

## **A Field of Non-Field** Chen Chieh-jen

Taiwan's Chen Chieh-jen is **one of the most important Asian artists on the international contemporary art scene**. Present at the most important art biennials such as Sao Paulo (1998) or Venice (on two occasions, 1999 and 2005), his visual work offers a critical reflection on the strategies of power.

## Description

Chen, who grew up under the regime that the Kuomintang imposed on Taiwan, began by setting up underground exhibitions and performance art pieces to challenge the dominant political mechanisms during a period marked by the Cold War, anti-communist propaganda and Martial Law (1950 - 1987) in Taiwan. When Martial Law was lifted, Chen ceased his artistic activity for eight years. He returned to art in 1996, collaborating with unemployed workers, day labourers, migrants and social activists. They occupied factories owned by the capitalists, crept into areas cordoned off by the Law, and they used discarded materials to build sets for their film productions. To portray contemporary reality and a popular history that has been obscured by neoliberalism, Chen embarked on a series of video projects in which he used strategies he refers to as "re-imagining, re-narrating, re-writing, and re-connecting".

With this method **he investigates the recent history of his country, retrieving specific situations that expose the systematic use of control, violence, subjugation and alienation, while at the same time exploring with visual languages the complex relationships between image and power.**

***A Field of Non-Field*** is the first chapter of Chen Chieh-jen's long-term project *Her and Her Children*, which follows a profound reflection on Madhyamaka philosophy and is inspired by the experiences of his unemployed brother.

In this work, he suggests that under the new social conditions of global control in the post-Internet era, it is almost impossible to appreciate individual desire, thought and sensory structures. "Can we get out of this situation?", the artist wonders.

According to the specialised media artforum.com, this film revolves around what Chen called "dharmic" leftism, a term he has been using for some time

now. “This concept is based on the Nagarjuna Madhyamaka school of Buddhism, in which Chen sees a kind of negative dialectic made manifest through its eight negations: *Neither birth nor death, neither end nor permanence, neither identity nor difference, neither coming nor going*. The doctrine requires a synthesis of strict criticism and speculative awareness, which is also materialised at the visual level: the slow motion shots in Chen’s videos remain ineffable”.

## Credits

Director/Scriptwriter: Chen Chieh-jen

Production Manager: Chen Tsung-chin & Chen Mao-jung

Director of Photography: Chien Ming-chi

Gaffer: Wei Chia-ching

Production Designer: Chen Chieh-jen

Sound Recordist: Li Yu-chih

Sound Designer: Chien Feng-shu & Chen Chieh-jen

Music by: Wang Fujui

Editor: Chen Chien-ping

Cast: Li Cheng-hao, Chen Shao-tang, Watan Wuma, Tsai Hsiu-ju, Cheng Chih-chung & unemployed laborers

Producer: Chen Chieh-yi

Co-producer: SAMUSO, Seoul, Korea

Language: Mandarin with Spanish subtitles

## SPANISH PREMIERE

In collaboration with



Date / 28, 29 and 30 June

Timetable / Friday 5pm to 8pm; Saturday and Sunday 12pm to 8pm

Duration / 61 minutes and 7 secs. in loop

Venue / Naves Matadero

Price / Free entrance