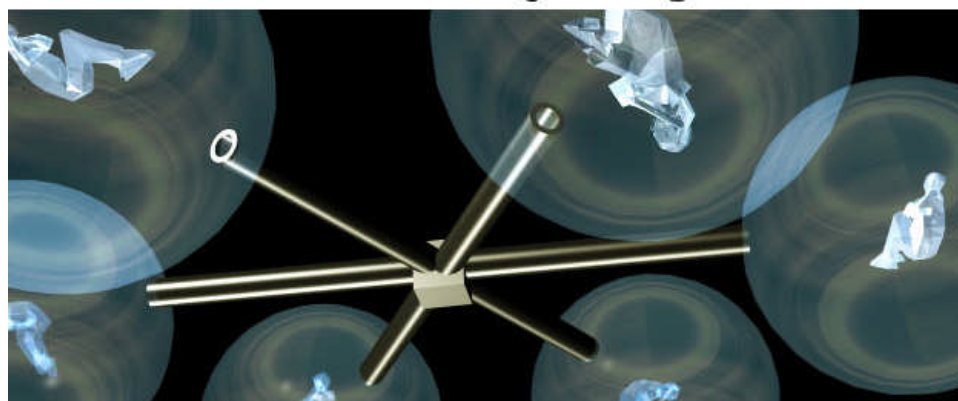
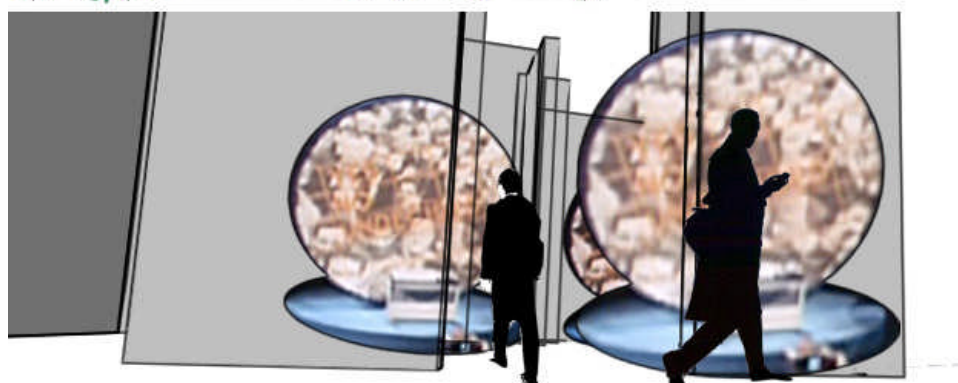


# ***STAR FAIRY: HK in Venice***

**Map Office, Hiram To and Amy Cheung**  
**curated by Norman Ford**

Hong Kong's participation in the  
52<sup>nd</sup> International Art Exhibition  
La Biennale di Venezia, 2007



香港藝術發展局資助  
Supported by the  
Hong Kong Arts Development Council

## **PREMISE**

Cities create and employ representational strategies in promotion of a particular identity. As a city identity becomes a brand, it desires real cultural artifacts to substantiate itself. From tourism boards to architectural firms, from government departments to independent arts, city images are created and disseminated globally in vast quantities and in varying quality. Enormous amounts of time and money are spent in making our cities, and ourselves, *visible* to the rest of the world. This generates intricate networks of imaging strategies, interacting and competing for economic and cultural gain.

The city's motivations are not mysterious – this is primarily a promotional, income-generating exercise. But it's also about making meaning. It empowers real-world intervention into the state of a city's culture and, importantly, influences how that culture is produced, then packaged and consumed (how it is *perceived*) internationally. This process is the focus of *STAR FAIRY*'s critique.

We set out to question this process, where a city seeks fame, and then purposefully engage with the various strategies a city might use to represent itself.

*STAR FAIRY* asks: How does Hong Kong show itself to the world? What sorts of strategies does it use to say "This is Hong Kong," when showing ads, tourist promotion, cinema, design and so on? More specifically, why are we going to Venice? What can we say about our city in an event as multi-faceted and prestigious as the 52<sup>nd</sup> Venice Biennale?

