

dino zhang

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Dino Zhang is an artist filmmaker based in London and Shanghai. He holds an MFA from the Ruskin School of Art, University of Oxford and a BA degree in Fine Art from the Central Saint Martins. His works have recently been presented at the Beijing International Short Film Festival 2023&2024; HOME, Manchester; the Slow Film Festival 2024, London; The Bomb Factory Art Foundation, London; and MOUart Gallery, Beijing. He is the recipient of the FLAMIN fellowship 25/26 and the Elephant Trust Award 2024.

Zhang's practice weaves together threads of memory, history, and identity. Employing an autoethnographic framework to retrace the past, he approaches his practice as inherently research-oriented, gathering cumulative materials and archives from his family and where he grew up. Through grieving, contemplating, and reconciliation with the contradictory discourses of the past, he seeks heterochronic narratives that connect us to the field of socio-cultural history. Often taking the form of expanded cinema, his works move from a mode of thought and lyricism to a mode of resilience, stretching beyond the expanding landscape of archival imagery.

# The Oriental Pearls

Main Credit:

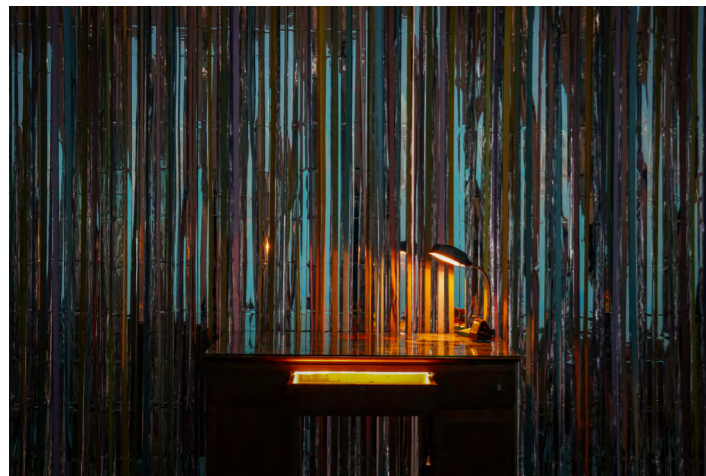
Produced by *Dino Zhang*  
Cast: *Zuxiang Mao*  
Sound Track: *Gary "Notale" Guo*  
Camera: *Dino Zhang*  
Edit: *Dino Zhang*  
Editing Assistant: *Haoran Qiu*  
Colourist: *Da Zhang*

Supported by *The White Pube Creatives Grant*

Exhibition Space Designed by *Jiayue Yu*  
Special Thanks to *Tank Shanghai & the Install Team*

Selected Press:

<https://fadmagazine.com/2025/03/20/between-memory-and-modernity-dino-zhangs-practice-on-expanded-cinema/>  
<http://tankshanghai.com/zh/exhibition/danwei-unfolding/>  
<https://www.bisff.co/selection/there%2C-there>

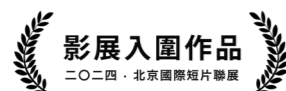
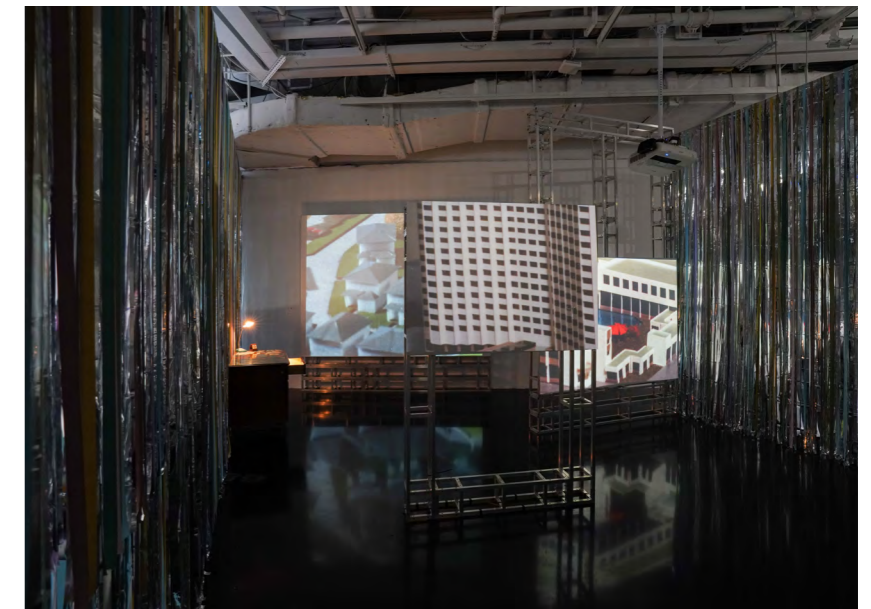


Installation view at Tank Shanghai, as a part of the exhibition 'Danwei Unfolding', 2025. Photo by Xiangchu Han.

