

# Wang Bing Solo Exhibition

## *Experience and Poverty*

Curated by Yang Beichen

18<sup>th</sup> November to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017

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Wang Bing

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It was nearly a century ago that Bertolt Brecht loudly proclaimed 'Remove Every Trace!' It was a classic modernist political call to arms, marking an aspiration to locate a rupture and displace a particular moment, a time when the tide of history recedes to lay bare 'poverty' in order to enable the production of something 'new' to begin once more. Yet similar to Wang Bing's video work *Traces* (in Chinese the character is closer to 'relic') these traces have to be retrieved little by little. The lens gathers things, recording as it moves between the coarse grains of the camera film and the sound of the machinery. It is as if the artist enters into the scene of a long forgotten place, searching like a detective in an inhospitable terrain. Abruptly something might capture his attention like a bottle of alcohol or there might be a close-up of either a stone or a bone. History has inevitably persevered amongst these objects, finding within them a silhouette or thread connecting them back to the past - the specter of history simply cannot help but initiate an oppositional stance to this poverty as it becomes concrete.

Wang Bing persistently chooses to work within a state of poverty and he continually looks to direct his camera lens towards a nameless person or place. Even so, there develops a possibility to enable these things to once more obtain a name again - from a mere possibility, he more importantly looks to aid these 'nameless' entities to preserve the unique state of their experiences. Wang Bing possesses perhaps one of the most unique perceptive abilities: sharp, resilient, focused to the point he could be considered stern - it means that as he continually handles the experiences and problems of others, he remains resolute and unwavering in the face of their adversities. In *15 Hours*, we experience the presence of an artist in an extreme situation: for an exceptionally long duration, Wang Bing's camera practically matches the incessant motion of bodies working or the sewing machines operating onscreen.

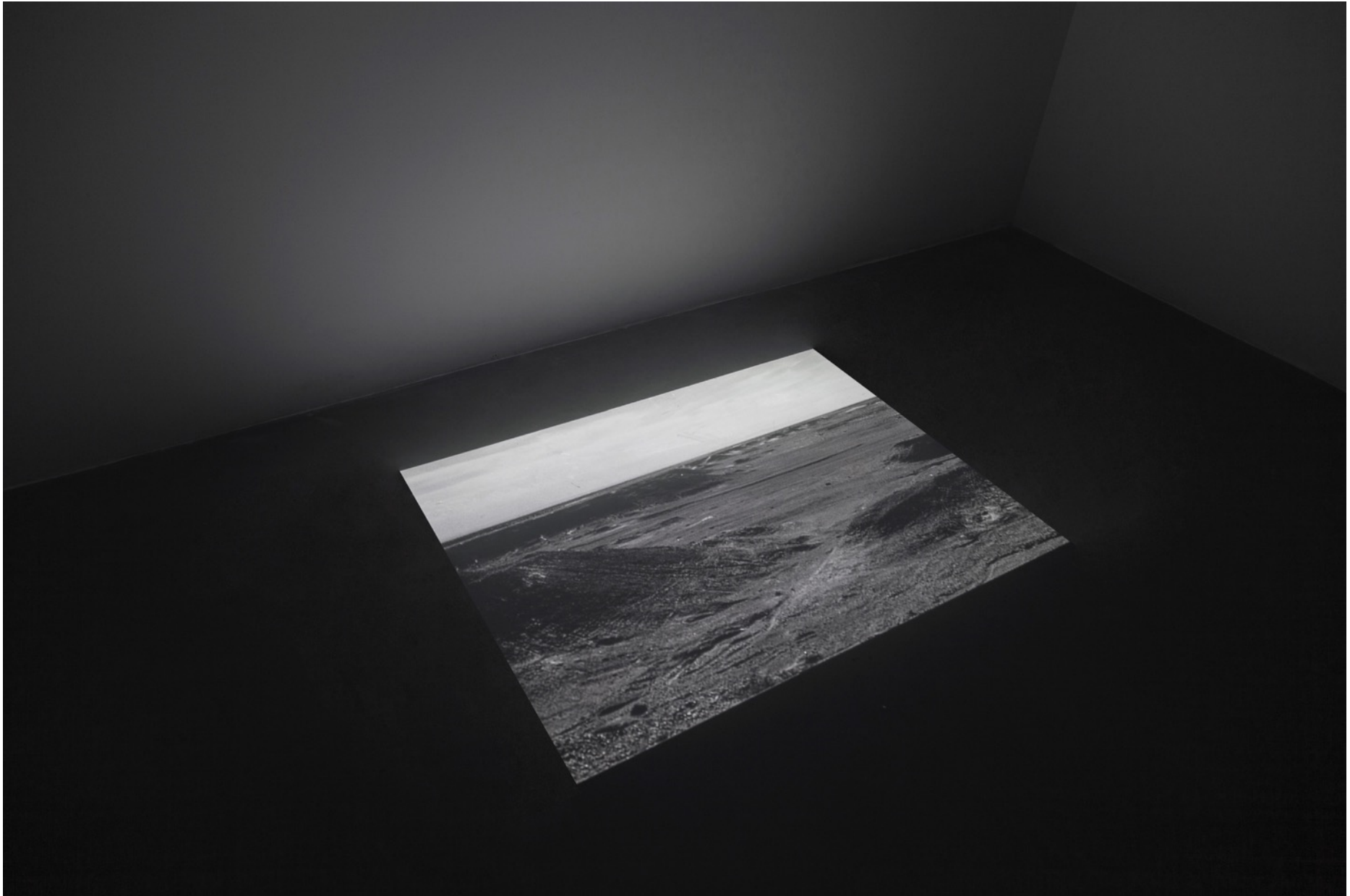
It even refuses 'observation' - broaching a topic that returns towards a question of photography in the sense of a non-producer who negates the montage-producing machine. Similar to the machine before *Workers Leaving the Lumiere Factory in Lyon*, where like a transporter he delivers to us an obscure moment in time. *Mrs Fang* also embodies another kind of figure with 'no name': we are able to view how her life becomes deprived of language, or it could be said, that as she partakes in the utterances of the world it begins to lose its vitality. She seemingly transforms into an 'actor' as a counterpart to 'He Fengming' - even with the silence of her language, nonetheless the light that occupies a place in the film demonstrates the passage of a life with such accuracy that it becomes exceedingly hard for the audience to confront the death of someone living.

