

Yang Fudong: *Honey (mi)*, 2003 & *Lock Again*, 2004

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Projection on the outer wall of the gallery building

The video works *Honey (mi)* and *Lock Again* by the Chinese artist Yang Fudong display a new cinematic aesthetic, which on the one hand reflect the tradition of progressive film production from the 1930s and on the other also highlight matters concerning society in China today, which is in a transition between old and new gender images, consumerism and communism, city and countryside, as well as censorship and dreams of freedom.

In the opening shot of *Honey (mi)*, the viewer is confronted with a view of a woman's legs in fishnet stockings, which immediately generates an erotically charged atmosphere. A well-groomed woman sits smoking, firmly enthroned on a red sofa. She is reminiscent of the nameless prostitute in the Chinese film *The Goddess*, 1934 who stands in her long dress on a pavement at night in Shanghai waiting for clients. The woman in *Honey (mi)* seems to be subject to the conventional image of the traditional gender role, which contrasts with the men in her room who are all wearing the standard Maoist uniform. She is also wearing the jacket and cap of a uniform, but combined however with a western oriented clothing style. Fudong transforms the aesthetics of silent films from the early days of Chinese cinema into a world of colorful images. Just as in the silent films, there is no spoken communication between the characters, yet they seem to be connected in the narrative. Subsequent gaps in the plot leave room for presumptions and associations. The bird's eye perspective of the camera and the suspenseful music conjures up pictures of a spy thriller. Together with the lighting of the individual scenes and the images, which are obviously taken from the classic subject of film history (such as car chases or gambling behind closed doors), the film industry's construed structures are exposed. In *Lock Again*, the viewer encounters two men in white police uniform who are handcuffed to one another in some scenes. Warily catching their breath, they sit on the floor and are covered in blood. They look as if they are on the run; in the end they appear to get away: together with a woman in a pink dress, they row a boat toward freedom. However, in the last scene of the film the boat is back, floating on the water of an indoor swimming pool. The boat is empty, the woman has disappeared, the men are standing up to their chests in water, the dream has come to an end, the blood is fake.

Honey (mi), 2003

Single-channel video installation, color, sound

Duration: 9' 29''

Lock Again, 2004

Single-channel video installation, color, sound

Duration: 3'

Yang Fudong (born 1971 in Beijing, China) lives and works in Shanghai.