

Statement

A faraway cold Palace Installation is named after the translation from the Chinese moon mythologies.

In this installation we aim to bridge the gap and form an understanding of Eastern moon mythology, as a means of showcasing the Eastern, and Chinese new dominance of space exploration. Our installation and performance stems from the three major Chinese moon myths, the story of Chang'e, Wu Gang, and Jade Rabbit.

For each of us the moon has a different meaning, our own social and cultural backgrounds had defined our perception of the Moon.

For an American the perception of the moon is something that has slipped out of our grasp. Like a lost love, the moon has moved on, and the close connection to the joy and happiness, the collective memory of the moon landing itself was before our generation. Our perception of the space program itself is just the precession of surreal celestial images, and tragedy because our image of astronauts stems from the space shuttles Challenger and Colombia disasters. The successes of NASA are all in the past, and I believe there to be a national sense of disappointment in the space programs declining role in leading the way in space exploration. An American perspective is that space represents another declining world leadership role for our country, and like so many things China has started to fill our shoes.

As a Romanian, I can't imagine that my country could have anything else to do with a space program, then as propaganda set up with no actual background. This could be a left over from our Communist era. I would say we were far too long, following the Chinese model. So for my country to have any connection with any space project needs some help from a third party. Looking at the countries history I won't be surprised if we would keep our options open for both, East and West. So I see my roll in this project as a bridge between the two big cultural sides.

I guess all the Chinese people would be just like me, when they hear the word "Moon" they would first think of, Chang'e, Wugang -the old mythology stories, not of modern science. However, one day, when we really get there, what would we find? Are we going to the future, or back to the future? -We will see.

The Moon and Chinese Mythology

Chang'e: is a Chinese goddess of the Moon. She left her husband and live along on the Moon. There are many versions of the story. The lunar exploration-orbiting spacecraft Chang'e 1 is named after her.

Woodcutter Wu Gang: is a character in Chinese folklore. He is known to cut down a self-healing cherry bay on the moon, punished by The Jade Emperor. But as fast as he cuts into the tree, it heals itself, and he never makes any progress.

Moon rabbit: also called the Jade Rabbit, is a rabbit that lives on the moon in Chinese folklore. It make medicine with leaves of cherry bay to healing sick people on the earth. It is often portrayed as a companion of the moon goddess Chang'e, constantly pounding the elixir of life for her.

A Faraway Cold Palace

Concept

The moon has come into focus again in the great Space race. It has been forty years since Neil Armstrong landed on the moon, now after the recent discovery of water on the moon a new interest has been sparked about finally heading back. In this new moon race has new contenders, the US and Russia are no longer in the lead. By 2015 it might be a Chinese man to be the next to step foot on the moon.

We conceptualize our project around dissolving the western ideals and myths about the moon and working with Chinese mythology and symbolism as our focus. Our concept of the moon stems from the three Chinese moon myths the story of Chang'e, Wu Gang, and the Jade Rabbit. These three myths revolve around a mystical laurel tree that grows on the moon.

Personal Backgrounds

Katarina Sengstaken, with a BFA in Digital Arts has previously created the installation, Forgotten Barracks, which was featured at the 8:22 Space exhibit in 2006 at the Ewerk in Weimar. She has also worked as studio assistant to video installation artist Amie Siegel at Harvard University, as well as interning with installation artist Jean Shin while she prepared her installation for the Museum of Modern Art in 2004.

Timea Tofalvi has a BFA in Arts from Partium University, Romania. Currently she is a Master student in her first semester at the Bauhaus University, Weimar. Her focus is in animation. Her films were shown in several countries by international film festivals such as: Mediawave (Hungary), Balkanima (Serbia), Kaff (Hungary), Cinemaiubit (Romania). She has also participated for many years as an assistant at Passport a film, photo, and animation camp.

Yuxiang Wen, BA in Film and Television Direction from the Communication University of China. Her short films "Montage," and "Now I am dreaming of the Past," was shown on CCTV-6 as well as CATV. She is also working for SOHU.com for the Berlinale and Cannes Film Festival as a special journalist