## Project Statement:

In this three-channel film installation, threaded with photographic archives, the artist draws on his grandfather's memories of conducting the feasibility study for the Oriental Pearl TV Tower, capturing vignettes of Shanghai's headlong modernization. By the turn of the millennium, the streets of the artist's childhood were almost unrecognizable, yet in the interstice of those fragmented recollections flickers the spark to reimagine alternative destinies for the TV tower and for the futures it came to symbolize.

Layering moving images with memory, the work opens a cinematic space where past, present, and speculative futures collide heterochronically. It asks how sweeping state narratives seep into the intimate grain of family life, while revealing the slipperiness of personal testimony in the making of history. Adrift in the currents of modernisation, the artist continually positions and displaces himself, treating history as a fluid continuum to enter, dismantle, and dream anew.



# Blues in Tirana

Film  
Super 8mm film transferred to 4K, Colour, Stereo Sound, 17'00, 2025, Albania/China/UK  
Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/1041451427/fb7e959982>  
Full Film: <https://vimeo.com/1107556617/30f3801492> Password: dino2025



Film Still from 'Blues in Tirana', 2025

## Main Credit:

Directed by *Dino Zhang*  
Produced & Written by *Dino Zhang*  
Cast: *Deni Çava; Enes Xhabija; Alexandra Eder*  
Camera Assistant & Sound Recording: *Simon Mengzhe Xu*  
Voiceover: *Zuxiang Mao; Dino Zhang*  
Editor: *Dino Zhang*  
Editing Consultant: *Stéphanie Meth*  
Music Track: *Dina Hajrullahu; Franc Kurti (I Tpame I Tvrame)*  
Sound Design: *Gary "Notale" Guo*  
Colour Grading: *Gabriel Xavier*  
Film Process & Scan: *DDREDfilmLab*

Supported by *The Elephant Trust Fund*



## Project Statement:

47 years after the rupture between Albania and China, a young Chinese filmmaker returns to Tirana in place of his grandfather. Alongside three Albanian students, he pieces together the turbulent global picture of the Cold War using old photographs, poetry, and an uneasy future.

Since the deaths of Mao and Hoxha, China and Albania have reshaped their socialist foundations into shifting economic and ideological hybrids. Every city conceals desires and fears like dreams.<sup>1</sup> *Blues in Tirana* interprets the lingering summer blues as both political aftershock and youthful restlessness, rippling across nations and generations. Blending documentary texture with scripted reverie, the film adopts a coming-of-age gaze to track post-socialist tremors and to explore how we inhabit an interconnected world while imagining the next step of history.

<sup>1</sup> Calvino, Italo. (1972). *Invisible Cities*. Translated by William Weaver. Random House.

(In Research & Development)  
Film Installation  
Excerpt: <https://vimeo.com/1028043995/c63bd6d87a>

# The Seventh Heaven

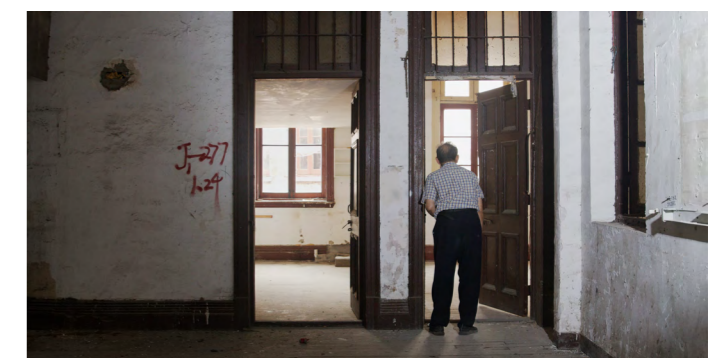
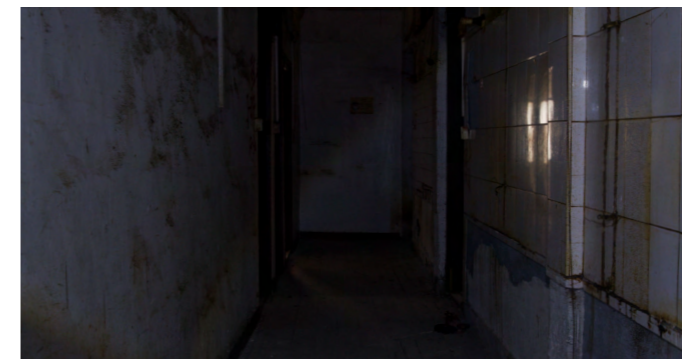


