

PRESS RELEASE

"Zhou Xiaohu: Concentration Training Camp"

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Long March Space, Beijing

Shanghai-based Zhou Xiaohu, one of China's pioneers of new media art practice, presents 'Concentration Training Camp' 2007-08, a provocative 8-channel installation that comically parodies the system of indoctrination (what Zhou Xiaohu refers as 'brainwashing') in money-making pyramid schemes. In this humorously compelling series of moving images Chinese workers of the American-founded company 'Amway' are shown in the midst of 'motivational drills', where workers yell into microphones with company catch-cry phrases such as 'Victory Victory Makes Good Winning' and 'I want to become a boss unnecessary to work!'. This series of fictional settings is quizzically unsettling for these workers have their hair and clothes seemingly defying gravity, the blood rushing to their heads as if they are hanging upside down. The room in which they perform their drills are realistically oriented, further confusing the nature of this space and its conditions. This confusion is a deliberate and humorous element by Zhou Xiaohu whose playful subversion of gravity (performers are acting upside down in suspension) coupled with the military-like drills full of slogans that are uncannily similar in syntax to communist propaganda, makes for a provocative expose of their relationship between political and consumer antics. Amway was launched in China in 1995. In 1998 the Chinese government banned all direct-selling companies after riots ensued due to illegal pyramid schemes. This situation was renegotiated in 2005 and in 2008. Amway China was ranked as this global company's largest market with over 1,800,000 employees.

Zhou Xiaohu (b. 1960, Changzhou, Jiangsu Province) was one of the first contemporary artists in China to work experimentally with sculptural ideas of video and animation. With a background in sculpture, oil painting and graphic design, Zhou's work reflects a world in which technology dominates everyday life through popular media, offering a particular platform for contemporary ideas of propaganda and public influence. Zhou Xiaohu was included in the

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historically significant exhibitions 'Shanghai Biennale 2000' and 'Between Past and Future: New Photography and Video from China' in 2004. His work has been exhibited in such prestigious institutions as Tate Liverpool, UK; Kunst Museum, Bern, Switzerland; Shanghai Art Museum, Shanghai, China; International Center of Photography, New York, USA and the Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Wien, Austria.

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