Georges Didi-Huberman once described Wang Bing way of filming things as a 'Monad' in the sense that he is able to 'crystallise all the tensions within a historical configuration'. *Mrs Fang* is also a monad in the sense that it is an assembly of all the experiences that arise during the natural process of a life in decline, or perhaps we can regard this as a means to preserve her everyday life experiences in the name of death. In actuality, *Mrs Fang* and *15 Hours* were made very close to one another - we could almost imagine an intersection or overlap happening between the relatives visiting *Mrs Fang* and the workers from the garment factory - they are companions proceeding onwards outside the lens in a life of poverty. Moreover, in many ways this exhibition can be regarded as Wang Bing's unflinching portrayal of all the poverty and experience of the times we are in.

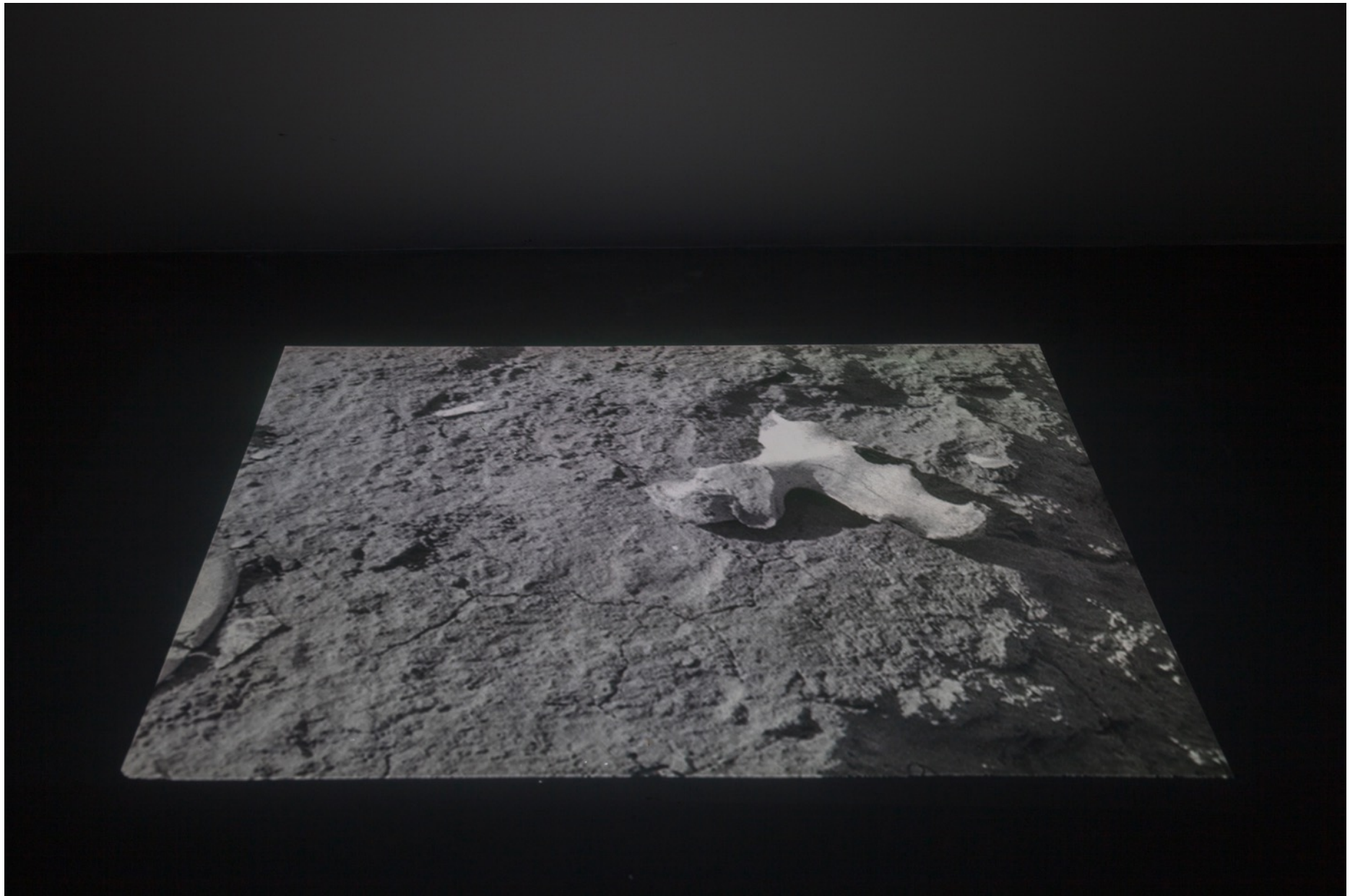
Yang Beichen



*Traces*, 2014 (produced in 2005)  
Single-channel video, 35mm film transferred to digital, black and white, sound, 28min



