

Short Biography

Yingmei Duan was born on the 27 October 1969 in China. She works as an artist in performance, installation and video in Braunschweig.

Yingmei Duan belongs to the Chinese Avant-garde, which positioned itself in the 90's in the artist colony East Village in Beijing. 1995 she participates in the famous performance "To add one meter to an anonymous mountain".

To develop herself artistically, she goes to Germany on 1998. 2006 she finished her Postmaster studies with Marina Abramović, Birgit Hein and Christoph Schlingensiefel at Hochschule fuer Bildende Kuenste Braunschweig.

Since 1993 she has participated in numerous national and international exhibitions, festivals and workshops, e.g. Braziers International Artists Workshop in England 2003, 1st Performance festival in Salzau 2005, etc. Likewise she has taken part of multiples exhibitions from the IPG (Independent Performance Group), curated by Marina Abramovic, e.g. PAC Milan 2003, Van Gogh Museum Amsterdam 2005 and the Venice Biennale 2007.

Yingmei Duan's performances, installations and videos deal with aspects from the daily life: memories, fears, longings and dreams.

Site-specific she develops and changes experimentally her concepts, e.g. 2003 she realized during one month different performances in the solo exhibition "26 days in OK"; 2005 she connected performance and installation in the solo exhibition "Playing with 14 rooms"; 2006 she created performances that communicated with the other exhibited works of the group exhibition "Excellent" in dialogue with other artists; 2007 she researched the media performance and painting in the solo exhibition "Performance-Painting", where she interprets performance pieces into painted canvasses.

Yingmei Duan

1969 Born in Daqing Heilongjiang Province, P. R. China,
lives and works since 1998 in Braunschweig, Germany

Education

2006 Master at Hochschule fuer Bildende Kuenste, Braunschweig, Germany(HBK)
2005 Diploma in Fine Arts at HBK, Germany
2000-2006 Studies in Performance under Marina Abramovic; Film Studies under
Birgit Hein and "Kunst in action" under Christoph Schlingensiefel at HBK
1999-2000 Performance and Film under Mara Mattuschka at HBK
1998-1999 Guest studies in Painting under Nobert Tadeusz at HBK
1993-1998 Freelance artist in Beijing (1993-1995 in Beijing East Village)
1996-1997 Studies in Sculpture at the Central Academy of Arts and Crafts in Beijing
1993-1994 Studies in graphic design at the Central Academy of Arts and Crafts in Beijing
1991-1993 Studies in Oil- and Mural Painting at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing
1989 Graduation in Petroleum Exploration at the Northeast Petroleum University, China

Exhibitions & Festivals

Solo exhibitions

2007 "Performance-Painting Yingmei Duan", Gallery auf Zeit Braunschweig, Germany
2005 "Bedroom 07, 11, 2005 – 02, 08, 2006", Juliusstr. 17, Braunschweig, Germany
"Playing with 14 rooms", Gallery auf Zeit Braunschweig, Germany
2003 "Yingmei Duan - Performance", OKS Gallery Braunschweig, Germany
1996 "Bilder aus Peking", Gallery am Prater, Berlin, Germany
1995 "Duan Yingmei - Peking", Kunsthaus Erfurt, Germany