Film Still from "The Seventh Heaven", 2024

## Project Statement:

*The Seventh Heaven* (2024–ongoing) is a film named after the building in Shanghai where Dino's mother's family lived during the Cultural Revolution. The film envisions the building as a maternal womb, a threshold obscuring life and death, where the memories of four generations converge and collide. By restaging historical events alongside documentary footage of his family, Dino interconnects the film with 1930s Shanghai leftist cinema, and imagines alternative strands of history that could have unfolded in different ways.

Viewing *The Seventh Heaven* as a confluence where time collapses, Dino takes inspiration from Juan Rulfo's novel *Pedro Paramo*, and weaves together stories from his family's past: his mother's recollections of childhood in the building after the Cultural Revolution ended; his grandfather's memories of his first date with his grandmother during the Cultural Revolution, when her family's home was confiscated twice; and his relatives' accounts of his great-grandfather's early life in the 1930s, when he joined the revolution and became an underground member of the Communist Party.



Developed with the support of FLAMIN and Arts Council England



Artists' Moving  
Image Network



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



# Upon that River

Film  
4K, Colour/B&W, Stereo sound, 28'44, 2023, UK/China  
Excerpt: <https://vimeo.com/923762810/125b943be0>  
Full Film: <https://vimeo.com/856231297> Password: dino2023



Film Still from "Upon that River", 2023

## Main Credit:

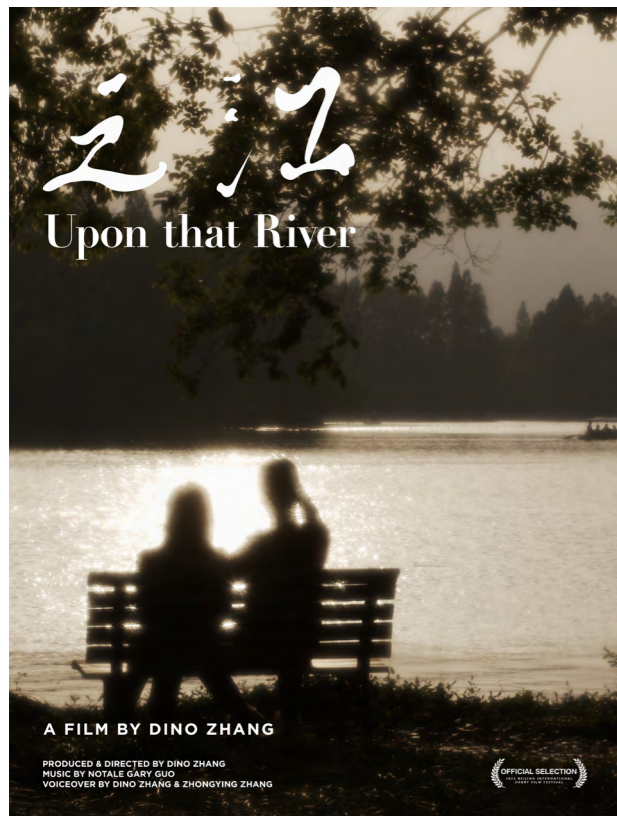
Production: Dino Zhang  
Sound Track: "Notale" Gary Guo  
Voiceover: Zhongying Zhang; Dino Zhang

## Prizes:

Beijing International Short Film Festival 2023, Beijing (Official Selection)  
Shanghai International Short Week 2024, Shanghai (Honorable Mention)  
Slow Film Festival 2024, London (Official Selection)