*Traces*, 2014 (produced in 2005)  
Exhibition view



*Traces*, 2014 (produced in 2005)  
Exhibition view



*Traces*, 2014 (produced in 2005), film still



*Traces*, 2014 (produced in 2005), film still



*Traces*, 2014 (produced in 2005), film still



*Traces*, 2014 (produced in 2005), film still



*Traces No.1, No.2, No.3, 2014*  
Inkjet print, 100 x 100cm (x1)

魔金石空間  
MAGICIAN SPACE



*Traces No.1*, 2014

Inkjet print

50 x 50 cm ED.5+2AP

100 x 100 cm ED.5+2AP

*Traces No.2, 2014*

Inkjet print

50 x 50 cm ED.5+2AP

100 x 100 cm ED.5+2AP



魔金石空間  
MAGICIAN SPACE

*Traces No.3, 2014*

Inkjet print

50 x 50 cm ED.5+2AP

100 x 100 cm ED.5+2AP





*Traces No.4, 2014*

Inkjet print

40 x 80 cm ED.5+2AP

80 x 160 cm ED.5+2AP



*Traces No.5, 2014*

Inkjet print

40 x 80 cm ED.5+2AP

80 x 160 cm ED.5+2AP



*Traces No.6, 2014*

Inkjet print

40 x 80 cm ED.5+2AP

80 x 160 cm ED.5+2AP



*Traces No.7, 2014*

Inkjet print

40 x 80 cm ED.5+2AP

80 x 160 cm ED.5+2AP



*Mrs Fang, 2017*  
Digital video, color, sound, Chinese w/English subtitles  
110 min