Group exhibitions

2007 "Hweilan International Artists Workshop", Hualien, Taiwan
"International Chinese Live Art Festival", Chinese Arts Centre, Manchester, England
"BoulevART", Kunstherbst Berlin, Germany
"Kasseler Kunstvereinsheim", Kunstverein Kassel, Germany
"kunst...hierundjetzt", das Kunstfest der offenen Ateliers in Braunschweig und Region,
Germany
"FRoots 2007 Festival", Metelkova area in Ljubljana, Slovenia
"Body & Eros", 52th La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy, Italy
"Sommerfest", Greenpeace in Berlin, Germany
"Diverse Universe III", Non Grata, Estland
"DIE KINDER SCHWIMMEN.DIE KINDER BRATEN", Kunstraum B in Kiel, Germany
"Yingmei Duan – Performance im m&n", Kolonie Wedding in Berlin, Germany
"Liste Köln 2007", Liste Köln 2007 in Köln, Germany
"Inside out year of the pig", Trocaadero London, England
2006 "IPG UNCENSORED ICONOGRAPHY with Illy at Moroso", Milan, Italy
"Excellent", Volkswagen Bank Braunschweig, Germany
"International Chinese Live Art Festival", Chinese Art Centre, Manchester, England
"Drop Spot", Kunstverein Celle im Schloss Celle, Germany
"BoulevART", Kunstherbst Berlin, Germany
"Meisterschüler", HBK Braunschweig, Germany
"Happy birthday", Kunsthaus Erfurt, Germany
"Akte Spuren Menschenbilder", OKS Gallery Braunschweig, Germany
"Gipfeltreffen", Projektraum für aktuelle Kunst und Performance in Basel, Switzerland
"Big River 3", CCA7, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

- 2005 "commonplace", ICEbox Kulturzentrum in Beijing, China
 "PLATTFORM #2", Kunstverein Hannover, Germany
 "Aiwa International Artists Workshop", Aley, Lebanon
 "Von Angesicht zu Angesicht", Der Offene Kunstverein e.V. Potsdam
 "Gifted generation", Hebbel Theater, Berlin, Germany
 "HBK, my love", HBK Braunschweig, Germany
 "Persistent and Gradual Loss of Self-Control", Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam, Holland
 "1. Performance Festival", Schloss Salzau in Schleswig-Holstein, Kiel, Germany
 "I love computer", Cebit Hannover, Germany
 "Kalte Küche", HBK Braunschweig, Germany
- 2004 "Re-Enact Performancenight", Mediamatic, Amsterdam, Holland
 "Menschenbilder", HBK Braunschweig, Germany
 "Nude with Skeleton", MARTa Herford, Germany
 "The Retrospective Abramovic Class 1997-2004", HBK Braunschweig, Germany
 "Braunschweiger Kulturnacht", LOT-Theater Braunschweig, Germany
 "Real Presence 4" Museum '25th of May', Belgrade, Yugoslavia
 "Cleaning the House-Performance Loop", NMAC Foundation, Cadiz, Spain
- 2003 "Colours Nachwuchs-Filmfest", Kino im Künstlerhaus Hannover, Germany
 "Braziers International Artists Workshop", Oxfordshire, England
 "Recycling the Future", 50th La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy
 "Performance in der Kunsthalle", Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany
 "As soon as possible", PAC Milan, Italy
- 2002 "Body Power-Power Play2", Württembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart, Germany
 "Prêt_À_Performance", Viafarini Milan, Italy
 "16. internationales filmfest Braunschweig", Braunschweig, Germany
 "Body Basics", Trans art 02, Franzenfestung, Brixen, Italy
 "Braunschweiger Kulturnacht", LOT-Theater Braunschweig, Germany
 "Cleaning the House", CGAC Santiago de Compostela, Spain
 "Common Ground#1", Landesvertretungshaus Niedersachsen und Schleswig-Holstein, Berlin, Germany
- 2001 "Marking the Territory", Irish Museum Of Modern Art, Dublin, Ireland
 "Get that Balance", National Sculpture Factory in Cork, Ireland
 "Ovalen den frie udsillings bygning", Copenhagen, Denmark
 "100 Selbstportraits", Freistaat Vertretung Thüringen beim Bund Berlin, Germany
 "100 Selbstportraits", Kunsthaus Erfurt, Germany
 "Durch die Zeit", Kunstraum Zehn, Hannover, Germany
 "Yingmei Duan und Finn Richardt", Birkrod Kunstforening, Denmark
- 2000 "Cleaning the House", Domaine de Kerguéhennec, France
 "Wer hat Angst vor Roger Whittaker?", Staedt. Museum Zwickau, Germany
 Chinesischer Turm in Donaustauf, Germany
- 1999 "Bilder und skulpturen", Niedersächsisches Umweltministerium, Hannover, Germany
 Schlossgalerie Eichhofen, Germany
 48th La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy
- 1996 Qiran Gallery, Beijing, China
 "Herbst Salon", Kunsthaus Erfurt, Germany
- 1995 "2nd Joint Exhibition of Chinese Professional Painter's Works", Ammonal Gallery, Beijing, China
- 1993 "100 young artists", China National Museum of Fine Arts, Beijing, China

