

Times

Art Center

Berlin

The D-Tale, Video Art from the Pearl River Delta

Curated by HOU Hanru, co-curated by XI Bei

Curatorial Statement

Video art in the region of the Pearl River Delta (PRD) emerged as early as the mid-1980s. Collectives such as “Videotage” in Hong Kong and “Southern Artists Salon” in Guangzhou were pioneers and galvanizing creative forces in the field. This movement was carried forward, in the 90s, by the rise of certain collectives and individuals, including the “Big Tail Elephants Working Group”, the “Borges Bookstore”, “U-theque”, JIANG Zhi and CAO Fei.

A highly specific part of China with its distinct cultural characteristics and traditions, the PRD has been closely related to international influences and interwoven with popular culture from the beginning. Frequent exchanges between Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, the impacts of Hong Kong’s popular culture, film, television and pop music concerning visual culture, coupled with a sensitivity for and references to international new media art, led to rapid experimentation in video art across the entire PRD. The art communities in the region have continuously developed their own aesthetics, merging individual independence, freedom, cultural hybridity, humour and irony with avant-garde experiments in open, diverse, fluid and natural manners.

At the same time, video art of the PRD has also been integrated into the process of high-speed urbanisation. It utilises strategies of witnessing and intervention to open up spaces for criticism and alternatives while paying close attention to the “supra-political”, bottom-up social expressions generated in the realms of everyday life. From the perspective of visual culture, video art of the PRD reflects the culture of this region and individuals’ singular involvements in the globalisation.

By adopting the medium of moving images, artists from the Pearl River Delta are looking for freedom and forms of resistance against dominant ideology and powers, turning ordinary gestures into artistic strategies to construct diverse personal utopias. Their video practices represent the most ground-breaking and powerful visions of experimental art and culture in the PRD. As a result, the PRD has become a creative hub for international exchange and art activities, as well as a deviating model which inspires artists from other regions.

The development of the Guangdong Times Museum was informed by these singular cultural explorations and artistic expressions. As a parallel institution and the first international branch of an Asian art institution, namely, the Guangdong Times Museum, Times Art Center Berlin is pleased to present its inaugural exhibition *The D-Tale, Video Art from the Pearl River Delta* which introduces the shifting cultural landscape and visions of the region in an era of globalisation. The exhibition is part of the *Operation PRD* curatorial framework following the exhibition *Big Tail Elephants* at the Guangdong Times Museum in 2016.

HOU Hanru, XI Bei