

REVIEWS

with the "real" in contemporary documentary practices might indeed be negotiated across the re-spatializing of time.

■ JOHN DI STEFANO

AUCKLAND

Slow Rushes for Auckland

Artspace

"S low Rushes for Auckland," an exhibition of moving image works curated by Rhana Devenport, explores the practice of 12 Asia-Pacific-based artists who take subjective approaches to documentary. A new version of "Slow Rushes: Takes on the documentary sensibility in moving images from around Asia and the Pacific," originally presented at the Contemporary Art Center in Vilnius, Lithuania in 2004, explores "expanded" views of documentary films that challenge notions of spectatorship.

Beijing artist Wang Jianwei's *Living Elsewhere* (1999) is a four-channel work that observes—over a year's duration—the everyday lives of four families in an abandoned housing development on the outskirts of Chengdu, Sichuan. *Living Elsewhere* is oddly compelling in its deadpan presentation of the margins of China's new urban landscape. His approach is informed by his association with the mid-1990s New Documentary Movement in China, which challenged the grand narratives produced by the PRC government. Wang's "observational" camera offers no clear expository perspective, and no climax or traditional narrative resolution. Rather, he relies on the slow and at times imperceptible emergence of "minor dramas" in the housing development. As *Living Elsewhere* unfolds with deliberate slowness, Wang's camera becomes an active participant in the environment that he is "objectively" recording by its proximity and intimacy to the on-screen events.

Chen Chieh-jen's *Lingchi: Echoes of a historical photograph* (2002), a work inspired by a photograph documenting a public execution in the late Qing dynasty, also displays the artist's subjective "hand" and its relationship to the real. Chen chooses to "document" the past as a means of re-presenting and animating historical events. The slow tempo of Chen's re-staged vignettes requires the viewer to suspend a desire for narrative closure and "objective" distance.

Devenport has focused on the gallery as a "documentary site" by choosing subjective works that demand particular attention to the durational in relation to their documentary "object." Other artists in the exhibition—Emil Goh, Kim Young Jin, Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba and Judith Wright—also blur the divide between subjective and objective positions by exploring various temporal strategies. "Slow Rushes" suggests that the interface



Chen Chieh-Jen ■ *Lingchi: echoes of a historical photograph* ■ 2002 ■ Single-channel video projection installation at Artspace, Auckland ■ Dimensions variable ■ Courtesy Artspace