Live Performances

1995 - 2007

To add one meter to an anonymous mountain

Live Performance with Wang Shihua, Cang Xin, Gao Yang, Zuo Xiao Zu Zhou, Ma Zongyin, Zhang Huan, Ma Liuming, Zhang Binbin, Zhu Ming.

This is a collective work by the Beijing East-Village artists.

First we were weighed by my friend Kong Bu, which determined the order of our body weights. The heaviest lay down first, the lightest lay down last. The order of the bodies was 3, 2, 2, 2, 1 from the bottom to the top. Our bodies were stacked one meter high and the nameless hill grew one meter higher.

East Village, an artists quarter on the edge of Beijing, reached international fame in the 1990s. Musicians, artists and critics, who looked for free space, lived here, in order to work experimentally. It happened innovative works, whereby the performances excited in particular international attention. For the first time Ma Liuming showed one performance in East Village because of the Visiting from the artists Gilbert & George. From now on some artists served also performance-art. and it developed themselves apart from einzelarbeiten some spectacular group performances, in which Yingmei Duan participated codesigning. "To add one meter to an anonymous mountain" is one the most well-known. During some artists the attention of the media on itself pulled, Yingmei held herself rather in the background. At this time its principal interest applied still for the painting and here above all the Selbst-portrait as topic. But although Yingmei was not yet conscious, which means performance for it, did not release it the thought to it since that time. Without doubt the years were coining/shaping in circles of the artists of East Village for their later artistic career. The turning point came during its study at the HBK Braunschweig as it Marina Abramovic to however only know learned, an important Protagonistin in the history of the performance art. Yingmei Duan dedicated itself since that to the performance as artistic expression means. (Artists in the East Village: Cang Xin, Duan Yingmei, Gao Yang, Kong Bu, Li Guomin, Ma Liuming, Ma Zongyin, Rong Rong, Tan yeguang, Wang Shihua, Xu Shan, Zhang Binbin, Zhang Huan, Zhu Ming, und Zuoxiaozuzhou)

Duration: approx. 20 Min.

An anonymous mountain in Beijing, China, 1995

Photograph: Lü Nan



Nine holes

Live Performance with Wang Shihua, Cang Xin, Gao Yang, Ma Zongyin, Zhang Huan, Ma Liuming, Zhang Binbin, Zhu Ming.

Duration: approx. 10 Min.

An anonymous mountain in Beijing, China, 1995

Photograph: Lü Nan



Old water

Live performance

Life has got many sides to it. It can be beautiful, annoying, sad, a lot of fun, boring etc. Sometimes I feel like the dregs of society. But no matter what happens, life carries on.

Wearing my "wedding dress" I stand between two rows of white plastic buckets that are filled with freezing water. The audience splashes water at me. I do not move. This is my "wedding".

Duration: approx. 5 min.

Hochschule fuer Bildende Kuenste Braunschweig, Germany, 2000

Staedt. Museum Zwickau, Germany, 2000

Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, Ireland, 2001

Photograph: Unknown



Clown

Live performance

I have made up my face like a clown. I am grinning stiffly at the audience. With a contorted animal-like face, I laugh right into people's faces, moving past them very slowly. The feeling conveyed is that the situation is anything but funny.



Duration: approx. 5min.

Hochschule fuer Bildende Kuenste Braunschweig, Germany, 2001

Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, Ireland, 2001

National Sculpture Factory in Cork, Ireland, 2001

Hochschule fuer Bildende Kuenste Braunschweig, Germany, 2004

Photograph: Viola Yesiltac



My future

Live performance

Everything is futile and a striving for castles in the air. All things are wearisome. What profit does a man have in all of his hard work under the sun?

