

# Song Tao

# 宋涛

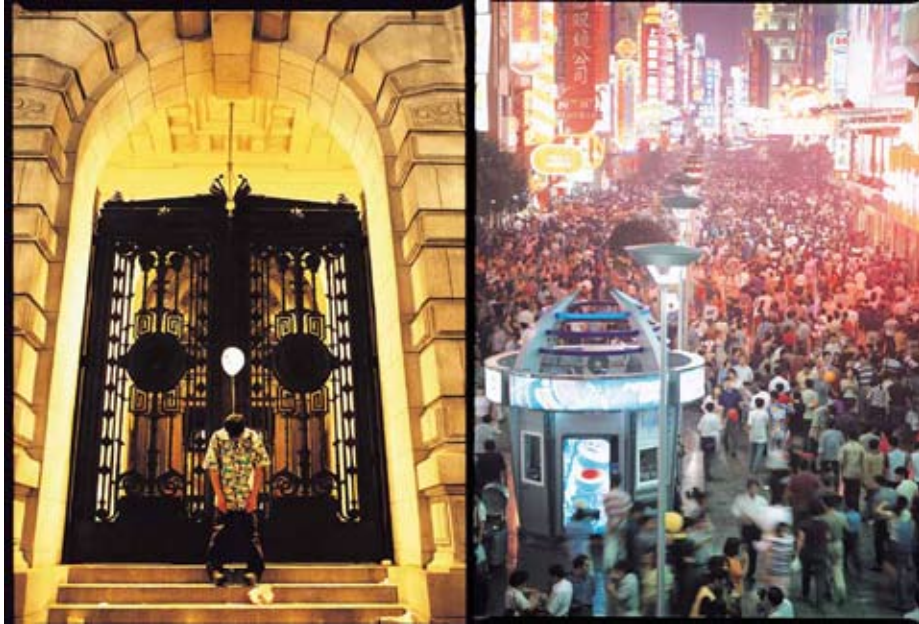


*Pride, 2004*  
video (multichannel installation)  
69x45 cm

*Pride, Photo, 2004, 103x73 cm*

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*In Large Crowds I Dream of Hanging Myself, Photo, 2002, 175x127 cm*

Song Tao's latest film noir *Three Days Ago* (2005) is a poetic cruise into the nighttime terrain of Shanghai. Along the way, the viewer glimpses and perceives of certain recurring leitmotifs, such as a child playing hopscotch, a brightly lit highway tunnel, and a haunting ghostlike building. Combined all along with an insistent and suggestive electronica score lends the film a flowing rhythm all its own. The loop-like structure encourages the viewer to focus increasingly on the convincing atmosphere rather than an overall narrative plot. However, the elliptical repetitions work as suspense that seems to accumulate towards the end. But the dramatic scenes appear eternally: this urban nightly journey could be anywhere, anytime. Song Tao introduces us to a sample of reality presented as kinetic views of urban space and fragments of memory. His vision is one of documenting and creating atmospheres – he is not concerned with stage-settings of grand truths. His own life, that of his friends, and the immediate surrounding metropolis serves as his base material as exemplified in the work *The Floor* (2003): During a course of six months he took nearly 20.000 photos of daily life in Shanghai. Of them he chose about 3.000 with which to create his floor-piece that was eventually mounted at the ShanghART Gallery. Another similar project that presently constitutes the floor of the gallery, is a photographic patchwork of the artist's own lawn that he meticulously shot day out and day in throughout the three changing seasons. These acts of recollecting come close to early strategies of conceptual and minimalist art, that is, an incremental and repetitious alteration from one piece of work to the next.

Mirroring Song Tao's pre-occupation with respectively the 'ordinary reality' and the direct confrontation between viewer and artwork is his engagement with the collective *Bird Head*. The work of this cooperative is, like-wise, manifested as a photographic survey of contemporary urban life in the metropolis and a direct response to its immediate scenery of constantly changing circumstances and events. Here, the artistic practice becomes un-separable from life in general that similarly consists of diverse and fluctuating impressions and appearances: "Our hearts are filled with huge amount of love and sadness" (*Bird Head*, Statement, 2004/2005).

Song Tao was born in Shanghai in 1979 and he graduated from the Shanghai School of Art and Crafts in 1998. Today he lives and works in Shanghai. Song Tao has exhibited widely. Recent shows include *China Contemporary, Art, Architecture and Visual Culture* at Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam, The Netherlands (2006), *Restless*, MOCA, Shanghai, China (2006), *Bird Head*, ShanghART Gallery, Shanghai, China (2005), *Guangzhou Photo Biennale*, Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China, *Double Vision*, 1st Lianzhou International Foto Festival, Culture Square Lianzhou, China (2005) and *Zooming Into Focus: Chinese Contemporary Photography and Video from Haudenschild Collection* at the National Art Museum, Beijing, China (2005) and subsequently in Mexico City and Shanghai. *Shanghai Constructions* at Shanghai Gallery of Art, Shanghai, China (2005) and *Light as Fuck! Shanghai Assemblage 2000-2004*, The National Museum of Art, Oslo, Norway (2004).