

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“Uninvited Guests” – Hao Jingban solo exhibition

27 November 2018 – 12 January 2019

Opening Reception: 24 November 2018, Saturday, 5-6:30pm

Artist will be present

Venue: Blindspot Gallery (15/F, Po Chai Industrial Building, 28 Wong Chuk Hang Road, Wong Chuk Hang, Hong Kong)

Opening Hours: Tuesday to Saturday, 10am to 6pm (Sunday and Monday by appointment only); closed on public holidays



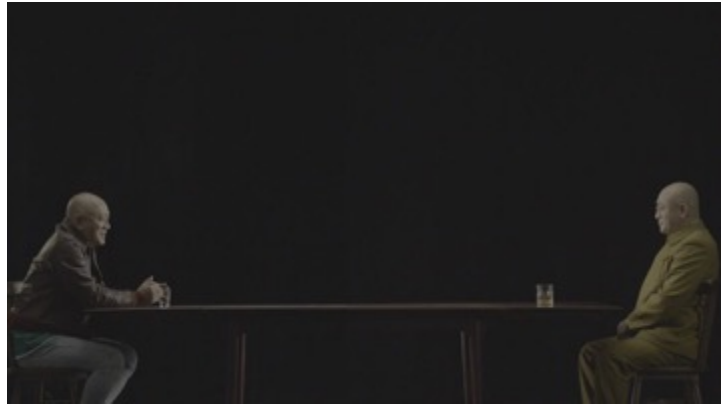
Hao Jingban’s first solo exhibition at Blindspot Gallery – “Uninvited Guests” – will feature three new video works from the artist’s most recent project using the Manchukuo of the 1930s-40s as background. The artist conducts historical investigation, archival research, field study and personal interviews, tracing back to the propaganda, drama and documentary films, as well as related figures, from the period of the Manchukuo Film Association. By weaving real and fictional narratives in video, reenactments and live performances, Hao explores the politicalness of visual language and the subjectivity of interpretation, revealing the power dynamics, border geopolitics and conflicting identities behind these performative mediums.

Forsaken Landscapes is a work integrating live performance and videos, based on several films selected and edited by the artist. These moving images include documentary and propaganda films made in the 1940-50s about Manchukuo, *Dersu Uzala*, a Soviet-Japanese film directed by Akira Kurosawa in 1975, and more. The Northeastern China has always shifted in the current of history: from a wild land full of aspirations, to a battlefield where bravery and despondence coexisted, to the “black-soil earth” that symbolised the Socialist spirit of agricultural and industrial expansion, to the slow decline of the “Northeastern” region as a whole. Filmic representations have repeatedly embellished and exploited this land, but because of various reasons, these images have become undesirable and forsaken. The artist strips the narrative from these images, leaving only a montage of landscapes, and then invites a “benshi”¹ to “re-interpret” the meaning of these landscapes in a live performance. In this performance, can politics let off these Manchurian landscapes? This is a question that the artist wants to explore.

Mr. Miura Plays Masahiko Amakasu consists of an interview and theatrical reenactment, featuring the Japanese actor Kenichi Miura, who has lived in China for decades and is recognised for playing countless Japanese military villains in Chinese television and films. In

¹ Benshi is a performer who provides live narration for silent films during the silent film era.

the 1990s, Mr. Miura came to Beijing for study, and ever since a fateful audition for a TV drama in 2001, has become a professional actor. In the video work, Miura performs in a black box theatre, reenacting the role of Masahiko Amakasu², head of the Manchukuo Film Association, while a conversation between the artist and the actor is interspersed on the other screen. As history, reality and fiction intertwine and overlap, the actor experiences this double world, on- and off-screen, in the splitting and recombination of personalities and psychological states. From the “Sino-Japanese War” fought in his professional work, to his twenty years of quotidian life in Beijing, the century-long conflicts in Sino-Japanese relationship structure Miura’s life in imaginary and real layers.



From South Lake Park to Hongqi Street is a dual-channel essay film based on the inquiry "What is Manchukuo Film Association", which threads together the spaces, characters and stories related to the Manchukuo Film Association, connected by the artist's voiceover narration. These stories comprise of a myriad of protagonists, including the Manchukuo actress-singer Li Xianglan (Yoshiko Yamaguchi), personnel working in the Manchukuo film association and Changchun Film Group Corporation, scholars of Sino-Japanese films etc. Through these narratives, the artist attempts to insert answers into the blanks that History indifferently or haphazardly left out. The corresponding places are washed out, forlorn and almost mundane, littered with bequeathed ideologies, unremembered names, discarded memories, inadvertently laid tombstones and monuments, and ruinous architecture. In the playback of her own footages, the artist tries to sort out the people, objects, time and space that she has encountered in the filming of the project, grasping for answers from the details that may have been undetected during the recording.

About HAO Jingban

Born 1985 in Shanxi Province, China, Hao Jingban completed a BA in Media and Communication from Goldsmiths College in 2007, and a MA in Film Studies from University of London in 2010. Hao has gained international recognition for her *Beijing Ballroom project* (2012-2016), in which she traces the present ballrooms in Beijing to the two waves of ballroom dancing in the early 1950s and post-Cultural Revolution in late 1970s. By including a wide range of found footages and recordings, archival materials, interviews and voiceovers, Hao interweaves complex historical narratives and social movements in the structures of experimental, documentary and essay film.

Her solo exhibitions include “New Directions: Hao Jingban” (Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China, 2016) and “Over-Romanticism” (Taikang Space, Beijing, China, 2016). Her group exhibitions and screenings include “Hao Jingban: Beijing Ballroom” (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, USA, 2018); “Special Economic Zone” (Guangdong Times Museum, Guangzhou, China, 2018); “FRONT International: Cleveland Triennial for Contemporary Art” (Cleveland, USA, 2018); “Prospectif Cinéma: Performing Dramas I” (Centre Pompidou, Paris, France, 2017); “11th Shanghai Biennale: Why Not Ask Again?” (The Power Station of Art, Shanghai, China, 2016); “Discordant Harmony” (Kuandu Museum of Fine Art, Taipei, 2016 and Hiroshima MOCA, Hiroshima, Japan, 2015); “The Civil Power” (Minsheng Art Museum, Beijing, China, 2015); “Sight and Sound” (Jewish Museum, New York, USA, 2014). In 2016, Hao won the Huayu Youth Award Grand Jury Prize in Art Sanya 2016. In 2017, she won the Young Artist of the Year award at the 11th Award of Art China and the International Critics’ Prize at the 63rd Internationale Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen. Hao currently lives and works in Beijing, China.

About Blindspot Gallery

Set up in 2010, Blindspot Gallery is a Hong Kong-based contemporary art gallery. The gallery began with a primary focus on contemporary photography and image-based art, and has evolved to include diverse media in contemporary art. The gallery represents both emerging and established artists, mainly from Hong Kong and the region but also beyond.

For enquiries and media interviews, please contact Ms. Lesley Kwok at 2517 6238 or by email info@blindspotgallery.com

Image Captions:

Hao Jingban, *From South Lake Park to Hongqi Street* (film still), 2018

Hao Jingban, *Mr. Miura Plays Masahiko Amakasu* (film still), 2018

(Image courtesy of artists and Blindspot Gallery)

Acknowledgement:



² Masahiko Amakasu (1891-1945) was a famous military officer in the Imperial Japanese Army. In 1930, he was relocated to Mukden in Manchukuo, where he was later appointed as the head of Manchukuo Film Association, and worked to produce propaganda films to support the war effort. He was instrumental in launching the career of Chinese-Japanese actress Yoshiko Yamaguchi (Li Xianglan).