Everything is empty! (Ecclesiastes)

I am buried on the street under old cardboard boxes, lumps of stone, branches and fallen autumn leaves. I am dressed like a beggar, sleeping the sleep of the dead. Vinegar concentrate gives me the smell of decay. The world has totally abandoned me.

Duration: approx. 60 min.

Hochschule fuer Bildende Kuenste Braunschweig, Germany, 2001

Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, Ireland, 2001

National Sculpture Factory in Cork, Ireland, 2001

Viafarini, Milan, Italy, 2002

Photograph: Jae-Eun Jung



Talk to myself

Video film

In 2001 I get a caretaker job, which involves a lot of gardening. Almost every day I am outside for 2 hours. I work alone and the fresh air gives me the feeling of freedom. While my body is busy with the work, running like a machine, my thoughts are elsewhere. I talk a lot to myself. The video shows the garden work in process. I sweep leaves and continually talk to myself in my mother-tongue. (One can read the text translation in the sub-title). In the end one can hear my voice. I sing the Chinese song "Looking for Friendship".

"...Why do I have so much to do every day? Perhaps I will die tomorrow, or just not wake up. Everything passes me by. Nothing there any more! (sigh) I want to stop the clock. I want to stop all the clocks!..."

Duration: approx: 5'26"

Hochschule fuer Bildende Kuenste (HBK) Braunschweig, Germany, 2002

Braunschweiger Filmfestival, Germany, 2002

Kino im Kuenstlerhaus Hannover, Germany, 2003

Videostill: Jae-Eun Jung



Corner

Live performance

Corners are my favourite place. I always feel very good when I can stay in a corner.

In this performance, I crouch in the furthest corner of a huge staircase set at 45-degree angle. I cannot lift up my head. It looks as if I were carrying a huge mountain on my back. During my performance a lot of people try to pull me out.



Duration: 1 hour

Cleaning the House, Centro Galego de Arte Contemporánea(CGAC),
Santiago de Compostela, Spain, 2002

Photograph: Silvia Garcia



Help!

Live performance

Originally this performance should have been carried out on top of a wall six metres in height and ten metres in length.

In this performance, I am hanging right at the top of a 7 metre high wooden partition. I am like a child who cannot stop kicking her legs. This is a dangerous situation for me and I am completely helpless.



Duration: 2 hours

Landesvertretung Niedersachsen und Schleswig-Holstein, Berlin,
Germany, 2002

Photograph: Asayo Nakagawa & Yun-Seok Koh



Sleepwalker

Live performance

As the audience come in, I have already been lying for some time in my starting position. I am asleep on the floor in front of the stage. I wake up as if I were in a trance and slowly stand up. I then move towards the audience as if I were sleepwalking. Suddenly I slap someone from the audience round the face. Then, as if nothing had happened, I move on.

Duration: approx. 10 min.

Cleaning the House, CGAC Santiago de Compostela, Spain, 2002

Hochschule fuer Bildende Kuenste Braunschweig, Germany, 2002

Photograph: Mariangela Bombardieri



Little secret

Live performance

In my entire life I have kept eight rabbits, nine dogs and two lambs. Whenever possible I talked to them.

I wear a girly dress. The atmosphere is very quiet. I speak Chinese to a very small white rabbit which I hold in my hands. The situation is calm and secure.

Duration: 1-2 hours

Hochschule fuer Bildende Kuenste Braunschweig, Germany, 2003

Mediamatic, Amsterdam, Holland, 2004

Photograph: Viola Yesiltac



Friend

Live performance

I come from China, which has a very different culture. There is no sex education in the school system. Before I was 21 years old, I really knew nothing about sex and I had never even spoken the word. I had a lot of questions in my mind at that time, for example: "Why does a woman become pregnant?", "Where do I come from?", ... This obtained until the day a girlfriend asked me what I knew about sex. I have been very busy since that day.