*Mrs Fang, 2017*  
Exhibition view



*Mrs Fang, 2017*  
Exhibition view



*Mrs Fang, 2017*  
Exhibition view



*Mrs Fang, 2017*  
Exhibition view



*Mrs Fang, 2017*  
Exhibition view



*Mrs Fang, 2017*  
Exhibition view



*Mrs Fang*, 2017, film still



*Mrs Fang*, 2017, film still



*15 Hours*, 2017  
Digital video, color, sound, Chinese w/English subtitles  
Two parts, 7h 55min each



*15 Hours, 2017*  
Exhibition view



*15 Hours, 2017*  
Exhibition view



*15 Hours*, 2017  
Exhibition view



*15 Hours, 2017*  
Exhibition view



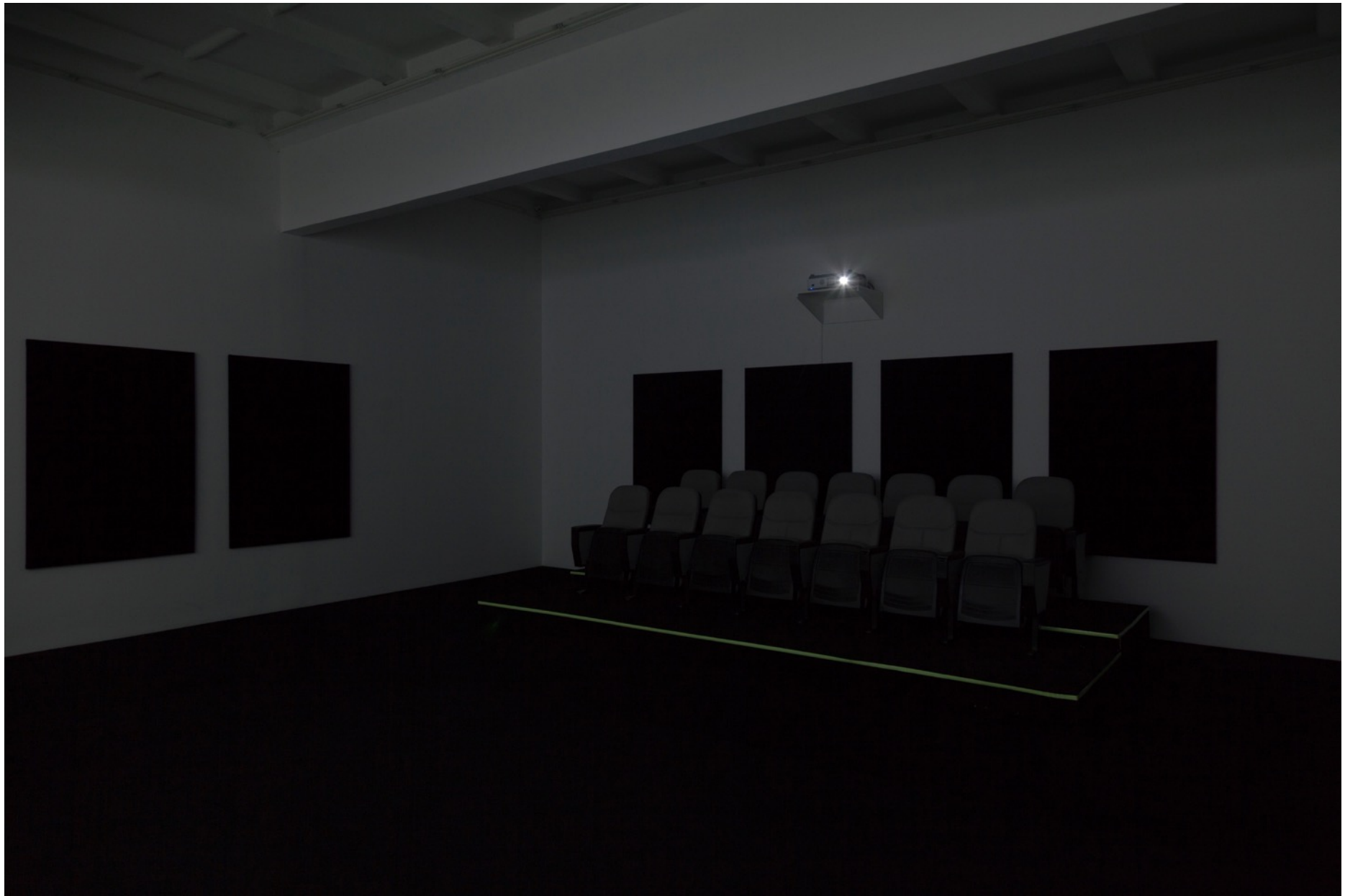
*15 Hours, 2017*  
Exhibition view



*15 Hours*, 2017, film still



*15 Hours*, 2017, film still



*Experience and Poverty, 2017*  
Exhibition view

## Wang Bing

1967 Born in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, China  
1995 Graduated from Luxun School of Fine Arts, Photography Department

Studied in Film Academy Beijing, Photography Department

### Solo Exhibitions

2017 *Experience and Poverty*, Magician Space, Beijing, CN  
*Documenta 14, Kassel: Retrospective*, Gloria Kino, Kassel, GE  
2016 *Wang Bing: Three Portraits*, CCA Wattis Institute, San Francisco, US  
*Special Focus*, dokumentar filmwoche hamburg, Hamburg, GE  
