

Immediate Release

K11 Art Foundation collaborates with contemporary artist Cheng Ran to debut *Always I Distrust* in Hong Kong

Exploring the emotional isolation of city dwellers with acclaimed actress Carina Lau

9 October 2020 – 8 November 2020

Always I Distrust

“Urbanisation is an irreversible and poetic hallucination.” — Cheng Ran



Film still of Carina Lau starring in renowned contemporary artist Cheng Ran's video work *Always I Distrust*.
Courtesy of the Artist, K11 Art Foundation, and Martin Goya Business

Hong Kong — K11 Art Foundation (KAF) collaborates again with renowned contemporary artist Cheng Ran to present a new video work *Always I Distrust*, exploring the subject of emotional isolation experienced by city dwellers. Starring acclaimed actress Carina Lau, *Always I Distrust* will be screening at Gold Ball in K11 MUSEA from 10 October to 8 November 2020.

Conceived as a sequel to Cheng's work *Always I Trust* in 2014, which was inspired by a computer-generated spam email sent to the artist by an unknown woman, and screened last year, Cheng created a new video work with the corresponding theme *Always I Distrust*. Contrary to the previous piece, the new work is taken from the perspective of an abandoned hacked email account as a potential sender that auto-generates unintelligible messages to hundreds of recipients, creating a random list that reverberates in the virtual city network.

As a representative of China's new generation of contemporary artist, Cheng Ran has been exploring different art forms. Through his vibrant and sometimes withdrawal mindset, Cheng poetically presents the nihilism between reality and imagination. His works reflect upon the existential state and cultural diversity of Chinese young generation under the impact of globalisation.

2020 is a year of global turmoil in which individual emotions have been experiencing an unprecedented complex cycle. This experience has broken through regions, classes, and occupations, leaving us in a continuous state of facing the unknown and maintaining introspection. Cheng Ran responded to the emotional life corresponding to the rapidly developing modern world through the process of taking in, from the large amount of outgoing information, the present voices with representation and strong individual sentiments.

Cheng Ran stated, “If urban construction is done by thousands of unknown workers, then the construction of the information city should include these ‘virtual builders’. As rapid urban development brings unprecedented technological changes, the relationship between cities and people has evolved accordingly. This relationship now stands at a new crossroad, over a new horizon.” Inspired by this concept, *Always I Distrust* constructs a fantasy world in a fictional setting, a space for listening and meditation, immersing the viewers in an abstract yet magnificently tactile and interactive time-space, as they traverse liquid spaces and interconnected portals in a nine-minute experience.

In the video work, Carina Lau plays different roles to interpret various emotional states of people in the current world. It visually creates a meditation space that is forgotten in the infinite depth of the Internet, wrapping audience’s senses in an environment of constant exploration and allowing them to search for the answer to the confusion of this century.

Affected by the pandemic, Cheng Ran and Carina Lau were unable to produce the work together on site. Unlike the previous video works, artist, director and teams cooperated remotely to complete the cross-regional production, which fully shows the current social situation and the action status.

Carina Lau expressed, “I appreciate Cheng Ran very much and I am pleased to work with him again. This is the first remotely filming experience I have had. The process of using various technologies to conduct in-depth communication with the artist and teams are new and special. I hope to use modern technology, as well as my personal experience and feelings, to produce a work that resonates with the audience.”

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About *Always I Distrust*

Director	Cheng Ran
Starring	Carina Lau
Chief producer	Adrian Cheng
Presenter	K11 Art Foundation

Screening information

Date	9 October to 8 November 2020
Time	Open every day from 10am – 10pm
Venue	Gold Ball, 2F, K11 MUSEA
Website	https://www.k11artfoundation.org/
Free Admission	

Social media

Please join the conversation on Instagram (@k11artfoundation), and Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/K11ArtFoundation/>), with the hashtags #K11ArtFoundation #AlwaysIDistrust #ChengRan #CarinaLau

Download high resolution images:

<https://nwshare.k11.com/DownloadFile.aspx?key=n4ak0RrJsYbmCRYJBPQb0Jw0hIZ8PuhZcBA86%2fPV0PUwl9C%2f0vvcGI8KbdZNUFTv>

About Cheng Ran

Born in 1981 in Mongolia, China, the artist participated in the artist residence programme at the Royal Academy of Visual Arts in the Netherlands from 2013 to 2014. He founded the art space, Martin Goya Business, in 2017.

