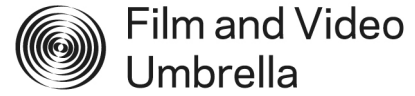


PRESS RELEASE



Suki Chan

Sleep Walk, Sleep Talk

A Foundation

198 Gallery

10 September – 19 October 2009

A FREE TO AIR project by Film & Video Umbrella

"It's very much based on a set of rules to be respected."

"The sense of purpose, sense of respect, self limits, helps a lot the way the city works."

"When you live in a huge city, you can be a kind of ghost."

"...you're constantly under the constraints of time... bits of the city just fall away."

In a London of fast-blinking lights and speeding commuters, cars and trains leave luminous comet-trails marking their passage through the night, and individuals reflect on freedom in the urban metropolis, or seek escape from the repetitive habits and conditions it enforces.

Presented as an outdoor projection at A Foundation (10-12 September) and as a twin-screen installation at 198 Gallery (14 September – 19 October) artist Suki Chan's work is inspired by ideas of freedom of expression. In an impressionistic and lyrical study of London's diverse population, *Sleep Walk, Sleep Talk* contrasts the movements of people on their way to and from work with their individual efforts to enjoy free time, and to create their own personal and psychological space outside the architectural restrictions and behavioural patterns imposed by life in the city.

Chan's work weaves together a series of video portraits highlighting revealing responses to the mania of London life. Groups of skaters, unimpeded by traffic, move freely and intuitively, mapping the twilight city. Nigerian security guards gatekeeping a deserted high-rise office block compare the 'freedom' of London with the rhythms and aspirations of their former lives. Artists and writers in the Graffiti Tunnel in Waterloo ruminate on the freedom they now have to create their art legally; city commuters portray the mundane, monotonous regularity of everyday existence... and architects, urban planners, economists and news journalists reflect on their real and abstract constructs of the city.

In *Sleep Walk, Sleep Talk*, Chan finds freedom in the marginal flashpoints of the city and in the internal psychological spaces of the conscious and sub-conscious where solace is sought. She mediates between public and private, investigating the underlying social, cultural and political structures. The work moves subliminally between a sleepwalker's hazy drift through the drudgery of daily city life to a sleepwalker's blurted expression of unconscious, pent-up frustration; from weary travellers dozing on buses to the deliberate act of self-retreat into meditation.

Using time-lapse photography, Chan captures the nuances at play in a city between the solid mass of its architecture and the fleeting movements of its urban inhabitants and the transportation system that revolves around them. She brings a scientific perception as much to her dispassionate views of the distant cityscapes as to her minute probings of human intimacies, facial expressions, gestures and reflexes.

Sleep Walk, Sleep Talk draws on Chan's interest in how urban spaces get planned and her experiences of Hong Kong and Shanghai and the Westernization of the towns and villages on their periphery. Her practice combines light, moving image, electronics and sound within mixed-media installations to explore physical and psychological experiences of space through simple, repetitive and sometimes painstaking processes, abstracting familiar materials and objects, to create imaginary and uncanny narratives.

Sleep Walk, Sleep Talk is the first project of FREE TO AIR, a major new four-year programme by Film & Video Umbrella for London Councils. Taking as its starting point Roosevelt's famous 'four freedoms' – freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want and freedom from fear – *Free to Air* invites four artists over four years who are living and working in London to create a work exploring the multiple meanings of 'freedom' in contemporary society. *Free to Air* is funded by London Councils and is presented in collaboration with A Foundation and 198 Gallery, London. *Sleep Walk, Sleep Talk* is accompanied by a series of screenings, workshops and events including *Figures of Speech*, a series of ten experimental and documentary films exploring how artists have used voice to examine race, gender, class and sexual relations.

For interviews, images or further information please contact Janette Scott on 07966 486156 or janettescottartspr@gmail.com or Hannah Barnes at Hannah@fvu.org.uk or 020 7407 7755.

Notes to Editors

1. **Suki Chan** was born in Hong Kong and currently lives and works in London. She graduated with BA (Hons) from Goldsmiths College, London, 1999 and completed an MA in Fine Art at Chelsea School of Art, London, 2008. Chan has participated in solo and group shows, artist residencies and research projects in the UK and internationally including: El Tanque, Spain; Comme Ca Art, New York, USA; PKW, Singapore and Upriver Loft Arts Space, China. Recent shows include: *Futuremap 08*, David Roberts Art Foundation, London, 2008; *Sequence and Repetition II*, Jerwood Space, London, 2007 and *Reversing Horizons*, Shanghai Museum of Contemporary Art, China, 2007. Her work is in numerous publications, and public and private collections. www.sukichan.co.uk

2. **A Foundation.** The A Foundation was established by James Moores in 1998 to support the development, production and exhibition of contemporary visual art in Liverpool and more recently at the Rochelle School in London's East End. The School is home to a thriving community of artists and creative industries housed in studios created from the School's former classrooms. Club Row, Rochelle's gallery is a flexible project space used to host multi-artform exhibitions, events, performances and installations. www.afoundation.org.uk

3. **198 Gallery** located in Brixton was created in response to the social unrest of the 1980s and has since grown from a community arts space, which helped nurture the Black Arts movement, into a contemporary visual arts organisation searching out artistic excellence, investing in emerging talents and exploring the rich diversity of artistic practices informed by globalisation and emerging cultural identities. www.198.org.uk

4. **Film and Video Umbrella** commissions, curates, produces and presents film, video and other moving-image works by artists from across the world. Projects encompass moving-image practice, from large-scale film productions to intimate video works and the use of online media such as YouTube. Film and Video Umbrella have consistently been at the forefront of new practice, developing audiences and promoting innovation through its support of some of the most exciting contemporary artists including works by Cory Arcangel, Tacita Dean, Johan Grimonprez, Isaac Julien, Mark Leckey, Gillian Wearing and Jane & Louise Wilson. Film and Video Umbrella is funded by Arts Council England. www.fvu.co.uk