



Ullens Center for  
Contemporary Art  
尤伦斯当代艺术中心

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**Exhibition Dates:**

9 June 2016 – 7 August 2016

**Exhibition Venue:**

Central Gallery

Press material also available for  
download from the UCCA website

## New Directions: Hao Jingban

Released on 8 June 2016

**Hao Jingban's work uses the language and structure of documentary film to explore the fate of the general population in relation to social movements and the currents of history.**

From 9 June to 7 August 2016, the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) presents “New Directions: Hao Jingban,” an exhibition featuring the artist’s recent video works: *An Afternoon Ball*, *I Can’t Dance*, and *How were you doing there?* Here, the artist turns the lens towards two seemingly disparate spaces, ballrooms and factories, key sites of entertainment, sociality, and production in the twentieth century. Influenced by directors Chris Marker, Harun Farocki, and others, Hao Jingban’s work often uses the language and structure of documentary film to explore the fate of the general population in relation to social movements and the currents of history. Through field research, scenic reconstruction, and narrative montage, her artworks act as historical documents as they explore the fraught relationships between memory and image, event and narrative. Hao Jingban captures, with great sensitivity, situations and behaviors that can stand in as the symbols of an era.

Since 2012, Hao Jingban has been working on the project *Beijing Ballrooms*, which includes both *I Can’t Dance* and *An Afternoon Ballroom*. Arriving in China during the Republican Era, ballroom dance enjoyed a brief vogue among the Beijing elite at the dawn of the People’s Republic, fell from favor during the decades that followed and was finally resurrected in public parks and plazas after the Reform and Opening. The vicissitudes of ballroom dance not only relate the plight of a generation, they also betray a logic peculiar to Chinese history. *An Afternoon Ballroom* observes and documents a deteriorating ballroom, reproducing an ordinary dance while attempting to present the abstract spatial relations—visual and psychological—constituted by the people occupying it. *I Can’t Dance* creates a four channel video installation where documentary images, classic movie clips, and texts on the evolution of Beijing’s ballroom scene coalesce in a polyphonic dialogue exposing new historical narratives. Here interviews with veteran dancers are interwoven with excerpts from *Song of Youth* and *Intrepid Hero*, films from the 1950s, placing the independent “oral histories” in a holistic intertextuality while deconstructing images of the ideological imaginary.



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As the first part of another ongoing project, *How were you doing there?* employs the realism of direct observation to a once booming industrial landscape now giving way to entropy. During the creative process, Hao Jingban visited the steel and copper factories where her parents and grandparents once worked. Claiming to follow the “cinematic logic of labor”, she depicts the production methods of workers through direct language, aiming to showcase actual labor. Architectural remnants of Soviet provenance, deserted buildings, natural landscapes around the copper mine, and nostalgic glimpses of machinery and other objects are combined with images of labor, placing the latter within in a wider temporal and spatial framework. The artist has also interviewed family members that once worked or are still working in the steel and copper factories. Independent from the film, viewers may use external headphones to listen to a monologue produced by the artist in response to her family members’ stories, adding another layer to the overall narrative. Through the use of long and fixed lens shots and a restrained editing style, Hao Jingban endows her works with a “neutral” temperament supplemented by written texts. From a personal perspective, the involvement of these family interviews re-examines the historical features within the landscape of China's industrialization.

For Hao Jingban, the filmic image is not merely a form of expression but also a research method reflecting history and reality. Her artworks act as historical documents as they provide new ways or approaches to understanding and penetrating reality through the reconstruction of imaged sites.

#### **About the Artist**

Hao Jingban (b. 1985) currently lives and works in Beijing. She graduated from Goldsmiths College, London, with a Bachelor's in Media and Communication (2007) and from University of London with a Master's in Film Studies (2010). Exhibitions featuring her work include the 7th Shenzhen Sculpture Biennale "Accidental Message: Art Is Not A System, Not A World" (OCT Contemporary Art Terminal, Shenzhen, 2012); “Echoes of Socialist Realism” (OCT Contemporary Art Terminal, Shenzhen, 2014); “Sight and Sound” (Jewish Museum, New York, 2014); “The Civil Power” (Minsheng Art Museum, Beijing, 2015); “Southern Wind” (Antenna Space, Shanghai, 2015). She curated “The Prose of the World” for the 2013 screening season at OCT Contemporary Art Terminal, Shenzhen. A book of a selection of essays under the same title, *The Prose of the World*, is set to be published in 2016.



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### **About New Directions**

Initiated in 2015, New Directions offers some of China's most promising artists a platform to realize their first institutional solo exhibition and monographic publication. Deepening UCCA's ongoing commitment to emerging practices pioneered by shows including "ON | OFF: China's Young Artists in Concept and Practice" (2013), "Breaking Forecast" (2009), and the Curated By... series (2010-2012), this series of solo exhibitions aims to present, through a constellation of singular positions, an overall sense of the richness and complexity of new art in China today.

### **About the Exhibition**

"New Directions: Hao Jingban", the fourth installment of the New Directions series, is curated by UCCA assistant curator Lotus Zhang. New Directions is initiated by UCCA Director Philip Tinari. The exhibition is accompanied by a monograph of the same title and features images of the artist's two projects alongside essays by Guo Juan and Yang Zi as well as a dialogue between the artist and Lotus Zhang. The monograph is available at UCCASTORE. Barco is the video equipment sponsor, and sound equipment support comes from GENELEC. Audio guide is supported by VART.

### **About the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art**

Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) is the international institution at the heart of Beijing's 798 Art District. Each year it presents a wide range of exhibitions and educational programs, highlighting artists from China and beyond, and encouraging the public to engage with contemporary art and culture. Opened in 2007, UCCA is a non-profit, non-collecting, non-governmental museum sustained by the generosity of numerous patrons, sponsors, members, and visitors, beginning with founders Guy and Myriam Ullens. In everything it does, UCCA aims to elaborate an inclusive, cosmopolitan vision of China in the world.

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