In summer a naked man stands in a large field. He is looking ahead. There is a very beautiful bird sound in the field and a big sun, sometimes there is wind. I appear in the distance and approach the man. At first the public is unsure what to do since I am so far away. With time, the viewer sees that I'm wearing a pink dress and big glasses. I am looking for something with a magnifying glass and go stealthily towards the man. Although reticent at first, I am very curious about the penis and check it thoroughly through the magnifying glass. After I have finished my intensive studies of the penis, I leave thoughtfully.

Duration: 3 minutes - 3 hours

Performance with Mirko Winkel in der Hochschule fuer Bildende Kuenste Braunschweig, Germany, 2003

Performance with Marco Mazzaro, 48th La Biennale di Venezia, Italy, 2003

Performance with Marco Mazzaro in PAC Milan, Italy, 2003

Performance with Claudio Torsa in Braziers International Artists Workshop, Oxfordshire, England, 2003

Photograph: Anna Berndtson, Mariangela Bombardieri and Martina Kienow







Nature

Live performance

During the two weeks of the workshop I was always surrounded by people. We stayed in an old castle in the middle of nowhere. So we spent most of the time together, always talking, always partying and so on. After some time I felt the need to spend some time by myself, enjoying the quietness of nature.

I wear a fresh blue dress and I sit still on a wooden bench. The romantic yellow autumn grass is around me. The atmosphere is very quiet, and I can hear only the wind's voice. I try to think of nothing.



Duration: 4 hours

Braziers International Artists Workshop, Oxfordshire, England, 2003

Photograph: Mariana Viegas



I love computer

Live performance

I worked on the computer fair in Hanover for 5 years. And with big interest I visited it every year. I like computer very much, because they changed our life a lot. Whenever I see one I feel really happy.

Wearing pink pyjamas I sit on the floor in front of an U-Bahn station. My feet are bare. I hug a monitor, my head is resting on it. My eyes are closed. I look happy and relaxed and I seem to be sleeping. Regularly comes the U-Bahn and the visitors get off. I am the first point for the visitors on their way to the Cebit.

Duration: 30 min.

Cebit in Hannover, Germany, 2005

Photograph: Stefan Simonsen



From face to face

Live performance

I stand in front of the audience, with my large pair of glasses on the floor nearby. Slowly, I move towards somebody in the audience and stop. When we are almost touching noses, I look the person straight in the eye. Sometimes I have to stand on tiptoe if the person is very tall. To look into the eyes of those who are seated, I have to crouch down. As soon as I have looked at everybody, I return to my place. I look for my glasses, and then put them on, I smile...



Duration: 10 min.

Domaine de Kerguéhennec, France, 2000

Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, Ireland, 2001

LOT-Theater Braunschweig, Germany, 2002

Hochschule fuer Bildende Kuenste Braunschweig, Germany, 2004

Der Offene Kunstverein e.V. Potsdam, Land Brandenburg, 2005

Photograph: Hongli Zhao & Mariangela Bombardieri



Akte Spuren Menschenbilder

Live performance installation with Helge Karnagel

Since 5 years I have been nacked model in many drawing courses. With the time the job becomes a part of my life.

According to the drawing exhibition AKTE SPUREN MENSCHEN of Helge Karnagel, with him I do one performance about his drawing. Karnagel has already drawn nacked model all his life. A lot Easels are everywhere in the galerie area and an installation is developed. Constantly I question him about his drawings during I do model. The public can know not only, but also experience, how he draws.

From the beginning the public are welcome to take part in the performance installation.



Duration: 1 hour

OKS Gallery Braunschweig, Germany, 2006

Photograph: Juergen Bernhard Kuck



Coffee bean

Live performance

In this performance I improvise, creating a coffee song and a dance.

The public comes into the exhibition, where they hear to a background song from the boxes. Lately they surprisingly realize that it is me singing from the coffee sacks and moving like a bee.

Lyrics:

"I am a small coffee bean, I come from very far away, from a very hot country, today I come to Italy, I settle my home in Illy. Illy Illy, my home, my home is in Illy..."



Duration: 2 hours

IPG UNCENSORED ICONOGRAPHY with Illy at Moroso, Milan, Italy, 2006

Photograph: John Fass



Happy birthday

Live performance installation

My idea was to realize an interactive performance with the audience.