*STAR FAIRY* sees this "representational" problem as the primary concern for Hong Kong's participation in the 52<sup>nd</sup> Venice Biennale. And we have developed a custom-made, site-specific project in response, presenting photographs, elaborate installations and sound.

*STAR FAIRY* offers some playful and engaging responses to these questions. Featuring Map Office (Gutierrez + Portefaix), Amy Cheung and Hiram To – three experienced international artists, the project reveals the artists' unusual and critical manipulation of representational strategies. Map Office presents "Concrete Jungle / The Parrot's Tale", an artificial, mist and plant filled "urban jungle" with talking parrots peppering visitors with humorous, critical questions. Amy Cheung's ambitious two-part project "Devil's Advocate," consists of an elegant Ferris wheel like structure with frozen figures and bumper-cars that destroy each other, both connecting with carnivalesque mystery. Lastly, Hiram To's elaborate installation "I Love You More Than My Own Death" weaves multi-layered references to game shows, cinema and contemporary art into Hong Kong's fascinating relationship with fame.

*STAR FAIRY* does not provide answers. But it does present articulate, critical responses to important questions of how meaning is generated through our representational strategies, how we show our cities to the world – and how we perceive ourselves within these processes.

Norman Ford  
Jan 2007

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## CURATOR BIO

### Norman Ford

Ford, a permanent resident of Hong Kong, has been an image-maker and educator for over 20 years. Involved in numerous group and solo exhibitions and screenings in places such as Hong Kong, Bangkok, Macau, Vienna, Seoul, and Toronto, his work has been exhibited and collected both regionally and internationally. Producing photographs, video, multi-media, writing and research in Hong Kong since 1994, he has published several articles on photography and various media. Ford continues to teach multi-media, visual cultural studies and related subjects at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, School of Design. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Hong Kong (studying with Ackbar Abbas), critiquing theories of the cross-cultural and representation through a study of Hong Kong visual culture and lens-based media.

In 2001-02, he curated *Re-considered Crossings: Representation Beyond Hybridity*, an arts and cultural exchange between Hong Kong and Vienna, and co-edited and designed the book *Traversals* (MAP Book, 2001) published in conjunction with the project. His recent curatorial / research work includes; the research project *Special Issue on Hong Kong Art* for Chinese Art.com (2002), the curatorial/ visual art/ research project *Con/deCon* (2003-06) which examines the commodification of hybridity and difference through various media; *New Chinese Art* (2003) a series of multi-media events (co-curator/artist), and *Trading Spaces* (2004) a site-specific installation event with MAP Office. Ford is also a regular art critic for the South China Morning Post and contributes essays to a variety of local and overseas periodicals.

