

MARY BOONE GALLERY
745 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, NY 10151 . 212.752.2929

PATTY CHANG

On 21 May 2009 the Mary Boone Gallery will open at its Fifth Avenue location "The Product Love", an exhibition of new works by PATTY CHANG.

Shot in Hangzhou, Los Angeles, and Berlin, *The Product Love-Die Ware Liebe* (2009) is a 42-minute, two-channel video installation which gravitates around the meeting between Walter Benjamin and the Chinese-American film actress Anna May Wong, and more specifically, around the text Benjamin wrote about meeting Wong for the German literary magazine *Die Literarische Welt* in 1928.

The first video alternates between three people each individually translating Benjamin's German text into English. This illuminates the ease with which mistranslation occurs in Benjamin's "reading" of Wong. The performance of translation gives distance to Benjamin's text and allows the viewer space to reconsider Benjamin's contextualization of Wong. On the other screen, two Chinese actors portray Benjamin and Wong's meeting as an imaginary, intimate encounter. The installation restages and recontextualizes this meeting as a porno in China with Chinese television actors – a reversal of sorts, turning a Chinoiserie into a Western.

Laotze Missing (2009) is a 3-minute film loop and photographic installation. The film is a transfer from video documentation shot in a film archive of *Song aka Show Life* (1928) starring Anna May Wong. In the film, Wong portrays a homeless street urchin who becomes the assistant in a knife-throwing act. The knife-thrower draws a chalk outline around her body and pushes her out of the way before throwing knives along the outline. The sense of absence is heightened by being rewound in slow motion and played repeatedly. The photograph is a close-up detail from one of Walter Benjamin's manuscripts on

Bertolt Brecht where he has notated in his own hand the phrase "Laotse fehlt", or Laotze missing, which has subsequently been crossed out by a layout artist.

Patty Chang (born 1972, San Leandro, California) is well-known for her earlier performative works which deal with themes of gender, sexuality, language and empathy. Her video installation Shangri-La (2005), which was shot in Shangri-La, China, investigates how cultural knowledge becomes produced, adapted and reappropriated for consumption.

The exhibition, at 745 Fifth Avenue, will run through 27 June 2009. Please contact Ron Warren at the Gallery for further assistance, or visit our website www.maryboonegallery.com .