

SUN YUAN & PENG YU

THE WORLD IS A FINE PLACE FOR YOU TO FIGHT FOR

Opening: Saturday 21 May 2011, Via del Castello 11, 6pm–12 midnight

Until 27 August 2011, Tuesday-Saturday, 2-7pm

If we win here we will win everywhere.

The world is a fine place and worth the fighting for and I hate very much to leave it.

(Ernest Hemingway)

The work of Sun Yuan & Peng Yu is based on the incessant confirmation of paradox, on the perpetual search for the dualities between black and white, reality and falsehood, the manifest and the concealed. Their apparently provocative work is the demonstration of a continual analysis of life through experience in which the viewing public is often invited to participate, with the will to find the essence and substance hidden behind appearance.

The world is a fine place for you to fight for! - this is the title of the solo show by Sun Yuan & Peng Yu at the Galleria Continua in San Gimignano. It is a positive affirmation that encourages a uniting of forces in the struggle in favour of life (or you can read the work as a totally opposite declaration). The image associated with the title is that of three monkeys who have their hands respectively over their eyes, ears and mouth. The ancient meaning was "see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil". But the picture taken by the artists today suggests something forced: the hands are those of Sun Yuan, which make it impossible for the monkeys to hear, speak and see. The monkeys are thus merely passive spectators, like children faced by the magic of a magician who takes delight in making objects appear and disappear, or like people disconcerted by a trick.

In the video part of this work, several people stand in a circle, and what is in the middle is always changing. Sometimes the scene/picture is an allegory with a taxodermist and his animals and sometimes it is a group of metal pieces of furniture. This furniture was in ten shipping crates at the transport company; the artists changed the final destination (they didn't know what was inside before setting up the exhibition, but the contents look like contemporary art now).

What has really happened? Why are there packing cases of a wrong shipping in the show? Are they stolen cases? What do they contain? Where are the works? Where is the art in all this? Sun Yuan & Peng Yu question themselves and viewers about the perception of "reality" through deception. According to the artists, art is mere illusion too. Whether it has its own ethereal independence or has socio-political connotations, it is always forced. Nothing is real in this life, everything is theatre. Our actions are dictated by rules, we are like stuffed animals, actors, inert beings. Sun Yuan & Peng Yu reveal to us the secret of a great enactment, of a dangerous crime. They explain to us in detail the process of an action, obviously illegal, carried off without the slightest hitch, a demonstration of how the control, prohibitions, rules and power that control and manoeuvre our choices and ideologies are

corruptible and therefore manoeuvrable.

In another work names *It is not certain that your enemies will harm you, it is not certain that your friends will help you*, the artists design a small device that can train the body and perseverance. They want it to be a piece of fitness gear that is seriously used and not treated as a joke, and believe it offers an unusual and new experience that can make the body healthy and stimulate intelligence as well.

Sun Yuan (b. 1972 Beijing, China) and Peng Yu (b. 1974 Heilongjiang, China) live and work in Beijing, China. They have exhibited in numerous public and private institutions, including: Galleria Continua, San Gimignano / Beijing / Le Moulin (2011, 2009, 2008); Aichi Triennial, Nagoya (2010); Sydney Biennale (2010); Ullens Center for Contemporary Art - UCCA, Beijing (2009); 3rd Moscow Biennale (2009); The Saatchi Gallery, London (2009); The National Art Center, Tokyo (2009); Groninger Museum, Holland (2009); 1st Mediations Biennale, Poznań (2008); Kunsthaus, Graz (2007); 2nd Moscow Biennale (2007); Liverpool Biennale (2006); 51st Venice Biennale (2005); Kunstmuseum, Bern (2005); Biennale Kwangju (2004); MuHKA: Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerp (2004); Museum Art Contemporary, Lyon (2004); Today Art Museum, Beijing (2003); 1st Guangzhou Triennial (2002); 5th Lyon Biennale (2000).

For further information about the exhibition and for photographs:

Silvia Pichini, Communication Manager: press@galleriacontinua.com mob +39 347 45 36 136