



MAR 31 WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH: FUNA YE

THEME MONTH (/FEATURES/CATEGORY/THEME+MONTH)



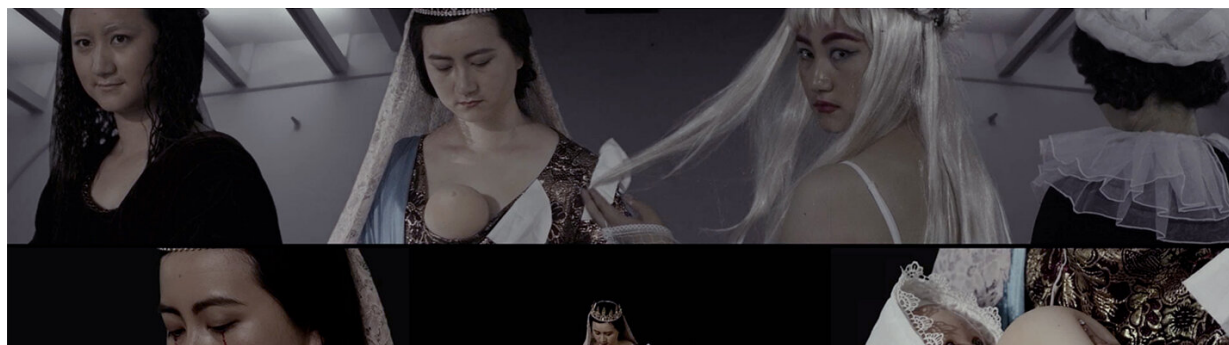
The Supper of Goddess, C-print, 51.7 x 150 cm, 2015 @ Funa Ye, Courtesy Eli Klein Gallery

Interview by Lingfei Ren

Copy Editors: Lara Southern, Maggie Boccella

LINGFEI REN: You mostly work with video, animation, and low-tech 3D imagery. Is this your preferred medium?

FUNA YE: I don't have a specific preference, but I find making videos and putting those images together in that way the easiest. I generally have the thought first and then like to work on multiple dimensions of the project for a long period [of time]. So each time, [each component] feels different, even if it's all continuing the same project. The final result could be a video or some installation, perhaps a live performance. Maybe that's why we call it "experimental art".





Video stills from *Practice 13 – The After Dinner Party*, 3 Channel Video, Color, 12 min, 2015 @ Funa Ye, Courtesy Eli Klein Gallery

The basic composition of the “Goddess Legends” series is based on thirteen unique and distinctive female figures in the history of art. The whole composition refers to Da Vinci’s *The Last Supper*. These thirteen characters are played by Ye Funa. Through special effects, make-up, styling, post-production, and the parodic approach with both Chinese and Western references, the three-channel video installation is created. Through role-playing, Ye places characters from different eras into the same time and space, therefore creating interconnectedness between each character’s personality. When Ye “becomes” each figure and reenacts their stories, she also finds the “potential energy” behind the characters. Through the re-narrating the fictional, it is possible for Ye to further discuss the strange politics that exist throughout history.

LINGFEI: *In The After Dinner Party you capture classically revered works of art such as The Mona Lisa and The Last Supper and reinterpret them, putting yourself into all of those characters. What went into your selection process when choosing these works?*

