

LEUNG CHI-WO AND SARA WONG

Founders of Para Site, the city's first artist-led art space, husband-and-wife duo Leung Chi-wo and Sara Wong are veterans of the local scene. Their latest collaborative work is "Museum of the Lost," a five-year project in which they research and re-enact archival photographs.



"Office Lady With A Red Umbrella," 2010

Image courtesy of artists and Blindspot Gallery

Leung Chi-wo: In 1997, I started sharing a studio between four people on Au Pui Wan Street (in Fo Tan). I had just finished my MFA at the time, and it was convenient to buy materials around the area. We founded Para Site around then.

I'm not the type of person who likes to sit around and imagine things. It's all about research.

Sara Wong: Over time, my work's focus has remained on the idea of space. My early works address the city, Hong Kong's urban setting, and so on. I also do a lot of urban design and landscape architecture.

LC: Art is not just a way to express your thoughts. It's more of a way to explore different issues and how you react to certain attitudes.

We've known each other for a very, very, very long time [laughs]. Ever since our undergrad. A couple of decades, I'd say. We've been married for over 10 years.

SW: We don't really collaborate that much, but the projects last for a very long time. The largest one was our "City Cookie" project.

LC: "Museum of the Lost" started when we were in Tokyo working on a commission. We saw some old photos that were taken right at the train station we were at. We got curious about the unidentifiable people in the photos—where are they now?

SW: I found a lot of joy in the research process, it was a little bit like detective work.

LC: Hong Kong's mainstream view of success is that you should have a stable income, a job, and an apartment under your name—you should be careful about using such criteria to measure whether an artist is successful.

The only thing difficult now about becoming an artist is that everyone has become aware that it's a career. If younger artists can't find a project then it's like they're unemployed. But to me, there's no such thing. We don't really think of it as an occupation.

SHOW & TELL



Pinhole Camera

Leung Chi-wo: This is a 1995 work that's quite important to me. It's a functional pinhole camera that I used to shoot a series of Hong Kong urbanscapes. I think locals sometimes can't see things the way tourists do. It wasn't just a way to document, but it was also a platform to get to know the place in a different way. The photos turned out looking quite old. For instance, an ultra-modern building like the HSBC headquarters ended up looking like a Gothic cathedral. The series was done before the Handover when people had a lot of anxiety: it was a very timely project.

Cookie Cutters

LC: I used these during the first stages of the "City Cookie" project in 1999. I have a few sets. This particular one depicts the sky of Chinatown in New York, all along Mott Street. There are eight cookie cutters in total, for eight intersections.

Kim

LC: He's around eight or nine years old. We rescued him after his last owner abandoned him to move to a place that didn't allow dogs. What pet owner moves to a place that doesn't allow dogs?!



See "Museum of the Lost" from Mar 7-May 2 at **Blindspot Gallery**, 15/F, Po Chai Industrial Building, 28 Wong Chuk Hang Rd., Wong Chuk Hang, 2517-6238.