## Selected Press & Screening Programs:

<https://www.bisff.co/selection/upon-that-river>  
<https://www.bisff.co/single-post/bisff2023-screening-program>  
<https://www.bisff.co/single-post/bisff2023-screening-schedule-in-shanghai> (Chinese)  
<https://slowfilmfestival.com/programme-2024-family>  
<https://www.rsa.ox.ac.uk/degreeshow/2023/mfa/dino-zhang>  
<https://www.gold.ac.uk/calendar/?id=15224>  
<https://www.roseberryroadstudios.com/events-exhibitions/oversounds>  
<https://thewhitepub.co.uk/grants/041/>



## Project Statement:

In the 24th year of the Republic of China, Dino's great-grandfather travelled by boat with his classmates in Hangzhou, capturing photos that he carefully preserved and annotated in a family album. In 2023, Dino revisited the locations depicted in these photos, journeying along the Fu Chun River to the Qiang Tang River—also known as Zhi Jiang. Drifting on the water, he gazed at the rippling waves as nearly a century of historical change converged into a luminous line.

*Upon that River* (2023) begins with a conversation between Dino and his family, unfolding as an autobiographical exploration of regional migration following the Chinese Civil War. It evokes a hidden diaspora brought on by social transformations, serving as a cognitive contemplation<sup>1</sup> that revives historical events and figures in spectral forms. In examining the archivability of time, the river becomes a metaphor for the boundless memories shared by his family, and a thread that interweaves temporalities where time has been brought to a standstill.<sup>2</sup>

1 Jameson, Fredric. (1993). *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. London: Verso.  
2 Benjamin, Walter. (1940). *On The Concept of History*. Translated by Dennis Redmond.

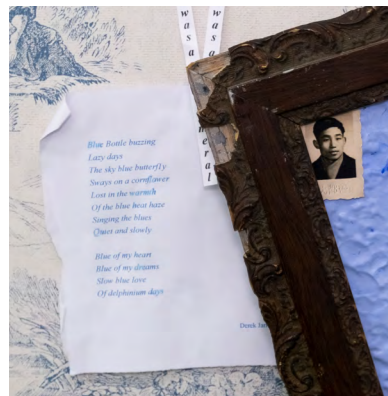
Installation  
2024, Plaster panels with photographic transfers, Wooden frames, Paper,  
PVC panel

# *The Ceiling of My Bedroom was Painted in Blue*



Supported by the Associate Studio Programme & Acme Studio

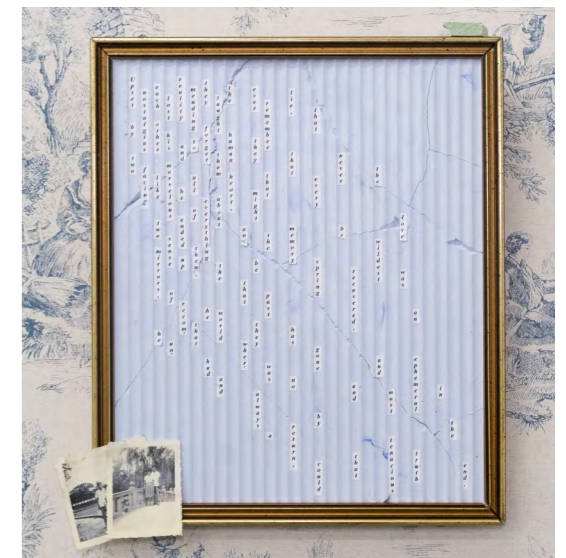
Installation view at Acme Studio, London, as a part of the exhibition 'Thresholds of Perception', 2024



## *Project Statement:*

Consisting of collages of imageries from family albums and lyrical text, *The Ceiling of My Bedroom was Painted in Blue* (2024) draws upon Dino's childhood memories in his family home. The series of works primarily made from scattered plaster panels, uses the colour blue as both a visual and emotional current, stretching and enveloping the space. These imageries, either transferred onto the panels or placed alongside them, present love stories spanning three generations of Dino's family.

When memories fall to pieces, we organize them and fall into pieces ourselves.<sup>1</sup> Through this series, Dino explores the complexities of home as an impermanent threshold of personal history and an enclosed space for grieving its loss. By capturing fragments of fading memories, the works invite recollection, and manifest a phenomenology of place where collective notions of grief and the passage of time both set in motion and paralyze.