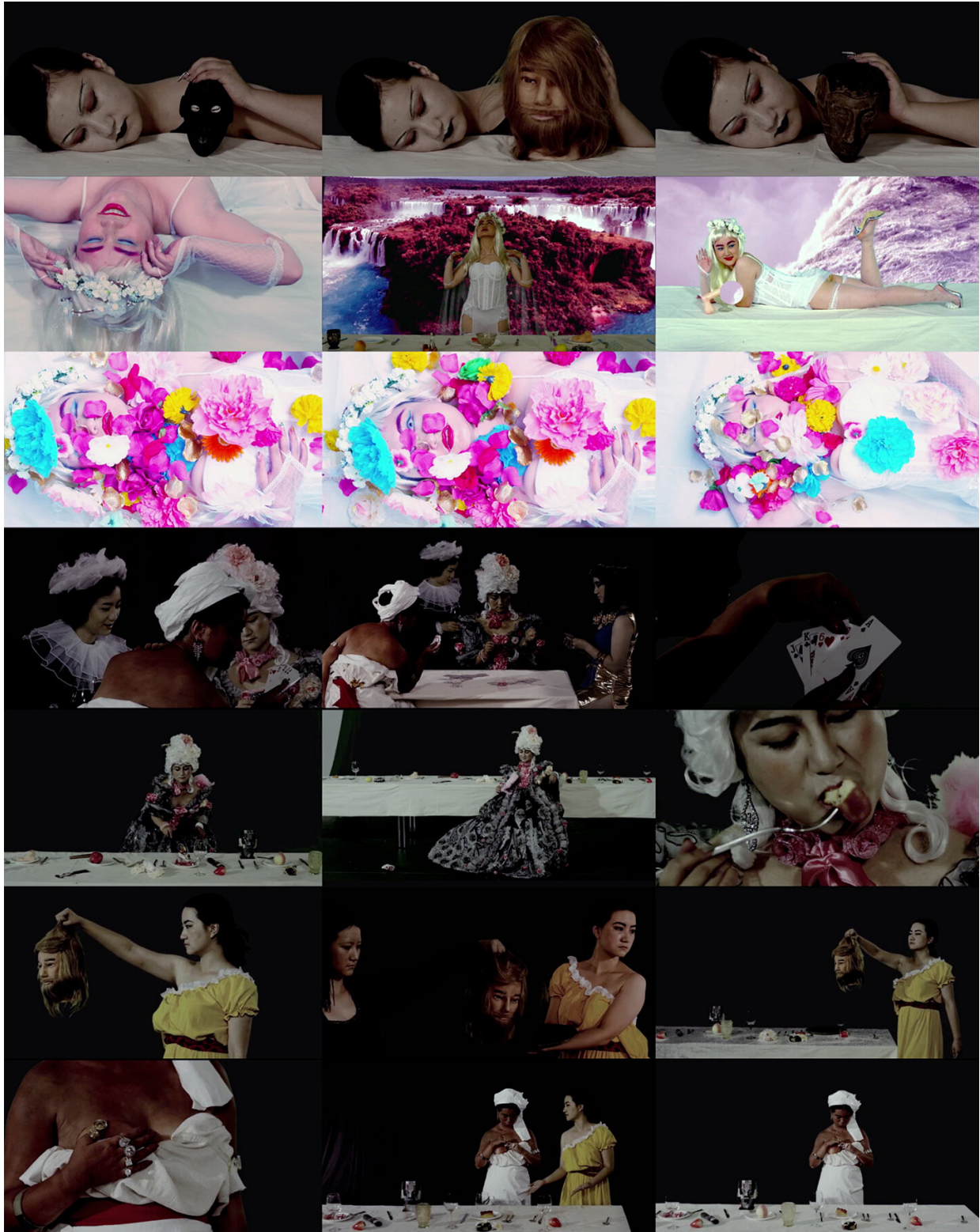
FUNA: [I like to] put myself into the research process. I thought about individual portraits of a few characters, and then I thought about making it into a bigger project and challenging myself to act as [all of these] different [people].

MUSÉE

VANGUARD OF PHOTOGRAPHY CULTURE

When we first learn to paint we always imitate others' work — for me [this] is the same thing. Trying to remake [these] works [through] video using similar structures and poses

0



Video stills from *Practice 13 – The After Dinner Party*, 3 Channel Video, Color, 12 min, 2015 © Funa Ye, Courtesy Eli Klein Gallery

MUSÉE

LINGFEI: The characters you portray in The After Dinner Party are classically male.

VANGUARD OF PHOTOGRAPHY CULTURE

FUNA: I've always been interested in women's work, in women artists. I think I chose [The Last Supper] because the structure of the picture is so interesting. I like the image — I didn't have a specific [relationship to] the people in the picture so much.

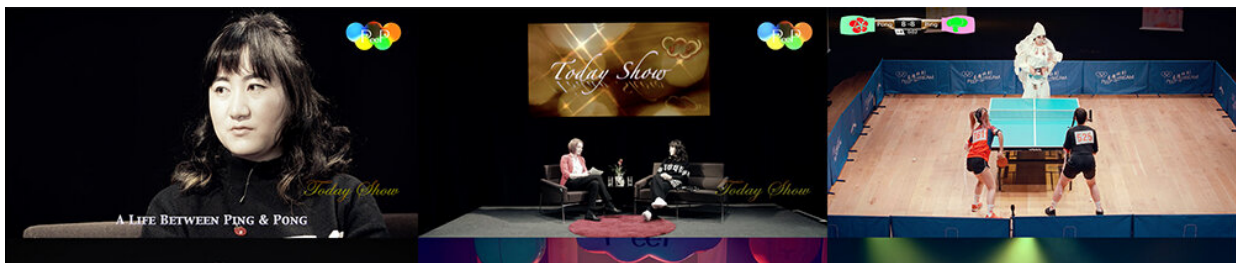
At the beginning, I did some research on different [female] characters [across] history, from different generations, times, and backgrounds. [Looking at] how they might come together if, at [a] certain point in time, they [met]. I liked the idea of a dinner as the [way in which] some women come together to [share] food and chat.



