

# IMPOSSIBLE UNIVERSE: NOW HERE

Featuring works by six among the youngest generation of video artists in China, *Impossible Universe: Now Here* presents an occasion to explore the freshest and most genuine as well as ever-changing creations emerging from contemporary art practice in China.

By exploring and informing a creative vision of the Now, whilst reflecting on the literary and visual traditions of the local, Here, the project is to investigate the swirl of conflicting emotions that inhabit the most inner landscapes of a young Chinese generation.

The choice of video, a medium that embodies reflection, is emblematic of the desire to discover, experience, narrate, document and interact with nature and reality. Human beings sense, perceive and imagine, and then take action. Artistic creation becomes thus a way of "thinking through vision"- the insight and thinking of the artists, their views in imagining the world, and their activities combined with their desires and perceptions. However, whether their attitude is that of re-imagining, discovering or understanding this world, they consistently question whether art can face real life, and honestly reflect the human condition. Hence, in *Now Here* the artists show an attempt to disclose their discussions.

In common, they all face an existing world seemingly certain, but full of absurdities, a non-aesthetic living world, a hard reality, a ruin full of energy. Bearing the weight of similar problems, they all penetrate the world around and look for the personal or for an antidote to existential issues. Highlighting the conflicting dialogue between real life and artistic creation, Jin Shan creates a physical and mental space in the shape of an 'island' in which he records the enactment of one individual's experience of the body and of self-awareness set in a constricted environment. His peer Sun Xun reaches deep into history in an attempt to bring to light a new anthology of humanity driven by its sins and victim of its lies. Staging the figure of a Magician, he haunts the viewer in a dark, expressionistic atmosphere in which to reflect on the human condition and the madness of our world.

Younger in age, Li Ming is instead intrigued by nature, as the inner principle of change, of which he looks the intrinsic paradox that stimulates actions; the quest for 'meanings' is prevalent in Pei Li's work, she is in fact in search of her own identity in the persona she adopts and this resonates in the atmospherics invoked in her videos. In a similar vein, Yang Guangnan, a sentimental perfectionist, produces works, which recall intimate spheres of our being. Examining ordinary life and human behaviors, she ponders on emotional conflicts and awareness of time of the 'anybody' and 'nobody' in the urbanized space. Huang Ran, trained at Goldsmith's College in London, on the other hand creates visionary videos interspersed with a sense of wonder, drama and frailty where he deconstructs reality to seduce the viewer with a beautiful aesthetic that conveys an abyss of emotions and fears.

The visual thinking of these artists becomes here intimate analyses of the self; they reflect their states of mind and reject a hackneyed expression of consumerism and artistic consumption. Moved by the need of evasion, they have abandoned platforms of greatness and highly political discourses to investigate individual activities and their relationships with the environment. Hence, the result of their thinking projects is an emotionally-charged pantomime.

The thin texture that *Impossible Universe: Now Here* weaves takes shape from the harmonious juxtaposition of the artists points of view. Absoluteness, ambiguity and inevitability inhabit their lives and become contents of their works. A stage for the absurd, their fictional plot is nothing but a fair and straightforward portrait of the reality in the way they experience it. Moved by conflicting feelings that can easily disorientate, these artists turn their videos into sophisticated narrations that cross borders of space and time and present the artist as a chaste human being, undressed of any stereotype or pre-assumption, as simple as man is.

**Claudia Albertini**  
London, August 2011



**Yang Guangnan, *What?*, 2011, HD colour video with sound transferred on SD DVD, 00:02:44.**



**Huang Ran, *The Next round Is True Life*, 2009, HD video transferred to SD DVD, 00:27:37.**  
Courtesy of the artist and Long March Space.

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**站台·中国**  
**PLATFORM CHINA**

Curated by  
Claudia Albertini (Platform China)

QUT Exhibition Curatorial Team  
Creative Industries Precinct Curator: Lubi Thomas  
Assistant Curator (Intern): Sarah Harper



**Sun Xun, *21G*, 2010, video animation, 00:27:05.**  
Courtesy of the artist.



**Pei Li, *miss lonely*, 2011, 4 channel video, 00:05:22.**  
Courtesy of the artist and Platform China.



**Jin Shan, *One Man's Island*, 2009-2010, 50 HD videos transferred on a SD DVD, 01:55:00.** Courtesy of the artist and Platform China.



**Li Ming, *Nature 3*, 2011, HD video, 16:9, 00:04:25.**  
Courtesy of the artist and Platform China.

**QUT creative industries precinct**

IDAprojects presents **The Joy of Loss**  
16 to 28 September 2011  
**Impossible Universe: Now Here**  
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IDAprojects presents

# THE JOY OF LOSS

David Sudmalis



## THE JOY OF LOSS?

The rite of our springtime is nurtured by physical and emotional privation manifesting wholistically. It is an all or nothing equation, an essential absolute.

What joy could possibly come from this?

Perhaps there is no joy in loss, 'only [the] hope that what one feels will eventually go away, that "time will heal", [that] one will be able to "rise above" and won't sink and die. That instead, one will become a bottom-of-the-abyss feeder, the dweller feeding on crumbs of other peoples' losses...[each] loss creating an abyss between oneself and the others, those lucky ones, still naïve and untouched' (Kucharova, 2011).

But surely to live it, to taste it, to feel it, to hear it is a spiritual awakening, not the tolling of a nearing bell. It is not what it is, it is how it is dealt with; it is the unexpected, as is our resilience, our stamina, our compass travelling an unsteady difficult path through an intense but finite wilderness. And whilst it invades every thought and corrupts every action, the measure is in one's ability to practice the 'art of losing gracefully' (Silva, 2011), emerging more complete than thought possible.

*The Joy of Loss* is not a treatise on fortitude. It is an exploration of the silences that embody loss: the unheard sounds, the unseen faces, the unspoken words. It is breath and it is pulse – and it continues long after the source of loss has faded into fluid, uncertain, grainy, disputable memory. Here it lives – perhaps transformed into a muted strength, perhaps existing as a living excuse – layering the ice, and cracking it when the great thaw succeeds in grasping a lungful of fresh air...

David Sudmalis  
[www.thejoyoffloss.blogspot.com](http://www.thejoyoffloss.blogspot.com)

Associate artists: Faces of the unheard: Willo Drummond, Bel Evans, Krystallia Fountis, Bridget Jones, Ned Kulasin, Paul Mason, Linda Paris, Elizabeth Sudmalis, Ray Sudmalis; Voices of the unseen: Cecelia Cmielewski, Kon Gouriotis, Emma Kirsopp, Ricardo Peach, Michelle Silby; Performers of the unspoken: Grant Johansen, Penny Mullen, David Sudmalis; iPad instrument: Rick McCulloch; writers: Sue Kucharova, Aneel Silva.

Thank you to my friend and colleague Stephen Danzig of IDA Projects for his taking a risk on *The Joy of Loss*, and to curator Lubi Thomas for her eagle eye for refinement; to Frank Panucci for extreme latitude in allowing me to concentrate on this work; to Sue Kucharova and Aneel Silva for their written perspectives on loss; to my associate artists; to LUBICORP (especially Genine Larin and Olivia Porgand); to Blair and Jason who provided expert advice on the installation and the technology; to Darragh O' Callaghan for her support and constant interrogation; and to my parents whose faith and love knows no limitation.

David Sudmalis, *The Joy of Loss*, 2011, multi-platform installation. Installation photo by Keith Novak.

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