

Wang Youshen

王友身



Newspaper Advertising, Photo, 1993
250x180 cm



Washing, Photo, 2003, 38x57cm

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Wang Youshen's pictorial imagery is characterized by a particular attention to the influence mass media exert on our thoughts, emotions, and actions, i.e. the mechanisms of in- and exclusion, which are attended by value judgment, if never explicitly stated. In his photo-based pictures, Wang Youshen uses selected press images as well as private photos as the basis of his investigation into the various functions and values of images, their truth content and modes of employment. Having worked as a magazine-editor, Wang Youshen is particular concerned about the power of the images printed. This is directly reflected in his work *Newspaper* (1993) where he uses newspaper as raw material, thus covering entire walls and printing them directly on to clothing fabric. In a similar project *Newspaper-Advertising* (1993) he covered the Chinese Wall with newspaper. By re-using the printed media in an entirely new context, Wang Youshen subverts and questions their original meaning.

In a recent, almost mono-chromatic, series of photographic work entitled *Washing* (2003) his point of departure are two original photos documenting tens and thousands of Chinese buried alive by Japanese troops during the 2nd World War. One of the pictures depicts a scene where some remains from the burial site is washed off. Wang Youshen uses the symbolic act of washing to reflect upon the question of washing that can both be understood as a form of purifying catharsis, but also as a form of amnesia, a cleansing of memory. The visual experiments of Wang Youshen mirrors his intention to develop a form of artistic communication that recognizes the necessarily fragmentary nature of any media, and he, thus, refuses the wish to reduce the work to a single coherent narrative.

Wang Youshen was born in Beijing in 1964. He graduated from the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, China. Today he lives and works in Beijing. Recent exhibitions include *Zooming into Focus*, National Art Museum of China, Beijing, China (2005), *Between Past and Future: New Photography and Video from China*, ICO and the Asia Society, NY, USA, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, USA, Seattle Art Museum, USA, V&A, London, UK, and *Haus der Kulturen der Welt*, Berlin, Germany, (2004-05), *5th Shanghai Biennale: Techniques of the Visible*, Shanghai Art Museum, Shanghai, China (2004) and *Washing – New Works by Wang Youshen*, ShanghART Gallery, Shanghai, China (2004). Additionally, he was included in the 45th Venice Biennale, Italy (1993).



Washing, Photo, 2003, 38x114 cm