Cicicolia Ye, C-print on aluminium, 75.4 x 145 cm, 2015 @ Funa Ye, Courtesy Eli Klein Gallery

LINGFEI: As an Asian artist, how does the western nature of these classic works influence you?

FUNA: I studied western art history — while it's difficult for me to engage with the religious [references in these] classic works, I think of it as a learning process. I also see [my work] as a way to create more diversity in these works. You might see some [people of color] in classic works, but rarely as the main character. [In classic depictions] the Virgin Mary is often portrayed as just a mother, while Cicicolia Ye is seen as purely sexual. I try [to give] the women more complexity in my work.





Video Stills from *Ping Pong Stream*, Single Channel Video, Color, 35'49", 2018 @ Funa Ye, Courtesy Eli Klein Gallery

Ping Pong Stream turns The Space of Nottingham Contemporary into a live stream of Ping Pong Championships. Through the performance, Ping Pong Stream reflects on the stories of former world champion Yongping and asks questions on national pride, politics and individual values in relation to Ping Pong.

LINGFEI: *In Ping Pong Stream, you put costumes on several characters — why?*

FUNA: Those are inspired by the female characters on Chinese talk shows and reality tv — [they all have] very turbulent lives. All of the narrative text is sourced from different generations of ping pong players. I wanted to created [this] sort of fantasy where I performed as a former champion being interviewed on a talk show with all of these characters — [hence] all of the costumes.



Ping Pong stream clip

from [funaye](#)

05:24



MUSÉE

VANGUARD OF PHOTOGRAPHY CULTURE

LINGFEI: *The project was commissioned by Nottingham Contemporary — what were the requirements of the commission?*

FUNA: They were actually very supportive and didn't have too many specific requirements. Initially, they suggested it be a live performance — they have a beautiful theatre there — but it would have been too difficult to manage with rehearsing and all of the different performers, so I eventually decided to make it a video.



Flying Dance No.2, C print photography, 36x 60cm, 2017 @ Funa Ye, Courtesy Eli Klein Gallery

Flying Dance was made by the artist during a residency program in Berlin in the 2017. It is the first part of the "Self-fiction" series. This project includes photographs, archives, and a 30-minute video. Ye plays various female roles that are based on, and appropriated from Chinese TV shows. The concept of this work was to combine episodes of "Virtual Adventurals" of Legal Report and The First Intimate Contact (1999), which was a very first Chinese online fiction, and to recreate an episode of an imaginary show. In doing so the artist incorporates screen recording from a video game "Sims" and video footages which were made by the artist. "Flying Dance" brings up questions of identity and gender issues, as well as representing and recalling memories from the initial stage of internet and virtual dating in the 90s.

LINGFEI: *Your PeeP show series is focused on our compulsion to display ourselves online. What inspired this focus?*

FUNA: I first became interested in live stream culture when it was just starting out back in 2014. The idea was strange to me at first, but also felt a lot like performance art. An in-person performance might only get a hundred audience members, but in this online space, you can reach thousands from all different backgrounds.

LINGFEI: *You probably couldn't have imagined the world we live in now!*

FUNA: Never! I never want to see a sci-fi movie again because it's too realistic.



Flying Dance trailer 2

from funaye

MUSÉE

VANGUARD OF PHOTOGRAPHY CULTURE

0

02:22

LINGFEI: *You refer to your work as self-fiction. What does “self-fiction” mean to you?*

FUNA: It’s a term I made up. While I was doing my MFA, I imitated some of my own family members, and I found putting myself into their clothes and characters helped me understand my family more and brought me closer to them. Rather than just reading about the history, I felt more deeply involved putting my physical self into the characters. Part of them becomes a part of me.









0

Up: MY PARENTS AND ME / Down: My father YeYongqing and my mother Fu Liya, taken at home in Kunming in 1984., 70X70cm, Digital print, *Family Album* series, 2012 @ Funa Ye, Courtesy Eli Klein Gallery

Family Album is a series of short videos recreating family portraits. Ye Funa uses old photographs of her parents and grandparents, remaking them through the form of video. She portrays the characters, and then lip-synchs with the recorded voices of the original characters.

Ye's work can be viewed on her website (<http://funaye.com/category/works/>) and Eli Klein Gallery's (<http://www.galleryek.com/artists/ye-funa>).

