

“Play and Loop” — a 7-week screening programme

Week 3 | 24.7 - 28.7.2018

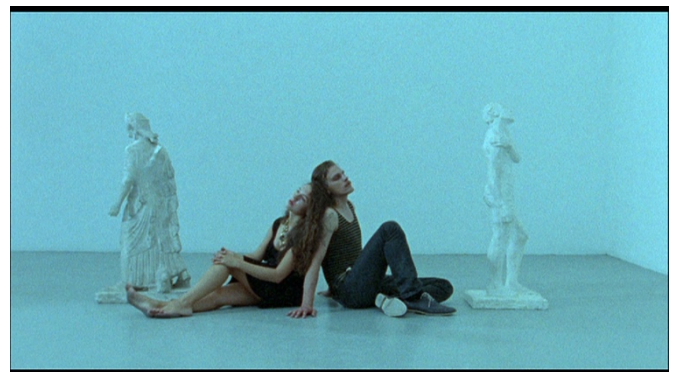
## Cheng Ran

In week 3 of “Play and Loop”, Blindspot Gallery is pleased to present two sets of video works by Cheng Ran, including *Simply Wild* (2014) and the four-part *Before Falling Asleep* (2013). Both works were shot during the artist’s residency in Amsterdam and were shot on film (super 8mm and super 16mm respectively) before being transferred to the digital format. Employing actors who re-enact a narrative adapted from world literature and personal correspondence, the artist becomes a story-teller who animates a representational world that is pervasive in its revealing and open in its imagination.

The words that scroll through the video of *Simply Wild* originate from a spam email Cheng Ran received from an unknown woman. She writes to him in typo-ridden texts relating recent events, soliciting attention and arousing desire from the reader. Amazed by the evocative writing of this pseudo-love letter, the artist enriches the text with sensationalist montages that follow a red-dress-clad actress frolicking across the cityscape of Amsterdam, serenaded by the sensuous music of Beethoven’s *Waldstein* piano sonata from the Romantic era. That which is simply wild is not merely the desire of the human psyche, but the untamed and uninhibited human mind capable of wild imagination and experiences.



Similarly, *Before Falling Asleep* utilises moving images to induce dialogical exchanges between two figures, this time four allegorical stories drawn from bedtime tales and fables, including *The River and the Pond* by Ivan Krylov, *Two Pigeons* and *The Fire and the Tree* by Aesop, and *The Butterfly and the Flower* by Hans Christian Andersen. Equally wild in nature and in spirit, the characters in these fables are anthropomorphically animated by actors; they talk about the dialectical struggle of chasing and stagnating, emigrating and homecoming, trusting and deceiving, choosing and regretting. The artist retells these childhood bedtime stories, manifesting the nebulous fusion between the fabulist’s didacticism and the hypnagogic state between wakefulness and sleep.



### About Cheng Ran (b. 1981)

Cheng Ran graduated from the China Academy of Art in 2004. His major solo exhibitions include “Diary of a Madman” (New Museum, New York, USA, 2016). Cheng has also participated in group exhibitions and screenings in major institutions and biennials, including the Art Institute of Chicago, Cass Sculpture Foundation, Shanghai Minsheng Art Museum, the Istanbul Biennial, and Palais de Tokyo. Cheng currently lives and works in Hangzhou.

Image:

*Simply Wild*, 2014, Super 8mm film transferred to digital video with sound, 6'53"

*Before Falling Asleep Part 2 - Two Pigeons*, 2013, Super 16mm film transferred to single channel HD video, 4'31"