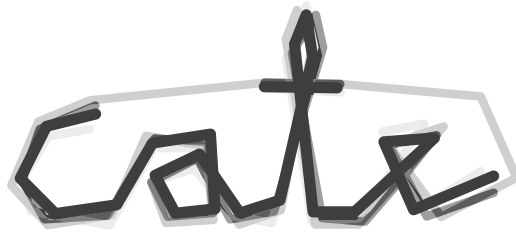


OCT. 23  
6 P.M.



## Conversations At The Edge - Fall 2014

# Cao Fei Haze and Fog

2007–13, China, multiple formats, ca 80 min + discussion  
In Mandarin with English subtitles

### Cao Fei in person!

Cao Fei (b. 1978, Guangzhou, China) is acknowledged as one of the key artists of a new generation emerging from Mainland China. She mixes social commentary, popular aesthetics, references to Surrealism, and documentary conventions in her films and installations. Her works reflect on the rapid and chaotic changes that are occurring in Chinese society today. Her work has exhibited all over the world, including the Venice Biennale; Shanghai Biennale; Yokohama Triennale; Istanbul Biennale; Guggenheim Museum, New York; the International Center of Photography, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; P.S.1, New York; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Musee d'Art Moderne de la ville de Paris; and Mori Art Museum, Tokyo among many others. She was named the Best Young Artist by the Chinese Contemporary Art Award in 2006 and was a finalist for the Hugo Boss Prize in 2010. She served on the selection committee for the curatorship of the 8th Berlin Biennale.

### program

#### *I.Mirror*

(2007, Video, Color, Sound, 28 mins.)

It's perhaps no longer important to draw the line between the virtual and the real, as the border between the two has been blurred. In the virtual land, we are not what we originally are, and yet we remain unchanged. We always worry about the virtual space's erosion of reality, but hopefully there's new possibility of combination in our electronic second life, a new force which transcend this mortal coil. On the reality's end of this combined ultra-space there are still love for simplicity and the pursuit of freedom. God loves people, but we are also each other's salvation.

#### *Haze and Fog*

(2013, Video, Color, Sound, 47 mins.)

Rather than positioning activity as good vs evil, Cao Fei's major new video commission explores how the collective consciousness of people living in the time of what the artist calls "magical metropolises" emerges

from seemingly tedious, mundane, day-to-day life. This magic reality is created through a struggle at the tipping point between the visible and the invisible.

Zombies have long been an important metaphor in Western popular culture but not so in China. Often violently blank they allow for evil motives to be projected onto them. In the western zombie film the zombie's brain is dead but the body is alive. In *Haze and Fog* the 'walking dead' are people with something dead inside only not their brain but their soul. The artist has departed from the like of U.S. TV show *The Walking Dead*, or the horror adventure game *Silent Hill*, and their protagonists' search for equilibrium. Instead of strong violence and shock, or a tense atmosphere through the unseen, Cao Fei's *Haze and Fog* examines people up close, slowly and in detail. Zooming into the international modern cells of new immigrants moved from traditional housing areas, we see people whose daily rituals have changed and traditions lost.

The artist focuses on the middle class people who have entered into this new fog of neutral modernity in their house cells, and the community of people created around them as service industries such as cleaners, real estate agents, prostitutes, deliveries, security and baby sitters. *Haze and Fog* shows the miracles of the world are blurring and we need something special to help us see more. Her film is about the invisible miracles of these potentially lost stationary lives.

The characters in *Haze and Fog* are symbolic characters of traditional and modern China. What at first glance may seem a critical glance at modernized Chinese culture in nostalgic favor of older wisdom is a more complex use of characters to question our understanding of right and wrong, progress or tradition.

### upcoming

October 30 at 6pm

**Anda Korsts' Video Metropolis**

## Artists' Film, Video, New Media, & Animation



A public program of



Department of  
Film, Video, New Media,  
and Animation

