

LOMBARD FREID GALLERY



Cao Fei

La Town

September 10 – October 25, 2014

Vernissage: Wednesday, September 10, 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Indeed, this simulacrum remains unsurpassed in its evocation of the Real.

Indeed, this film conveys the Truth.

I will always mourn for the fate of La Town, for La Town is always in mourning. – Cao Fei

Lombard Freid is pleased to present *La Town*, Cao Fei's fifth solo show with the gallery. An ambitious stop-motion feature, *La Town* exemplifies the artist's playful-yet-political practice, converging fantasy and reality into a film noir-inspired vision of the contemporary China and the World at large. The trailer for the film was well received at Art Basel Hong Kong 2014, and is followed by the full-length film and related photographic series.

Cao Fei explains *La Town* as follows:

At a place called the "Night Museum", open only after dusk, various artifacts about "darkness" are on display. There is the American horror film "30 Days of Night", Chinese artist Chu Yun's installation "Constellation", and surprisingly, there is even the iPad app game for "The Godfather." The current exhibition is about La Town.

Everyone has heard the myth of La Town. The story first appeared in Europe, but after traveling through a space-time wormhole, reappeared in Asia and Southeast Asia. It was last seen near the ocean bordering the Eurasian tectonic plate, vanishing in its midst as if a mirage.

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La Town, struck by unknown disaster - where without sunlight, time froze. Polar night was all encompassing, so the few instances of white nights have been momentarily recorded in the town's history. Yet, through the drifting of time and space, various countries have rewritten La Town's history, and details have been neglected. Now, the story of the small town's past - love affairs, politics, life, demons and disasters - have all been sealed beneath the museum's vitrines, the historical "specimens" becoming an authoritative but limited interpretation of this town's history.

Night town; is there something happening? What kind of story does it carry? What forces caused such distortions in space and time?

Visitors quietly wander between the displays. This is just the first exhibit of the summer; there will be more interesting shows to come.

At this moment, from the cinema screen of the "Night Museum" drifts a few lines of dialogue:

The Stranger: "Bar the windows. Try to hide. They're coming."

Eben Olemaun: "They? Who are they?"

Cao Fei has exhibited internationally to great acclaim, from her extraordinary 2008 project *RMB City* to her most recent work, the 2013 zombie film *Haze and Fog*. Her work is included in multiple private and public collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; M+ Museum, Hong Kong; and the Guggenheim, New York.

Cao Fei (b. 1978) is a Chinese artist based in Beijing. She is known for her multimedia installations and videos, and is acknowledged as one of the key artists of a new generation emerging from Mainland China. She mixes social commentary, popular aesthetics, references to Surrealism, and documentary conventions in her films and installations. Her works reflect on the rapid and chaotic changes that are occurring in Chinese society today. Cao Fei's recent movie *Haze and Fog* (2013) was screened at the Tate Modern, London, and her previous online project *RMB CITY* (2008-2011) has been exhibited in Deutsche Guggenheim (2010), Shiseido Gallery, Tokyo, Japan (2009), Serpentine Gallery, London (2008), and Yokohama Triennale (2008). Other exhibitions include *i.Mirror* by China Tracy, 52nd Venice Biennale (2007), Chinese Pavilion; *RMB CITY- A Second Life City Planning*, Istanbul Biennale (2007); *Whose Utopia*, Tate Liverpool (2007), Nu Project, Lyon Biennale (2007). Cao Fei has also participated in 17th & 15th Biennale of Sydney (2006/2010), Moscow Biennale (2005), Shanghai Biennale (2004), 50th Venice Biennale (2003). She has exhibited video works in Guggenheim Museum, the International Center of Photography, MoMA, P.S.1, Palais de Tokyo (Paris), Musee d'Art Moderne de la ville de Paris, and the Mori Art Museum (Tokyo). She was a finalist of the Guggenheim Museum Hugo Boss Prize 2010, and won the 2006 Best Young Artist Award by CCAA (Chinese Contemporary Art Award). Cao Fei is on the jury of the selection committee for the curatorship of the 8th Berlin Biennale 2014.