

Future Greats: Hao Jingban

selected by Aimee Lin. From the Summer issue of ArtReview Asia

By **Aimee Lin**



它总让我感觉到一种巨大的隔阂
It makes me feel an enormous disconnection

Hao Jingban, *Off Takes*, 2016, HD single-channel video, 21 min 18 sec, edition of 5 + AP (English and Chinese subtitles). Courtesy the artist ...

Influenced by Chris Marker and Harun Farocki, Hao Jingban sees moving images as a means of reaching into history and travelling from the present to the past, playing, along the way, with the distance and relationship between her subjects and herself.

In the four-part *Beijing Ballroom* (2012–16), her recently finished research project on the ballroom-dance culture in Chinese socialist history since the 1950s, Hao employed various methods to produce images and build narratives. In *Little Dance* (2012), for example, she set up a fictive scene to capture the otherwise-too-subtle-to-discern physical and psychological atmosphere around a woman. In *An Afternoon Ball* (2014) she documented a dance from beginning to end, letting the camera discover meaningful relationships between the dancers, the music, the lighting and other elements. In *I Can't Dance* (2015) she shows the complexity and constructed nature of historical narratives by using two kinds of histories: one preserved on videotape and the other told via first-person narration. Interestingly, there was no pre-made plan to these three chapters of *Beijing Ballroom*. The second and third piece were developed based on the artist's reflection (mostly critically) on the previous piece – in Hao's words, "adjusting the postures continuously". After the first three works she made *Off Takes* (2016), using the leftover footage she had produced and collected during the research to reflect on her experiences with these images and the relationship between images and the information and affection they carry.

Unlike other artists of her generation, who will more often claim themselves as visual or conceptual artists, Hao tends to position herself as a 'film artist'. In my eyes, the subjectivity that appears in her videoworks, the one that has always been observing and self-observing, is more like that of an author, an author who is always questioning her own writing. In her art she is always checking the legitimacy of the camera, of the intrusion of her voice and of the relationships between all the components that compose the work. She takes time to search for this legitimacy, this process itself an important part of the end product. This has made her art a rich text to read, and perhaps will make her a great artist in the future.

Hao is based in Beijing. She has recently been awarded the International Critics' Prize at the 63rd International Short Film Festival Oberhausen for her film *Off Takes* (2016).



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