*Special Focus*, Kerala Film Festival, IN  
2014 Film Retrospective and Video/Photography Exhibition, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, FR  
*Solo Exhibition*, Galerie Paris-Beijing, Paris showroom, Paris, FR; Brussels showroom, Brussels, BE  
*Film Retrospective and Video/Photography Exhibition*, Cinematek, Royal Belgian, Film Archive, BE  
*Film Retrospective*, IFF Pacific Meridian, Vladivostok International Film Festival, RU  
2011 *Special Focus*, Cinema South Festival, Sderot, ISR  
2009 *Solo Exhibition*, Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, FR

### Group Exhibitions

2017 Documenta 14, Kassel: Retrospective, Gloria Kino, Kassel, GE  
2016 Time Test: International Video Art Research Exhibition, Beijing CAFA Museum, Beijing, CN  
2015 *Film Retrospective*, Geneva Black Movies Film Festival, Geneva, CH  
*Video Retrospective and Photography Exhibition*, Jeonju International Film Festival, Jeonju, KR  
2014 *Film Retrospective*, Vladivostok International Film Festival Pacific Meridian, Vladivostok, RU  
*Special Focus: Wang Bing – Industrial Films*, AV Festival 14, Newcastle, UK  
Shanghai Biennale, Shanghai, CN  
2010 *Film Retrospective*, Milano Filmmaker Film Festival, Milan, IT

