

Proposal submitted to Para/Site for the year 2004
Rule-making and rule-driven creativity: an Open Work
Proposed by: Linda Lai (curator and concept)

The proposed activity is incited initially in commemoration of the late young artist Joey Luk (Luk Pui-man) who was brutally murdered (June, 2003) in Moscow during her transit back to Hong Kong after a three-month artist-in-residence program in Estonia and a one-month drifting experience in North and Eastern Europe.

The proposed event is better described as a series of collaborative creative activities than just a solo exhibition with the display of prepared art works honoring a single artist. The event seeks to explore the many questions that this young artist has raised in her former works, including her works presented at "Someone's Done It Before" at Para/Site in June 2002, which are very much in line with my critical concern for artistic creation. These issues include: (1) What is an art object? What is an art work? (2) A critical dialogue with display/exhibition practices; and (3) The demystification of the category of "the artist."

The proposed project is an educational event as well as the active engagement with questions of curatorial practice.

The following concepts have shaped and informed the proposed activities:

The point of departure of the project is the idea of the open-endedness of an art work in Modern Art, manifested in works such as Boulez's music atonality, asymmetrical rhythm and meter, the OuLiPo Group's rule-driven Potential Literature, happenings, conceptual art, and the evolvement of installation art in the 20th century in general. Among other consequences, the process of creative activities and spatial interiority of the work assembled are highlighted, suggesting a more active mode of audience participation. Following from this, the artist is dethroned from her/his supreme status since the audience, in various degrees, has turned into, or, is, also the creator.

Linda's pro,

The idea of play, such as in the works of the Surrealist, the Dada, the Lettrist and the group the Situationist International, also incited the focus on rules in this project. "Play" here can be understood on different levels: as conscious deviation from routine and the alienating affects of everyday life, as a celebration of chance, as an alternative to the illusory notion of mind-and-body-in-one thesis, and as momentary, performative utterances of individual subjectivities.

Inter-mediality: creative activities grounded in space and the play of rules necessarily collapse the strict boundaries between creative mediums and artistic genres. As well, other domains of knowledge, such as urban studies, social and cultural theories, history, literature, music, architecture, folklore studies, politics, ethnography and so on could be brought to light to enrich artistic creation.

Cultural critique in the form of creative intervention: the ideas of play and rule-driven creation have encouraged artistic process as journeys of discovery, especially in the form of walking of different kinds within the city space (drifting, derive, being one of them) mapping, and creation of imaginary cities (such as the multifarious works by artists identified as the New Babylonians).

The event will include the following parts:

Basic set up of the gallery space began with the spatialized display of Joey's video works (about four pieces), including an IFVA Gold-award winning video (youth session, 2002) and a piece presented at the Berlin-Hong

Kong Festival in 2000. These works are all about "space" – urban space, invisible space, inner space, temporal space... The footage of Joey's three-month artist-in-residence program in Estonia (2003), which arrived in Hong Kong in her luggage without its owner, will also run in a corner of the gallery. The initial set-up should play with the idea of presence/absence, with a lot of empty space or space of ellipses. As the event moves on, this basic set up will be modified and transformed.

A number of artists will be invited to set out their creative/discovery activities based on a few sets of rules that Joey has made. (This also includes two sets of program notes she created on the spot of an installation exhibition at the City University of Hong Kong in 2001, which was her response to the works on display and her work for the exhibition itself.) The works subsequently created by the invited artists will be brought back the Para/Site Art Space for exchange and discussion, and, if possible, integrated into the gallery space.

A series of forums and workshops will be run alongside the exhibition period:

Guest lectures and forums:

These are expositions and critiques on rule-driven creativity plus the many issues listed above. Forum guests can be Para/Site members and other local artists or scholars.

Sept. 2003

*proposal for the exhibition:
submitted to Para/site*

Workshops:

These are workshops and educational sessions (about two sessions) examining the use and creation of rules with actual creative activities. The rule-creation component can be extended into more creative projects that may result in performances, writings, installations, photography, and any imaginable creative forms – ideally to be brought back as a celebration of the month-long event. These activities may take place in Para/Site, or anywhere in the city.

Publications:

An initial catalogue, in the simplest and most economical form possible (such as in the format of handouts, small booklets or compiled notes) will be printed and delivered in the initial phase of the event. Content will include documentations of a number of conceptual art works Joey has done as well as her own writing, all of them critique on the politics of display. The rules for invited artists will also be included. A catalogue with serious essays (from the lecture series and guest response) on rule-driven creativity in art history and its contemporary relevance, visual and textual documentation of all the works produced in the month, and critical responses from local artists will be prepared after the event.

Special attention should be given to the publicity of the workshops and lectures with clearly defined targets. Invited artists may range from young to established artists. Suggest that all young artists who have submitted proposals to Para/Site this year should be on the invitation list.