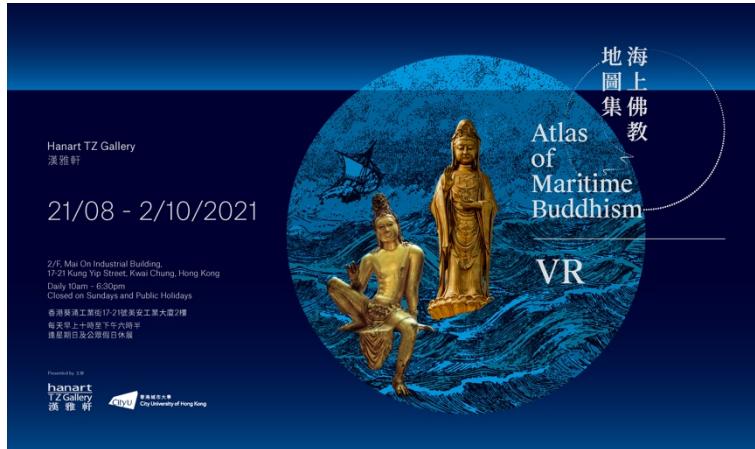


Press Release 新聞稿



If you receive an invitation to take a stroll with Jeffrey Shaw, be well prepared for embarking on a real journey. Jeffrey doesn't need to go far to step beyond the reality bubble; a Hong Kong street corner will do. He waves his smart phone and all of a sudden the disfigured behemoth that is the Hong Kong Cultural Centre disappears to make way for the nostalgic apparition of the Tsimshatsui train terminal in red brick and masonry; the very station where, for several summers long ago, I boarded a steam engine train to depart for Shanghai with my mother, where I would be spoiled by doting grandparents, aunts and uncles. I was a toddler and had to be led about by my mom on a leash to keep me from straying off into trouble. This is in effect an early clarion call for Jeffrey Shaw and Sarah Kenderdine's CITY IN TIME project with the Hong Kong Tourism Commission, using Augmented Reality to bring history back to Hongkongers. One scans a digital marker at appointed sites like the Star Ferry terminal, and through the monitor of one's smart phone bygone days return.

At Hanart TZ Gallery, another magic show by Jeffrey Shaw and Sarah Kenderdine is now on view. This time they are not reviving eras past, instead, they are taking us to 33 contemporary destinations across the Asia continent that have survived the ravages of history, and at each point to deliver some of the perennial wisdom of the Lord Buddha. From the Indian subcontinent, maritime Buddhism started to cross the oceans over two millennia ago, and through the wizardry of the artists these 33 still-thriving sites reside in virtual spaces beneath decorated discs glued to the gallery floor, bringing testimony to the resilience of spiritual devotion. It is a resilience through which the inevitable incompleteness of man's historical existence is made whole again. The rise and fall of kingdoms have only given us splintered memories of a small number of global cultures, even while these cultures presume to write the history of humanity as a whole. In our new era of digital archiving, the vast ocean of information make us even more painfully aware of the elusiveness of full understanding. Jeffrey Shaw and Sarah Kenderdine are experts in new media art, and as such are historical witnesses of media innovations that keep radically subverting this art's own successes, and render them obsolete in increasingly shorter cycles.

Corresponding to this technological acceleration, in the past two decades their work has taken a new turn. Their attention is turned backward to study historical memories that transcend the amnesiac passage of time. The *Atlas of Maritime Buddhism* is but their latest effort in making monumental memory out of fleeting moments, in order to connect with human endeavours of distant times whose meaning continues to resonate in our lives today. One senses a pathos in the artistic efforts of Shaw and Kenderdine, even though the image contents appear as deceptively straightforward as anthropological documentary. Moving slowly around the empty white gallery space while looking at one's mobile phone or iPad screen, the coded discs on the floor open up worlds to remind us of the vast unknowns that separate these locations. From the intense gaze of each gallery visitor, one also senses the realization that here lies a vast human world, previously unimaginable to all of us, that has made humanity itself possible.

Atlas of Real Time Buddhism
Chang Tsong-Zung 張頌仁

On the Exhibition 關於展覽

The spread of Buddhism by maritime routes from the Ganges Basin in India to East and Inner Asia, in the early centuries of the Common Era (CE), is a crucial element in the history of the religion. Seaports and connecting sites located on rivers played a major role in the expansion of Buddhism beyond the shores of India. Buddhist art and architecture developed as the dharma spread, adapting and evolving in each new host country. From the earliest rock cut caves of India to iconic stupas and temples, many of these revered spaces are now national heritage monuments and UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Sculpture and architecture were intimately connected. Monumental reliefs were used to decorate the walls of buildings, and depictions of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas, key figures on the path to enlightenment, were popular in countries along the maritime route. Covering thousands of important Buddhist sites, the ATLAS OF MARITIME BUDDHISM maps these treasured monuments and sublime architectures of south, south-east, and eastern Asia. This project derives from extensive fieldwork journeys by the artists Kenderdine and Shaw covering seven countries over several years. A diverse range of sophisticated tools and techniques were used to document the sites and sculptures, including gigapixel spherical photography, film-based and digital stereoscopic 360-degree panoramas, photogrammetry that captured 3D models of objects and surround-sound recordings. The result is the world's largest archive of fully immersive high-resolution panoramic and panoptic images, comprised of thousands of sites from India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia and China.

The exhibition ATLAS OF MARITIME BUDDHISM – VR has been specially conceived by the artists for Hanart TZ. It is a satellite experience to the exhibition ATLAS OF MARITIME BUDDHISM that is currently showing at the Indra and Harry Banga Gallery at City University in Hong Kong. It features thirty-three selected works of 360-degree spherical photography that were made by the artists at important maritime Buddhist sites across Asia. These are presented as 80cm diameter circular images on the floor of the gallery that each have a QR code in the center. Using one's smart phone or one of the provided iPads, visitors to this exhibition can then explore these sites in high-fidelity VR - the immersive sceneries of these sacred Buddhist sites completely surround the viewers as they move and look about on their mobile screens. The resulting exhibition is a conjunction of the real and virtual whereby an empty gallery space comes to contain a profound articulation of multifold Buddhist settings that spring up like lotus flowers from these digital imprints.

With thanks 鳴謝

City University of Hong Kong 香港城市大學

Fo Guang Shan Buddha Museum, Kaohsiung, Taiwan 台灣佛光山佛陀紀念館

University of New South Wales, Australia 新南威爾斯大學

EPFL École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne, Switzerland 洛桑聯邦理工學院

Chronus Art Center, Shanghai, China 新時線媒體藝術中心

Australian Research Council 澳大利亞研究委員會

NOTES TO EDITORS 致編輯

Opening Reception with Live Music | Saturday, 21 August 2021; 3-5:30pm

Exhibition Period | Saturday, 21 August – Saturday, 2 October 2021

Daily 10am - 6:30pm (Closed on Sundays and Public Holidays)

開幕酒會及音樂表演 | 週六 2021 年 8 月 21 日；下午 3 時至 5 時半

展期 | 8 月 21 日至 10 月 2 日

每天早上十時正至下午六時半 (逢星期日及公眾假期休展)

Address 展覽場地

Hanart TZ Gallery 漢雅軒

2/F Mai On Industrial Building, 17-21 Kung Yip Street, Kwai Chung

香港葵涌工業街 17-21 號美安工業大廈 2 樓

Press information 傳媒聯絡及查詢

Gordon Ho | T: + 852 2526 9019 | E: hanart@hanart.com