## ARTISTS BIOS

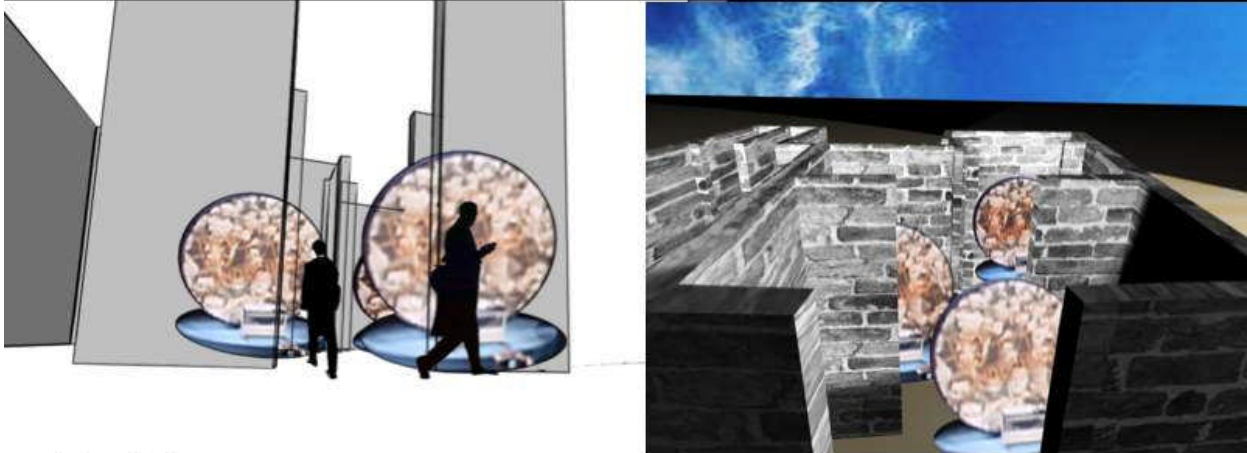
### Hiram To

Born and brought up in Hong Kong, Hiram To exhibited extensively in Australia and internationally, with his works acquired by the collections of the National Gallery of Australia, Sydney's Powerhouse Museum and the Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane. For extended periods between 1978 and 1995, To lived in Scotland and Australia. Upon returning to Hong Kong, he worked in a variety of industries including art administration, journalism, public relations and communications. To was invited by London's Camden Arts Centre and Institute for International Visual Arts (inIVA) to mount a one-person exhibition in 1994, while in 2002, The Winnipeg Art Gallery, the Canadian state gallery of Manitoba, initiated a survey project *Hiram To - Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood*. Both exhibitions mark the first occasions of a Hong Kong-born contemporary artist being celebrated by a major international public art museum and state gallery with one-person exhibitions. As a contemporary art curator, he collaborated with public art institutions and galleries in Australia, Germany, Taiwan and Hong Kong on a number of exhibitions. He was an arts writer for South China Morning Post and The Standard, and he regularly writes on arts and culture for Hong Kong's City Magazine and Bazaar. A monograph of his work was published by The Winnipeg Art Gallery, Canada in the summer of 2005.



*proposals...interior*

## **Hiram To - I'm Gonna Make You A Star** (rooms 1 - 4)



preliminary sketches

### **Amy Cheung**

Amy Cheung gained her BA in History of Art & Fine Art from Goldsmith's College, University of London in 1996 and her MFA in Mixed Media from the Slade School of Fine Art, the University of London in 1998.

Since graduation, she has initiated numerous city interventions and public art projects both locally and abroad, such as: installing half an airplane's interior into half a running tram (Studio Air - Helsinki 2000 European City of Culture Program); building a totally transparent shipping container carrying the projection of an unidentified population rolling across the sky (Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, International Container Arts Festival, Taiwan).

Cheung's other collaborative works & performance have also been shown in many festivals, galleries and museums including "Nasubi Gallery Project" Mori Museum of Art, Japan; "Complexity of Life" Aboa Vetus & Ars Nova Museums, Finland; "Blue, Indefinitive Portraiture and the Betweens" Gertrude Street Contemporary Art Spaces, Australia; "Pillowhead" Maneage Central Exhibition Hall, Russia etc.

Cheung was selected as one of Beck's New Contemporaries in U.K. 1997 and UNESCO - ASCHBERG Laureate in 2004.



## artists info... Amy Cheung

provokes her viewers with playful but meaningful objects and images. She has extensive international exhibition experience, participating in world-class residency programs, alongside major group and solo exhibitions.

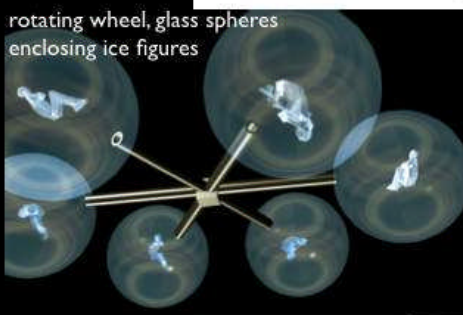


proposals...courtyard (Cheung + Map Office)