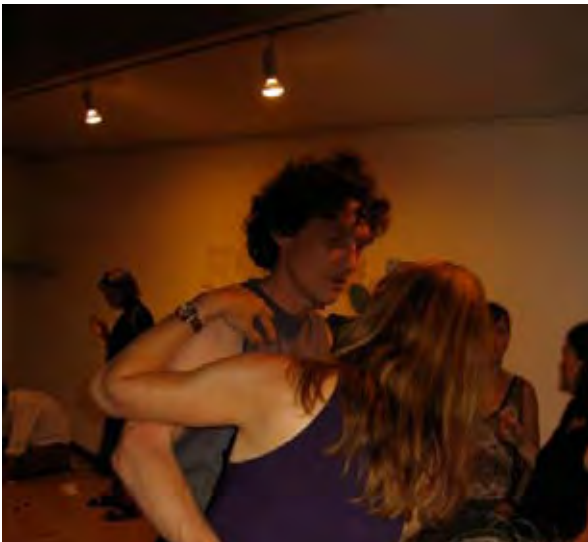
On invitation cards I asked them to bring a small birthday gift for the opening exhibition. The public received suggestions on what they could do. Visitors can operate on a wide variety of mediums, for example by drawing, performing, etc...



Duration: 20 Min.

Kunsthaus Erfurt, Germany, 2006

Photograph: Juergen Bernhard Kuck



Dreaming in the forest

Live performance

I develop the concept during the realisation of the performance. I am very curious, about what would happen.

I slowly fill the space with the "living trees" and a "forest" starts coming out. With spread arms I am dreaming in the dark people forest, which I built. Site specific, I improvise actions with the "trees": I stare at a female "tree" with disappointed eyes, while I move it around in the circle; I pull male "tree" hands to my naked breast under my night clothes; afterwards I give another "tree" a slap, before I slowly begin to dance with him...

Duration: approx. 35 Min.

Projektraum fuer aktuelle Kunst und Performance in Basel,
Switzerland, 2006

Videostill







Phoenix aus der Asche

Performance installation

Cooperation performance-installation of Yingmei Duan and Alexandra Gneissl from the exhibition "DIE KINDER SCHWIMMEN. DIE KINDER BRATEN"

There are two performers lying on a ground, fully covered by 15 kg ashes. One can recognize some objects placed on the floor. A very poetic, endless atmosphere arises. Tabula Rasa. At the beginning of the performance, people enter the room and leave their footprints on the dusty surface. After a period of silence a body begins to rise from the ashes. The performer Yingmei Duan is liberated from the dust and reaches for the objects. She starts giving them to the bystanders. These are meaningful objects, memories of friendships.

Meanwhile, the second body begins to move. The performer Alexandra Gneissl pushes the ashes from the outer corners into the middle of the room. The things that get crossed when she pushes them are also passed on the audience. Yingmei Duan follows this action by also putting the ashes into the middle of the room. The floor gets exposed and a small pile of towers is gradually built. The two performers, sitting on their knees, meet in front of this construction. After a moment of silence they begin playing a children's gossip game. They clap their hands simultaneously and sing a chinese children's song "Looking for friendship". One listens to the melancholic melody for a while and then the light goes off. The two performers leave the room, and the visitors remain standing still...

Duration: 25 Min.

Kunstraum B / Kiel, Germany, 2007

Photograph: Thorbjørn Jacobsen





Yingmei's Erotic Body

Live performance

The topic given: The Erotic Body.

There are different Performer-stations, which are lit by spotlights.

I walk naked, slow motion-like, in a sort of dream state around the area and among the visitors. Since no light falls on me, the public doesn't notice my presence immediately. My face has a sad gesture and I look for contact with the people, but most of them avoid me and seem to have fear. I move freely across the room and visit successively the stations of the other Performers. My body improvises connections to the different performance installations.



Duration: 3 days, each days 5 hours

52th La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy, 2007

Photograph: Juergen Bernhard Kuck