Funa Ye (/features/tag/Funa+Ye), Lingfei Ren (/features/tag/Lingfei+Ren), Maggie Boccella (/features/tag/Maggie+Boccella), Lara Southern (/features/tag/Lara+Southern)

-  (<HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/SHARER/SHARER.PHP?U=HTTPS%3A%2F%2FMUSEEMAGAZINE.COM%2FFEATURES%2F2021%2F3%2F31%2FWOMENS-HISTORY-MONTH-FUNA-YE>)
-  (<HTTPS://TWITTER.COM/INTENT/TWEET?URL=HTTPS%3A%2F%2FMUSEEMAGAZINE.COM%2FFEATURES%2F2021%2F3%2F31%2FWOMENS-HISTORY-MONTH-FUNA-YE>)
-  (<HTTPS://WWW.TUMBLR.COM/SHARE/LINK?URL=HTTPS%3A%2F%2FMUSEEMAGAZINE.COM%2FFEATURES%2F2021%2F3%2F31%2FWOMENS-HISTORY-MONTH-FUNA-YE>)
-  (<HTTPS://WWW.PINTEREST.COM/PIN/CREATE/LINK/?DESCRIPTION=%E2%80%9CRATHER+THAN+JUST+READING+ABOUT+THE+HISTORY%2C+I+FEL>)



MUSÉE

VANGUARD OF PHOTOGRAPHY CULTURE

Your used gear...



...could start their new career.



Time to upgrade or cash in on your kit?

Buy. Sell. Trade. **Change gear.**

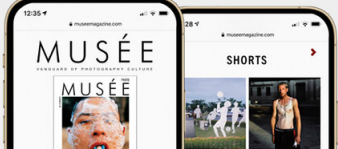
www.mpb.com/info/sell

(<https://www.mpb.com/en-us/info/sell/>)

Advertisement

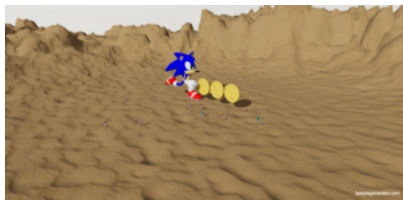
THE MUSÉE MAGAZINE DIGITAL ARCHIVE

\$30.00 Annual Subscription
2 issues/year + The Musée Digital Archive



(/membership)

Advertisement



Mar 30 It's a Bull Market for Polar Bears

(/features/2021/3/30/its-a-bull-market-for-polar-bears)

MUSÉE

VANGUARD OF PHOTOGRAPHY CULTURE **Related Posts**

0



Mar 3 Women's History Month: Laia Abril
(/features/2021/3/3/womens-history-month-laia-abril)



Mar 17 Women's History Month: Isabelle Wenzel
(/features/2021/3/17/womens-history-month-isabelle-wenzel)

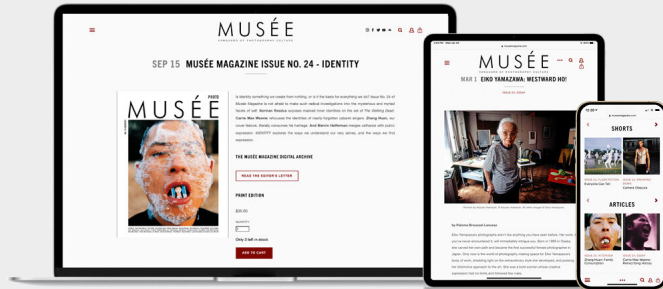


Mar 25 Women's History Month: Jessie Boon Cowler
(/features/2021/3/25/womens-history-month-jessy-boon-cowler)

THE MUSÉE MAGAZINE DIGITAL ARCHIVE

\$30.00 Annual Subscription
2 issues/year + The Musée Digital Archive

BECOME A MEMBER



(membership)

Advertisement

PARTNERS (/support)



(<http://bit.ly/2T3F>)

(<https://www.parisphoto->

MUSÉE
VANGUARD OF PHOTOCOPY

HELP MUSÉE GROW

Musée Magazine is a fiscally sponsored project of the New York Foundation for the Arts. The New York Foundation for the Arts is a 501c3 nonprofit organization and donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

DONATE

0

(<https://www.nyfa.org/fstransaction/pay/4d4e94d3-936c-49bc-b157-4bb0e7a1c5be>)

Site designed by **SHAHID & COMPANY** (<http://shahidcompany.com/>).

ALL IMAGES, TRADEMARKS, AND TRADE NAMES ARE THE PROPERTY OF THEIR RESPECTIVE TRADEMARK HOLDERS © 2018 MUSÉE. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. PUBLISHED BY MUSÉE.

Musée Magazine. Established 2011.

[HOME \(/HOME\)](#)
[THE MAGAZINE \(/MAGAZINE\)](#)
[FEATURES \(/FEATURES\)](#)
[CULTURE \(/CULTURE\)](#)
[EVENTS \(/EVENTS\)](#)
[MUSÉE LIMITED EDITIONS \(/MUSEE-LIMITED-EDITIONS\)](#)
[MUSÉE EDITIONS \(/MUSEE-EDITIONS\)](#)
[STOCKLIST \(/STOCKLIST\)](#)
[+ CONTACT](#)