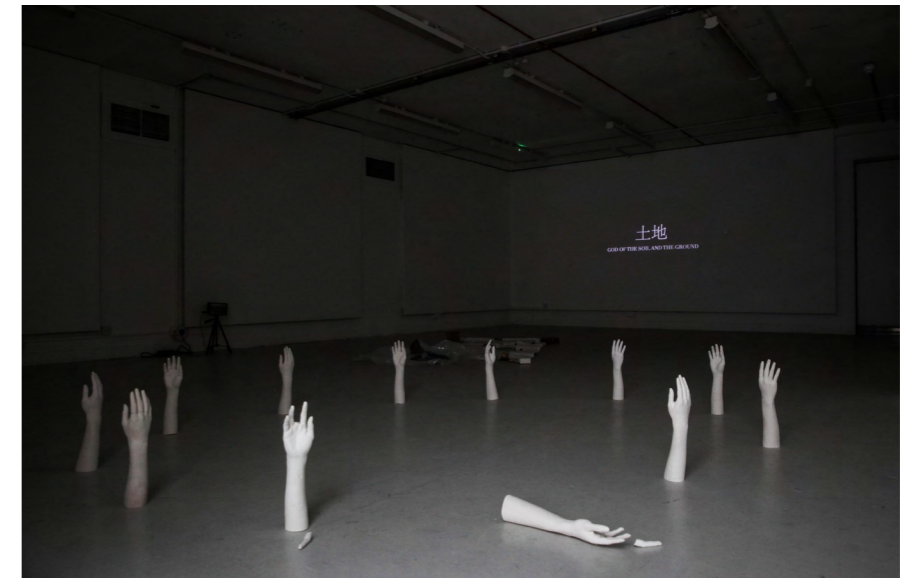
<sup>1</sup> Rilke, Rainer Maria. (1923). *Duino Elegies*. Translated by Richard Howard.

# God of the Soil and the Ground

Film Installation  
 2022, Single channel, HD Video, 9'45, Plaster, Paper, Plastic Sheet  
 Size Variable  
 Excerpt: <https://vimeo.com/1030312279/485898d17f>



Installation view at Chelsea College of Art, London, 2022



Details of the installation - Plastic sheet with an image of Yuanmingyuan Palace printed

Details of the installation - Paper sheet made from the book *Five Thousand Years of Chinese Nation*

## Project Statement:

*God of the Soil and the Ground* (2022) is a cinematic installation consisting of a film projection and a series of sculptures. The film features a protagonist who, by choosing death in the ruins, connects her spirit to the earth and defies time, transforming into the *God of the Soil and the Ground*.<sup>1</sup> Her colossal form, overlooking the viewers, symbolizes a resistance against the hegemonic past. Twelve casts arms appear to emerge from the ground, representing nameless figures reclaiming their place from repression. On the floor, torn and rearranged pages from *Five Thousand Years of Chinese Nation*, an emblem of authoritarian history, lay scattered.

Inspired by Bei Dao's *In the Ruins*,<sup>2</sup> Dino retraces the historical oppression inflicted on our physical bodies in form of the law and regulations by the social systems in China. The work endeavours to create a history for the body, challenging narratives of oppression by positioning the body as a symbol of resilience and transformation.<sup>3</sup> By supernaturally bridging the physical and spiritual realms, Dino invites viewers into a public space where historical trauma can be acknowledged, oscillating between the lived experience of memory and the multi-millenary speculation on the order of time.

Selected Press & Screening Programs:

<https://www.bombfactory.org.uk/post/lucky-number-8>

<https://fadmagazine.com/2023/01/30/17-london-based-contemporary-chinese-artists-exhibit-in-lucky-number-8/>

<sup>1</sup> *God of the Soil and the Ground* is a kind of tutelary deities in Chinese folk religion.

<sup>2</sup> Beidao. (1990). *Waves: Stories*. New Directions.

<sup>3</sup> Stewart, Susan. (1993). *On Longing Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*. Duke University Press.

Film Installation  
2023, Two-Channel, HD Video, Stereo Sound, 19' 28, Plaster, Pigment, Paper, Wood  
Size Variable  
Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/893486083/d2197ff692>  
Full film: <https://vimeo.com/834774979> Password: dino2023

# The Book of Meng Jiang



Installation view at Christ Church College, Oxford as a part of the exhibition 'Grounded, Not Mounted', 2023

