

## TIME CAPSULE

LUKA YUANYUAN YANG

幾每再夢  
時夢夢未  
夢尚仍清  
得誣美  
到心境  
家火  
庭盛

12 September - 12 October, 2024

49 Tung Street, Sheung Wan  
press@flowersgallery.com  
www.flowersgallery.com*Dream, dream - how I would like to dream of being home again.*

Excerpted from Songs of Gold Mountain, 1911

Flowers Gallery is pleased to present Luka Yuanyuan Yang's first solo exhibition, *Time Capsule*, in Hong Kong, featuring five short films created between 2019 - 2022.

These short films derive from her multifaceted research-based project *Dance in Herland*, encompassing five short films, photographic documentation, a collection of archives, a publication and feature-length documentary *Chinatown Cha-Cha* slated for release in Chinese cinemas in late-2024.

Yang's interest in the Chinese diaspora stems from her time in the UK observing visitors frequenting Chinese restaurants serving as time capsules that reflect the cultural limbo of immigrants - a state frequently overlooked both in China and their adopted countries. Fascinated by immigrants and their transnational experiences, Yang has extensively researched their sounds and visual cultures in the 20th century, with a particular focus on Chinese women and LGBTQ+ figures. Yang's visual language and documentarian approach to storytelling projects the different spatial, emotional and historical dimensions of the Chinese diaspora in film, discussing the complexity of identities and challenges posed to immigrants.

While *Tales of Chinatown* (2019) traces back the history of Cantonese opera among overseas Chinese community, *Cantonese Tunes on Mott Street* (2022) conveys an older generation's appreciation of Cantonese opera and seeks a sense of belonging through this art form. For Chinese immigrants separated from familiar land and culture, these theatres link them to a faraway home and help foster the strong bonds within a community. Yang brings to life the memories and trauma of those who directly experienced the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882-1943) as well as the subsequent generations in the 20th century.

By crafting stories where fact and fiction coexist, Yang challenges conventional historical interpretations and amplifies the voices of the forgotten, silenced, or misinterpreted. Years of research and focus on Chinese migration has sharpened Yang's ability to uncover their narratives and voices. What began as a 'time capsule' concept has evolved into a documentation where Yang preserves the fragmented memories of these communities in our time. As Yang explains; *I weave narratives based on real oral histories, aiming to transcend national and temporal boundaries to uncover connections among people with transnational experiences in our era.*



*Cantonese Tunes on Mott Street* (Still), 2022

## ABOUT THE FILMS

*The Lady from Shanghai* (2019) - 16'24"

Despite living in San Francisco for her entire adult life, 78-year-old Ceecee Wu has considered herself as "the lady from Shanghai." Her 101-year-old mother with amnesia shares this sentiment muttering "Where is this? Am I in Shanghai?". Ceecee, who doesn't read Chinese, reveals correspondence between her and her ex-husband from Shanghai that highlights how the two met through a dating website and formed a relationship which overcame the obstacle of language and geographical boundaries.

*Coby and Stephen Are in Love* (2019) - 30'41" (Co-directed with Carlo Nasisse)

Coby Yee, a 92-year-old retired nightclub dancer and icon from San Francisco Chinatown's golden age, and Stephen King, a man 20 years her junior found an unlikely love through matching outfits, dance, and art. Coby updated Stephen's wardrobe soon after they started dating, hand-making all of their clothes and ensuring that they never leave the house without matching outfits from head to toe. By becoming Coby's personal archivist, Stephen created photo albums and collages constructed from glamorous images of her past and the present. As their final performance in Las Vegas approaches, Coby and Stephen start to prepare their last dance on the curtain call.

*American Relatives* (2022) - 26'28"

Set in San Francisco and Toisan, this film follows Pat Chu Nishimoto as she uncovers her late father's secrets. In 1980, she visits China for the first time and discovers a family of half-relatives. The direction then shifts to these Chinese relatives, who recount the history of their ancestral home, emphasizing the erosion of history and culture amidst rapid modernization.



*Coby and Stephen Are in Love* (Still), 2019

#### Tales of Chinatown (2019) - 19'11"

Starting with a walking tour through San Francisco's Chinatown, this film brings the viewing to the last surviving Chinese theatre following the scene from the 1940s film "Lady from Shanghai" directed by Orson Welles; wandering from iconic venues in San Francisco's Chinatown including "Shanghai Low" to "Forbidden City Nightclub" - the camera follows the walking out of Chinese American nightclub dancer Cynthia Yee, and includes a series of interviews with historians Wylie Wong and David Lei.

#### Cantonese Tunes on Mott Street (2022) - 16'28"

This film centers on three Cantonese opera enthusiasts in New York: a Chinese immigrant from a Cantonese opera family, a Hong Kong immigrant who moved to New York as a child, and a Chinese refugee from Cuba. For them, Cantonese opera performances serve as both a sanctuary and place of community.

All films are single-channel HD video, Edition of 3 + 2 artist proofs



## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Luka Yuanyuan Yang (b.1989, Beijing) is a visual artist and filmmaker. She graduated from London College of Communications, University of the Arts London with a BA (hons) in photography. Her works weave documentary and archival materials into diverse mediums like film, photography, artist books, installations, and performances, often exploring themes of identity, migration, and memory. By crafting narratives where fact and fiction coexist, Yang aims to challenge conventional historical interpretations and amplify the voices of forgotten, silenced, or misinterpreted subjects.

As a filmmaker, her work has been featured in The New Yorker, as well as the New Orleans Film Festival, Atlanta Film Festival, Camden International Film Festival, Asian American International Film Festival, and Women Make Waves. Her first feature film "Chinatown Cha-Cha" has received support from The Gotham, Doc Edge, Pingyao International Film Festival, Beijing International Film Festival, CNEX, Shanyi International Women's Film Festival, and Aranya Waves Film Festival. She is currently working on her second feature film "Echoes", supported by Asymmetry Art Foundation.

As a visual artist, her work has been exhibited at Centre for Heritage Arts & Textile, Hong Kong; Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai; Power Station of Art, Shanghai; Times Art Museum & Times Arts Center Berlin; Chinese American Arts Council, New York City; Art in General, New York City; Espacio de Arte Contemporáneo, Uruguay; M WOODS, Beijing; Three Shadows Photography Art Centre, Beijing; G Museum of Art, Nanjing; Sifang Art Museum, Nanjing; OCAT, Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen; AIKE, Shanghai; and Modern Art Base, Shanghai, among others.

Luka's artwork was collected by KADIST Foundation and Power Station of Art. She has received support from institutions such as Asian Cultural Council and Asymmetry Art Foundation. She has also earned numerous international accolades, including BVLGARI Aurora Award (2023); Art Power 100 (2019); Huayu Youth Award (2016); Rencontres d'Arles The Author Book Award (2015); Magenta Foundation (2013); and the Three Shadows Tierney Fellowship (2012).

Private View: 11 September (Wednesday), 6-8pm

Artist Talk: 11 September (Wednesday), 7-8pm

### Image Credits:

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Opening Hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 12 - 6 pm

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