As a representative of China's new generation of contemporary artist, Cheng Ran has been trying different art forms including film, poetry, drama, novel, and installation, etc. Relying on his vibrant mindset, sometimes detached and more often experimental spirit, he is especially good at changing the sense of space, structure and one's conception towards the original object by undefined use of materials. The switch between texts and visual language created by the artist, allows the audience floating between the reality and the imagination, presenting the poetics of nihilism. In fact, the artist re-patches aesthetic elements as such into his own unique artistic language. His works in general reflect on the existential state of Chinese young generation under the impact of political and cultural globalisation. From these works, we can see that the artist doesn't pay much attention on the issue of "identity", but more on discovering new values from diverse cultures brought by globalisation. It seems that the artist's self-judgment can't be easily spotted, while this largely speaks of his autonomy in artistic creation. We can also find this distinguished feature in many of Cheng Ran's works, which always reflect his deep thoughts on universal themes including the boundary, distinction, and even confrontation, marginalisation, etc. in an all-round way.

Cheng Ran's works have been featured in numerous biennials, group exhibitions and film festivals, including Sydney Opera house (2019); FRONT International: Cleveland Triennial for Contemporary Art An American City (Transformer Station, Cleveland, 2018); Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, 2017; The 63rd International Short Film Festival Oberhausen (Oberhausen, 2017); China Remixed Initiative (The Media School of the University of Indiana, Indiana, 2017); Time Test: International Video Art Research Exhibition (CAFA Art Museum, Beijing, 2016); *SALTWATER: a Theory of Thought Forms*, the 14th Istanbul Biennial (2015); *When I Give, I Give Myself* (Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam, 2015); *Inside China - L'Intérieur du Géant* (chi K11 art museum, Shanghai, 2015; K11 Art Foundation Pop-Up Space, Hong Kong, 2015; and Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2014); the 8th Shenzhen Sculpture Biennial (Shenzhen, 2014); *Decorum: carpets and tapestries by artists* (Power Station of Art, Shanghai, 2014); *ON/OFF: China's Young Artists in Concept and Practice* (Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, 2013); the 26th European Media Art Festival (Osnabrück, Germany, 2013); *Video Art in China – MADATAC* (Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, 2011); The Third Guangzhou Triennial (Guangzhou Museum of Art, Guangzhou, 2008) and The Second Chinese New Media Art Festival (China Academy of Art, Hangzhou, 2004).

For the presentation of *Inside China* in Paris, Cheng Ran's video *Joss* (2013) was projected on the façade of the Palais de Tokyo.

Cheng Ran's recent solo exhibitions include New Museum, New York; Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), Beijing; Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Tel Aviv; MAC, Belfast; K11 Art Foundation, Hong Kong.

Awards

- Nomura Emerging Artist Award 2019
- Best Director at Madrid Video Art Festival 2017
- Nominated for the China's Best Young Artist Award by AAC Arts, 2015 and 2016
- Selected for the Pierre Huber Prize 2015
- Nominated for the Stockholm Absolut Art Award 2015
- Named as the Best Young Video Artist by the *Ran Dian Magazine* 2014

Collections

M+, Hong Kong; K11 Art Foundation, Hong Kong; DSL Collection, France; Domus Collection, New York; New Century Art Foundation, Beijing; White Rabbit Gallery, Australia; Guangdong Museum of Art, Shanghai Museum of Art, Zhejiang Museum of Art, Borusan Kocabiyik Foundation, Turkey; the Walther Collection, Germany; the Royal Academy of Visual Arts, the Netherlands, and Erlenmeyer Foundation, Switzerland, etc.

About K11 Art Foundation

Founded by Adrian Cheng in 2010, K11 Art Foundation (KAF) is a non-profit organisation in Hong Kong dedicated to fostering the development of Chinese contemporary art. In pursuing our mission, we are committed to supporting artists through KAF's exhibitions, artist residencies, and educational programmes. We also actively establish partnerships with leading art and cultural institutions around the world, collaborating with curators and other industry specialists to create impactful cross-cultural exchange and contribute to the expanding global contemporary art discourse.

Over the years, KAF has collaborated with the Royal Academy of Arts, Serpentine Galleries, and the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London; Centre Pompidou, Palais de Tokyo, and Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris; Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, Figueres; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the New Museum, The Museum of Modern Art, and MoMA PS1, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; UCCA Center for Contemporary Art, in Beijing; and Videotage, British Council Hong Kong, Design Trust, and Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong, among others.

www.k11artfoundation.org

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