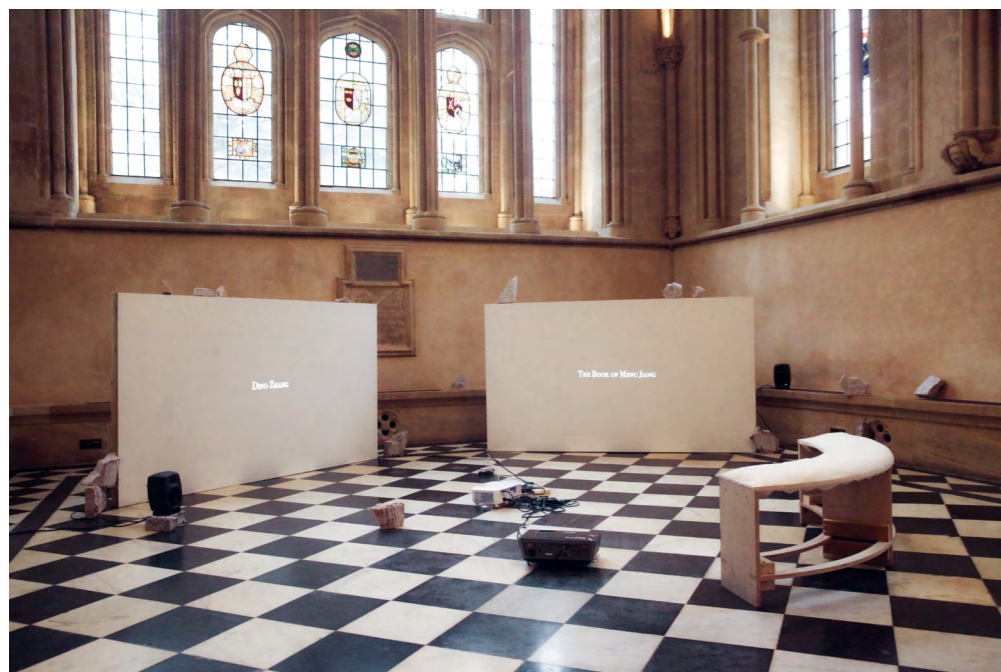
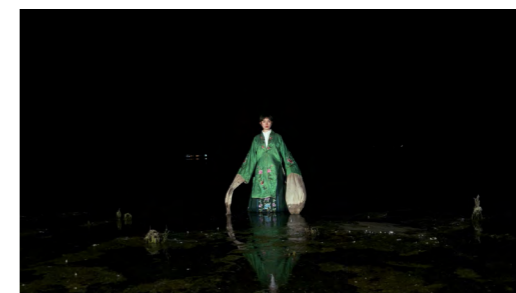
Main credit:

Produced & Written by *Dino Zhang*  
Cast: *Serin Chou; Anna Du Toit*  
Sound Track: *Gary "Notale" Guo*  
Camera Assistant: *Lucy Meeber*  
Voiceover: *Lucy Meeber; Dino Zhang*

Supported by the *Wadham College Pollard Fund*  
Special Thanks to *The Ruskin College of Art, University of Oxford*

Selected Press:

<https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/7Z7PWlwjKotjkFXTfoHrag> (Chinese)  
<https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/TFA57uBb2bNU5iz2Fz1GSQ> (Chinese)



## Project Statement:

Comprising a two-channel film and a series of dispersed sculptures, the film installation follows a female protagonist as she encounters an ancient myth woven into her daily life. On the left screen, she reads its narrative, while on the right, a male voice recounts the myth's patriarchal version. As she contemplates her own connection to the story, it begins to surface in her dreams—her journey questions whether she can defy the constraints of a predetermined fate and reclaim her power from the myth without being confined to a pre-written script.

Drawing from the evolving myth of Lady Meng Jiang—a Chinese mythical figure shaped by feudal and patriarchal values<sup>1</sup>—*The Book of Meng Jiang* (2023) probes whether a historical event and its literary forms can be reinterpreted through a perceptual approach where the spectators' role becomes paramount.<sup>2</sup> Notably, prints of historical texts are attached to scattered plaster casts on the ground. These texts originate from records of different versions of this mythical story throughout history, as an aporia of incoherence unable to reconcile. By reimagining the myth in an expanded cinematic space where contradictory terms collides, in dialogues, the work challenges traditional retellings and explores a form of female agency that seeks to infiltrate and reshape the inherited narrative.

<sup>1</sup> Originally as a folktale, Lady Meng Jiang's husband was conscripted to build the Great Wall. Hearing no news, she traveled to bring him winter clothes, only to find he had died. Overcome with grief, her bitter tears caused the Wall to collapse. In despair, she finally took her own life in a river.

<sup>2</sup> Benjamin, Walter. (2003). *Understanding Brecht*. London: Verso.