and an installation, all produced in the past two decades. Since China's economic reform in the 1980s, hundreds of millions of people from rural areas moved to cities to earn their living—a change in population that constitutes one of the largest internal migrations of the contemporary world. Dominant media representations portray these workers as a generic mass of former peasants, who appear interchangeable, while also casting them as symbols of dreams and upward mobility in big cities. *In this world, we* challenges this homogeneous field of representation by bringing together works of art by Liu Chuang, Li Jinghu, Antje Ehmann and Harun Farocki, alongside investigative materials from the non-governmental organization China Labor Watch. Together, they draw attention to the migrant workers' subjectivity and their lives as individuals through the fragments and traces of their everyday activities.

Labour in a Single Shot (Hangzhou) 2014

ANTJE EHMANN (B.1968),
HARUN FAROCKI (1944-2014)



Labour in a Single Shot is an ongoing project, initiated by filmmakers Antje Ehmann and Harun Farocki, encompassing videos shot and produced in 17 cities worldwide, from 2011 to the present. These videos were produced in the context of video production workshops led by Ehmann and Farocki. In each workshop, participating artists and filmmakers were asked to produce videos of 1-2 minute duration, each video privileging a single unbroken take.

Like the larger project, *Labour in a Single Shot (Hangzhou)* showcases an inclusive and shared understanding of work and social relationships in contemporary society, focusing on the often concealed, everyday activities of labor across material or immaterial, paid or unpaid, and traditional or new forms. This exhibition presents 15 videos on 5 monitors, with 3 videos looped

on each screen, and selected from the 32 videos that comprise the Hangzhou series, referencing the industrial city in east China. These videos expand the notion of labor to include those quotidian activities happening around us and present a humanized view of labor in China. In addition, the Hangzhou series also includes a contemporary reworking of the Lumière brothers' film *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory* (1895), one of the first films ever made and whose depiction of the titular workers exiting their workplace became a point of reference for Farocki's own practice, influencing his 1995 film *Workers Leaving the Factory*.

Love Story 2006-2015

LIU CHUANG (B.1979)



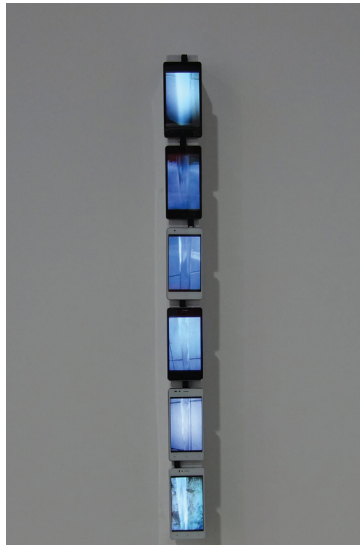
Between 2006 to 2015, artist Liu Chuang collected over 3,000 used romance novels that were primarily rented by young migrants, particularly female workers, from book rental shops in the factory districts of Dongguan, a manufacturing hub in southern China. With a cheap deposit and rental fee, costing about 2.5 RMB (less than 40 cents), the migrant workers could get access to these portable novels. Most of the book rental stores have shut down in the 2010s as reading digital books on smart phones became popular.

These books were not only read but often annotated, as anonymous readers used them as personal diaries, scribbling letters, love letters, poems, phone numbers, leaving traces of their personal lives and emotions. As a work of art that includes and circulates the unknown stories and sentiments of migrant workers, *Love Story* is a powerful exposition and carrier of

those social relationships indicated by the scribbles of workers during their leisure time. *Love Story* has been previously presented as an installation, in which the original books are stacked on low wooden platforms, accompanied by handwritten text on wall. This display focuses on the reproductions of the romance novels and their handwritten annotations, and is presented as a new installation.

Waterfall 2016

LI JINGHU (B.1972)



This installation was inspired by the artist's experience of living in Chang'an, an industrial town in Dongguan: every morning Li Jinghu awoke to the sound of running water from migrant residents living in neighboring apartments. This sound indicated the migrant workers' morning preparations for their working day. Li invited his migrant neighbors to film videos in their apartments on their mobile phones, with instructions to point the camera at the faucets running water as the work's primary visual subject. The diegetic sound in these videos also includes the sound of birds in their neighborhood, which was a largely industrial district within the town. When the mobile phones

are installed in a row, they evoke the vertical motion of a waterfall. The original presentation of *Waterfall* (2016) created in Chang'an included mobile phones that were owned by the migrants who took the videos. In this version, the original video is presented on mobile phones purchased from the Lower East Side Ecology Center in Brooklyn, New York that recycles the old mobile phones of local residents.

Copies of Investigative Reports

CHINA LABOR WATCH



The display highlights online reports that resulted from investigations conducted by the human rights organization China Labor Watch (CLW) that researches working conditions in factories in China, and provides legal assistance to the workers. This presentation includes selected investigative reports that have been published on CLW's website since 2000. The reports have targeted suppliers of international corporations producing furniture, shoes, stationary, toys, garments and electronics. The reports consist of labor condition assessments, utilizing textual and visual evidence provided by anonymous researchers who impersonated as factory workers. Their research encompasses interviews and testimonies by workers, and statistical analyses of working hours relative to wages, across previous and current investigations regarding the same factory.

The exhibition also includes a selection of pay stubs from Pegatron, a Taiwanese electronics manufacturing company, one of the major suppliers of Apple Inc. According to CLW, the documents "were gathered with the assistance of 18 Pegatron workers coming from 12 departments, who in turn collected pay stubs from workers of many other departments." The pay stubs have been redacted by CLW to protect the privacy of individuals, while their general release has offered evidence of the workers' low income.

This presentation of reports and pay stubs is intended to reflect the CLW's investigative work, its categories, priorities, use of personal testimony and evidence.

I would like to thank the following people and organizations whose support has been crucial in the making of this exhibition:

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In this world, we is curated by Jinglun Zhu, as part of the requirements for the master of arts degree at the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College.