



# FIKRET ATAY YANG FUDONG JUN NGUYEN - HATSUSHIBA

October 5 -- November 6, 2005

**MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN DE MONTRÉAL**

Québec ::







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FIKRET ATAY

Born in Batman, Turkey, in 1976.

Lives and works in Batman and (recently) in Paris.

**Any Time Prime Time**

2004, colour video with soundtrack, 6 min 30 s, edition of 5

Collection of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

OCTOBER: 5, 8, 14, 20, 23, 25, 28

NOVEMBER: 1, 4

The Kurdish artist Fikret Atay shot *Any Time Prime Time* near his native city of Batman, where—as he explained when taking part in the Istanbul Biennial in 2003—it is practically impossible to make art. For the past twenty years, the region has been weighed down by extraordinary military security, poverty and political oppression. It is nonetheless this “impossible” situation that is the subject of Fikret Atay’s works and his main source of inspiration. His aim is “to penetrate everyday life, to perceive the profundity of time in an instant, to struggle for discernment.” With fine-tuned sensitivity, Fikret Atay captures particular episodes of local culture, decodes them and subtly reveals their universal dimension. < < <

Fikret Atay studied the visual arts at the University of Dicle. His work attracted attention in 2003 with his participation in the exhibitions *Poetic Justice*, at the 8th International Biennial of Istanbul; *U-Topos*, at the 2nd Biennial of Tirana; *In den Schluchten des Balkans*, at the Kunsthalle Fridericianum in Kassel; and *Undesire*, at Apex Art in New York. More recently, his work appeared in *Time Zones*, at the Tate Modern in London. < < <

For *Any Time Prime Time*, he shot a scene that apparently takes place each year in the hills not far from Batman: young men mime a story—well known to their audience—about a shepherd and his flock. This ritual aimed at preserving memory, filmed by Fikret Atay in an almost documentary style, is evidence of an act of cultural resistance. Accompanied by the strident tones of a flute and the beating of a drum, the camera infiltrates the story without interrupting it, alternately blending with the movements of the sheep, observing the predator and occasionally mimicking the shepherd’s gaze as it sweeps the horizon. We recognize the series of actions, understanding it sufficiently to grasp that the ritual is a kind of exorcism. The beat of the drum, whose skin bears the image of a clock face with numbers but no hands, signals that time has no hold over history—an idea also reflected in the work’s title. *Any Time Prime Time* is a reminder of the vigilance that must never be relaxed and the urgency of every second. <

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YANG FUDONG

Born in Beijing, in 1971.

Lives and works in Shanghai.

**Liu Lan**

2001-2003, 35 mm black and white film transferred onto DVD, 14 min

OCTOBER: 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 26, 29

NOVEMBER: 3, 6

Yang Fudong made *Liu Lan* against the tranquil backdrop of a lake and its reedy banks. The whole film is suspended between two worlds—between dream and reality, past and present. The use of black and white gives the work a poetic quality reminiscent of early Chinese films, and the sense of nostalgia is enhanced by the melancholy strains of a sentimental song performed by Zhou Ching. Yang Fudong imagines an encounter between a man and a woman that lasts for the time it takes to cross the lake. The white-suited man is the elegant passenger; the traditionally dressed country girl pilots the ferry. Throughout the whole crossing, not a single word is exchanged. Yet their mutual regard is evident, for the man takes over the tiller for a while and the young woman covers him with a blanket while he sleeps. Their lives, though, are irreconcilable: they are from different worlds, different times.

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Yang Fudong's work portrays the rupture between tradition and modernity. He lives in Shanghai, where the modernization of China began in 1992 and where, he says, he feels like a foreigner. "I feel as though I'm trying to execute projects in a situation where there is pressure, notably political pressure, that may sometimes prevent me. I am—we all are—a little like the 'first intellectual' [a reference to the title of one of his works]. All educated Chinese people have big ambitions and inevitably encounter obstacles related to society or themselves." The place of the intellectual in contemporary China is a central theme of Yang Fudong's work. Fond of atmospheres of great calm and beauty, he often instils his films with a mood of nostalgia by shooting them in black and white.

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Yang Fudong studied painting at the institute of fine arts in Hangzhou, where contemporary art is a major focus. In 1999 he exhibited in Shanghai, as well as taking part in the Film Festival in Hanover and the exhibition *Love* at the Tokyo Art Festival. His work entitled *Seven Intellectuals in Bamboo Forest*, presented at the Venice Biennale in 2003, brought him to international attention.

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JUN NGUYEN-HATSUSHIBA

Born in Tokyo, in 1968.

Lives and works in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

**Memorial Project Nha Trang, Vietnam – Towards the Complex –  
For the Courageous, the Curious and the Cowards**  
2001, colour DVD with soundtrack, 13 min

OCTOBER: 7, 11, 13, 16, 19, 22, 27, 30

NOVEMBER: 2, 5

Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, born in Tokyo to a Japanese mother and a Vietnamese father, was educated in the United States. The theme of the dialogue between cultural identity and history is integral to his work. The fact of having lived in Japan, the United States and now Vietnam has given him a profound knowledge of identities split between the old and the new. As its title implies, *Memorial Project Nha Trang, Vietnam* is a “memorial” to the boat people, those thousands of Vietnamese who fled their homeland by sea during the 1970s and 1980s to escape war and persecution. Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba’s aim with this project has been to offer them a sanctuary, “a spiritual space,” where, he believes, “they will be able to rest in peace.” < < <

Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba attracted attention with his first participation in a major international event, at the Yokohama Triennial in 2001. Since then, his work is shown regularly in important international exhibitions. *Memorial Project Nha Trang, Vietnam* is undoubtedly his best-known work. < < <

In creating *Memorial Project Nha Trang, Vietnam*, Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba staged a bicycle-taxi race along the sandy seabed near the Vietnamese city of Nha Trang. After half a century of political turmoil, in a country undergoing major social change, the bicycle taxi, or “cyclo” – a simple way of making a living that was vital to a large sector of traditional Vietnamese society – is fast disappearing, threatened by the new economy and new legal restrictions. In the turquoise coastal waters off Nha Trang, Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba filmed a surreal scene. The to-and-fro of the divers, who have to keep returning to the surface to breathe, symbolizes the dilemma of a community torn between the old life and the new. The effort of the swimmers, struggling to hold their breath as long as possible and to edge their cyclo forward just a few metres more, illustrates the combat of a society faced with the disappearance of its traditional resources, fighting desperately to survive. <

There are countless places across the world that are full of history, memory and local mythology. The artist is often the first to perceive the dialogue between a place and its history, and to interpret the metaphor it embodies. The three works in this selection bring us images from far away. Fikret Atay shot *Any Time Prime Time* in the hills of southeastern Anatolia, not far from the Turkish town of Batman, near the border with Iraq. Yang Fudong made *Liu Lan* while traversing the calm waters of a Chinese lake in a sampan. Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba's work was filmed underwater, in the sandy depths of the sea off the coastal city of Nha Trang, in Vietnam. Using very different approaches and to varying degrees, the three artists explore the tenuous link that connects an individual to a place – what it means to “come from” somewhere. Behind each story, beyond the issues of oppression, migration and social change, all three works prompt a meditation on the identities perturbed by the passage of history.

LOUISE ISNERT

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*Projections* is a program of films and videos presented on the big screen. Many artists from a wide variety of backgrounds – video makers, visual artists, photographers, playwrights, choreographers and composers – are drawn to the poetic power of the projected image. *Projections* takes a look at recent developments in the realm of the moving image.

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