

*I Told Them My Camera Was On* (revised version, 2005) (version #1 2004)  
/ Linda Lai / 24'44" / [smllai@cityu.edu.hk](mailto:smllai@cityu.edu.hk)

Brief:

The video is a narrative game reconstructing Lai's own video diaries (1990-2003) and found footage. It plays with the thin line between remembering and fabricating, recording and staging, documentary and story... It subverts causal narrative logic and shows 13 women's stories as a network of acquaintances, each in an isolated moment of her life. Questions on the practice of auto-ethnography are raised via "the politics of the everyday."

Concept/Artist's Statement:

Part of a digital auto-ethnographic video cycle, *4748 Moons and 13 Elliptical Years*, "**I Told Them My Camera Was On**" is a self-conscious narrative game re-constructing the author's own video diaries and found footage taken between 1985 and 2003, from vhs, hi-8 to mini-DV.

"**I Told**" has three inseparable objectives. First, the work plays with the thin line between remembering and fabricating, recording and staging, and document and story. Second, the work seeks to subvert mainstream *causal* narrative logic to bring playful chain-connectivity, turning a plot-driven story into a network of acquaintances. Third, the video mocks the "standard" narrative of a woman's life-story by inventing a composite story made up of women from diverse backgrounds. Each woman is shown in an isolated moment of her life, thus questioning the necessity of an epic approach. Standard theses on cultural differences and identities, realities of growing up and growing old etc. become ambiguous.

The scratches and jerking lines of the images from older format footage have been preserved to signify the multiple sheets of time-space and the passing away of time. Towards the end of the work, the narrative takes on a new style, like an organism about to move into a new phase of life. Many questions about image-making and representation have emerged in the process of making this work: early cinema's direct presentational style, what it means to write women's history, can an individual's life be understood without the illusion of continuity in an epic form? Etc.

List of technical staff:

Photography/Director:	Linda LAI
Editors:	WOO Lingling; Kedy FAN
Sound design:	Linda LAI
Voice performance:	Linda LAI, Theresa Mikuriya
Additional footage from:	Hector Rodriguez, Rita Hui, Sherona Chan

Screening History:

(1) World-premiered at: 51<sup>st</sup> International Short Film Festival Oberhausen [51. Internationale Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen] (Germany), May 2-10, 2005 [in competition], with an hour-long round-table discussion hosted by the festival.

(2) European screenings 1: in the program "Film Diaries" [Dietarios filmados] at the 12<sup>th</sup> Festival of Independent Cinema at Barcelona [L'alternativa, 12è Festival de cinema independent de Barcelona], November 11-19, 2005

(3) European screenings 2: in the program "Consultation: Contemporary Documentaries" [consultation documentaires contemporains] in the Paris/Berlin Meeting for New Cinema and Contemporary Art [Rencontres Internationales Paris/Berlin...Nouveau cinema et art contemporain], Paris, 15-27 November, 2005