## Filmography

- 2017 *15 Hours*, digital video, color, sound, two parts, 7h 55 min each
- Mrs Fang*, digital video, color, sound, 87 min. Documenta 14, Kassel, Premiere
- 2016 *TA'ANG*, documentary, 147 min. Berlin Film Festival, Forum, Premiere
- Bitter Money*, documentary, 152 min
- 2014 *Father and Sons*, documentary (video art), 40 min. Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, Premiere
- Traces*, video art, black and white, sound, 28 min. Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, Premiere
- 2013 *'Til Madness Do Us Part*, documentary, 227 min. Venice International Film Festival, Premiere d'Argent Prize
- Venice 70: Future Reloaded*, short film. Venice International Film Festival, Premiere
- 2012 *Three Sisters*, documentary, 153 min. Venice International Film Festival, Premiere
- Alone*, documentary, 89 min.
- 2010 *The Ditch*, feature film, 119 min. Venice Film Festival – International Competition, Premiere
- 2009 *Happy Valley*, documentary short film, 19 minutes. A project of “The Complete Letters, Filmed Correspondence”, Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (CCCCB)
- Man with No Name*, documentary, 97 min
- 2008 *Coal Money*, documentary, 52 min
- Crude Oil*, documentary, 840 min
- 2007 *Brutality Factory*, short film, fiction, 15 min. Cannes Film Festival, Director's Fortnight Premiere
- Fengming: A Chinese Memoir*, documentary, 3 hours. Cannes Film Festival Official Selection, Premiere
- 2003 *West of the Tracks*, documentary, final cut, 554 min. Rotterdam Film Festival, Premiere
- 2002 *West of the Tracks*, documentary, 5 hours cut. Berlin International Film Festival, Premiere

## Grants & Awards

- 2017 Golden Leopard Award - Concorso Internazionale of the 70<sup>th</sup> Locarno Festival, CH (*Mrs Fang*)  
Recipient of the 2017 EYE Art & Film Prize, Amsterdam, NL
- 2014 Top 10 Foreign Movies of Kinema Junpo 2013, JP (*Three Sisters*)  
Best Film (Grand Prize) - Lisbon International Documentary Festival, PT (*Father and Sons*)
- 2013 Mongolfière d'argent - Festival des 3 continents, Nantes, FR (*'Til Madness Do Us Part*)  
Grand Prize - Fribourg International Film Festival, CH (*Three Sisters*)  
Critic Prize - Geneva Black Film Festival, CH (*Alone*)
- 2012 Orizzonti Award for Best Film, 69th Venice Film Festival - Mostra, IT (*Three Sisters*)  
Montgolfière d'or, Festival des trois continents, Nantes, FR (*Three Sisters*)  
Best Director, Muhr AsiaAfrica Award, Dubai International Film Festival, UAE (*Three Sisters*)  
Best Film Award - Doc Lisboa Festival, PT (*Three Sisters*)  
Best Foreign Film Language Director - Kinema Junpo Awards 2011, JP (*The Ditch*)
- 2011 Prix Spécial du Jury - Festival ânûû-rû âboro, Pwêêdi-Wiimîâ, Kanaky-New-Caledonia (*Man with no name*)
- 2010 Golden Lion, Mostra - Venice Film festival, Venice, IT (*The Ditch*)  
Rated one of the 10 best films made between 2001 and 2010, by Cahiers du Cinéma (*West of the Tracks*)
- 2008 Ecumenical Jury Award - special mention, Fribourg International Film Festival, CH (*Fengming, A Chinese Memoir*)
- 2007 Georges de Beauregard Prize - Marseille International Documentary Film Festival, FR (*Fengming, A Chinese Memoir*)  
Robert and Frances Flaherty Prize - Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival, JP (*Fengming, A Chinese Memoir*)  
Young Critics Award - Cinema Digital Seoul, KR (*Fengming, A Chinese Memoir*)  
IPJ University Prize - Lisbon International Documentary Festival, PT (*Fengming, A Chinese Memoir*)
- 2006 French National Order of Merit (Légion d'honneur)
- 2005 Grand Prize of the Documentary Jury, Mexico City International Contemporary Film Festival, MX (*West of the Tracks*)  
Grand Prize of the Documentary Jury, Montreal Festival, CA (*West of the Tracks*)
- 2004 Rated one of the 10 best films of 2004 by Cahiers du Cinéma (*West of the Tracks*)  
Prize-winner, La Résidence, Cinéfondation of Cannes Film Festival
- 2003 Robert and Frances Fleherty Prize - Yamagata Film Festival, JP (*West of the Tracks*)  
Grand prix, Festival International du Documentaire, Marseille, FR (*West of the Tracks*)  
Montgolfière d'Or - Jury Documentaire, festival des 3 Continents, Nantes, FR (*West of the Tracks*)
- 2002 Grand Prize - Lisbon International Documentary Festival, PT (*West of the Tracks*)