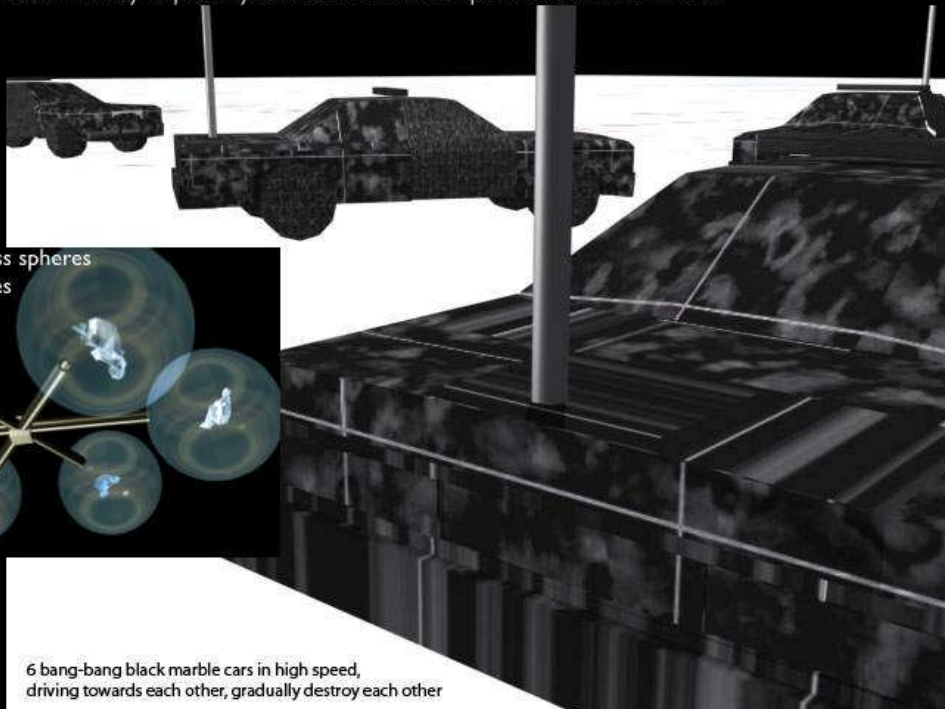
**Amy Cheung** - *Devil's Advocate* (courtyard and room 6)

A two part installation loosely inspired by carnival rides like bumper cars and ferris wheels.

rotating wheel, glass spheres  
enclosing ice figures



6 bang-bang black marble cars in high speed,  
driving towards each other, gradually destroy each other



MAP Office is an open platform conceived by Laurent Gutierrez and Valérie Portefaux to reform our daily practice and to reconstruct our life-world. Based in Hong Kong, both French architects epitomize a new breed of architects who are rethinking the socio-political agenda of art, design and architecture. Their projects involve critical analysis of spatial and temporal anomalies and documentation of the ways in which human beings subvert and appropriate spaces for their own uses. In this context, the mission of MAP Office is to bring forward a set of fresh alternates to a region mainly preoccupied with “Just in time” industrial production and efficiency. MAP Office have participated in several local and international exhibitions, including the 7th Architecture Venice Biennale, the 1st International Architecture Biennale in Rotterdam where they won an award for the best ‘Inspiration’, the 2nd Guangzhou Triennial, including the exhibition design for the main venue and at present Zones of Contact - 2006 Biennale of Sydney. They published a number of articles on urban phenomena about Hong Kong and China. Their publications include *Mapping HK* [2000], which details both the physical and dynamic transformations taking place in Hong Kong; *HK LAB* [2002] and *HK LAB 2* [2005], a interdisciplinary book trilogy in which Hong kong is seen as an advance laboratory for innovative solutions; an architectural monograph, *Yung Ho Chang/Atelier Feichang Jianzhu - A Chinese practice* [2003]; and in relation with recent exhibitions *My PRD stories* [2005] and *PIXEL Games* [2006]. (see [www.map-office.com](http://www.map-office.com))

explore the processes and flows of the China and the Pearl River Delta region through their interdisciplinary studio work as artists, writers, architects, exhibition designers and publishers. Using detailed research coupled with prolific documentation, Gutierrez + Portefaix have presented large-scale installations in Guangzhou, (2nd Triennial) Paris, Sydney (Biennial), Berlin, Beijing and many other cities around the world.







**GUTIERREZ + PORTEFAIX present CONCRETE JUNGLE | PARROT'S TALE - HK ART LAB : STRATEGIES OF REPRESENTATION**

HONG KONG REPRESENTATION FOR VENICE BIENNALE 2007 - "STAR FAIRY" - CURATED BY NORMAN FORD

## INFORMATION ON THE EXHIBITION VENUE

The Exhibition Venue is a ground floor area and courtyard of a building in front of the main venue of Venice Biennale, i.e. the Arsenale, with an approximate total area of 158 square metres (excluding the courtyard), situated at Arsenale, Campo della Tana, Castello 2126-30122 Venezia.

