

Simon Leung
War After War
Curated by Rirkrit Tiravanija

March 24th – May 7th, 2011

Opening reception Thursday, March 24th, 6-8pm

“Simon Leung has been redefining the negotiation of territory and boundaries of identity and culture, both in physical and metaphorical ways...Leung has, in his works both past and present, consistently reflected on cultural conditions that run parallel in daily and intellectual life.”

-Rirkrit Tiravanija

The work of Los Angeles-based artist Simon Leung serves as a companion guide for examining the dislocation and disparities that are left in the aftermath of war. Pulling inspiration from objects, people, and writing that have been removed from their origins—through the effects of time, circumstance or historical violence, or through his own tactical displacements—Leung recombines these parts to form new allegories that parallel and challenge the received meanings of his source material. This amalgamation of historical specificity and against-the-grain interpretation is rendered in ways that both bestow credence to his original subjects, and open new narratives that question their previous certainty. Using video, performance, and other media, Leung obliquely reinvents the war stories of our time.



Still from *War After War*, 2011
Single-channel video

On view at CUE Art Foundation, Leung’s first solo show in New York since 1996, is a new single-channel video/sculpture exploring these themes: *War after War* (2011). Revisiting the artist’s friend and frequent subject/collaborator Warren Niesłuchowski, *War After War* serves as an accompaniment to the an earlier work, *Warren Piece (in the ‘70s)* from 1993. Niesłuchowski, born in a displaced-persons’ camp in Germany, immigrated to the United States as a child, only to leave again when he became an army deserter during the Vietnam War. During the last decade he has become, in Leung’s words, a “cosmopolitan nomad”, often spending his time as an international



Still from *War After War*, 2011
Single-channel video

houseguest without a permanent home of his own. These periods of transience in Niesłuchowski’s life, paired with his original displacement, provided timely inspiration for Leung. It is not coincidence that both of these pieces were created during times of war – the Gulf War and Iraq/Afghan Wars respectively. Indeed, both works function as meditations on the dislocation—physical, psychological, ethical—that wars create. In *War After War*, the viewer follows Niesłuchowski, playing a version of himself, as he wanders through what seems to be a library and a guesthouse of possibly one of his hosts, where he reads, rests, sings “leftist songs” in several languages, and reflects on his collaborations with Leung over the past twenty years. Throughout the video are voiceover readings from Immanuel Kant’s essay “Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch”, a text which considers the possibility of a world beyond war. For Kant, “peace” is a difficult, if not impossible ideal, given that that “the state of nature is rather a state of War.” This is where Leung’s work steps in – taking its audience to the place where ethical ideals and war’s remains look upon themselves, and we are left to consider the ramifications of wars, and to imagine the (im)possibility of living otherwise.

(More, over)

For additional information, please contact Ryan Thomas, Programs Coordinator, CUE Art Foundation, 212-206-3583, or email ryan.thomas@cueartfoundation.org

Free catalogues available.

Exhibition-related Programming:

Wars I Will Have Seen

Simon Leung in conversation with Project for an Archive of the Future Anterior

Saturday, March 26th, 4:00-5:30pm

This event is FREE but RSVPs required, email jessica.gildea@cueartfoundation.org to reserve a seat.

For more information on the project, please visit: archiveofthefutureanterior.org

ARTIST'S BIO:

Simon Leung was born in Hong Kong and studied at the University of California Los Angeles, Columbia University, and the Whitney Independent Study Program. His projects in various media include a proposition of Marcel Duchamp's oeuvre as a discourse in ethics; a rethinking of the psychological, philosophical, and political dimensions of the glory hole; meditations on the residual space of the Vietnam-American War; a video essay on the site/non-site dialectic instigated by Robert Smithson's reception of Edgar Allan Poe; "squatting projects" in various cities (Berlin, New York, Chicago, Vienna, Guangzhou, Hong Kong); and an ongoing opera project set in Los Angeles' Griffith Park called *The Side of the Mountain*. Leung has participated in the Guangzhou Triennial (2008), the Luleå Summer Biennial (2005), the Venice Biennale (2003), the Whitney Biennial (1993), and has also exhibited at Pat Hearn Gallery, the Museum of Modern Art, the Museum of Contemporary Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Generali Foundation (Vienna), 1a Space (Hong Kong), NGBK (Berlin), and Sala Mendoza (Caracas). In 2008, he received a Guggenheim fellowship and the Art Journal Award for his essay *The Look of Law*. He has taught in the Studio Art Department at the University of California, Irvine since 2001. Leung's exhibition at CUE Art Foundation marks his first solo show in New York City since 1996.

About CUE:

CUE Art Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit forum for contemporary art and cultural exchange that provides opportunities and resources for under-recognized artists. We value the astonishing diversity of creativity that artists provide and the importance of their activity in the social context of the city.

CUE provides artists, students, scholars and art professionals resources at many stages of their careers and creative lives. Our programs include exhibitions, publications, professional development seminars, educational outreach, symposia, readings, concerts performances. Since 2002, we have operated from our 4,500 square foot storefront venue in the heart of New York's Chelsea Arts District.

CUE exhibiting artists are chosen by their peers who are themselves selected by a rotating advisory council from across the country. This pluralistic process ensures that CUE consistently offers diverse viewpoints from multiple disciplines of artistic practice.

Simply put, we give artists their CUE to take center stage in the challenging world of art.

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