

Crescendo

2010

Single Channel DVD Projection with Sound (looped)

7 minutes & 02 seconds

Developed from a three-month international artist residency in Shenzhen, Southern China, 'Crescendo' was conceived by a chance observation from outside the window of a bus journey. Whilst drivers maneuvered their cars to avoid fatal accidents, I saw a group of people in their mid-fifties and older, performing a ritual in the middle of a busy dual carriageway.

Curious by such an unusual sighting, I got off the bus to investigate. Upon engaging with the group in conversation, I discovered the dual carriageway was once the ancestral village to these people. Their ritual was a way to express the loss of their homes, the lack of compensation and the disregard to their human rights.

By consent, and over the course of several clandestine meetings, I decided to facilitate a participatory art project with the group I met in the streets, in which an action would be used as a way to self-empower and to express ones anger against corruption. A flash mob style intervention in a public space was agreed and developed with the group.

Split into two parts, 'Crescendo' is a single screen video installation, depicting ordinary citizens alongside myself, confronting the issue of corruption within the confines of Shenzhen's busy underground metro. Preceding this, the video unfolds with a sequence of freeze-framed images from several popular 1950's to 1960's Chinese state propaganda movies, distilled at the very moments of peasant uprising.

'Crescendo' interrogates the relationship between state-funded propaganda and self-initiated protest. Oscillating between risk and defiance, rationality and absurdity, the resulting work is a performance-based video, exploring the social and political perspectives defining our cultural landscape within the context of the times we live in.

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