

Estranged Fruit

2010

Single channel video.
20:30 min. 1080 x 720. 25p. Color. Stereo.

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GROUP**

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A study in the application of political history and socio-political meaning through the introduction of one of America's most famous protest song, Strange Fruit, into China's growing rock scene, via Chinese punk rock & industrial metal band, VooDooKungFu.

The ability to protest is a privilege. In some contexts, that "privilege" is opposed with militarism. Interested in the political efficacy of music, The Propeller Group have turned their attention to the the punk/rock scene in communist China, now thriving and thumping with contagious rock-n-roll energy. The Propeller Group has begun a collaboration with Beijing industrial metal band VooDoo KungFu. We set out to create a unique rendition

of one of the first major protest song in the U.S. titled "Strange Fruit". In 1939, "Strange Fruit" was recorded, widely distributed and made famous by Billie Holiday, later becoming her biggest selling record.

VooDoo KungFu's first rendition of "Strange Fruit" was performed entirely in English and recorded in their unique styling integrating traditional Chinese instruments and a dark metal feel. The Propeller Group is currently working with VooDoo KungFu to develop a Mandarin version of the song.

Check song here: <https://vimeo.com/29665828>



Installation view.

GALLERY INSTALLATION

Estranged Fruit was displayed in its first iteration in Hong Kong at 1A Space as an installation. A wall that was built to partition the space was fabricated with three speakers attached to the 15-centimeter-thick exposed end of the wall. The bare speakers were pointed into the wall where a system of pipes channeled the sound through the inside of the wall and out the other end through small speaker holes on the surface of the wall.

The first speaker played the original Billie Holiday version.

The second speaker had the cover versions playing back to back.

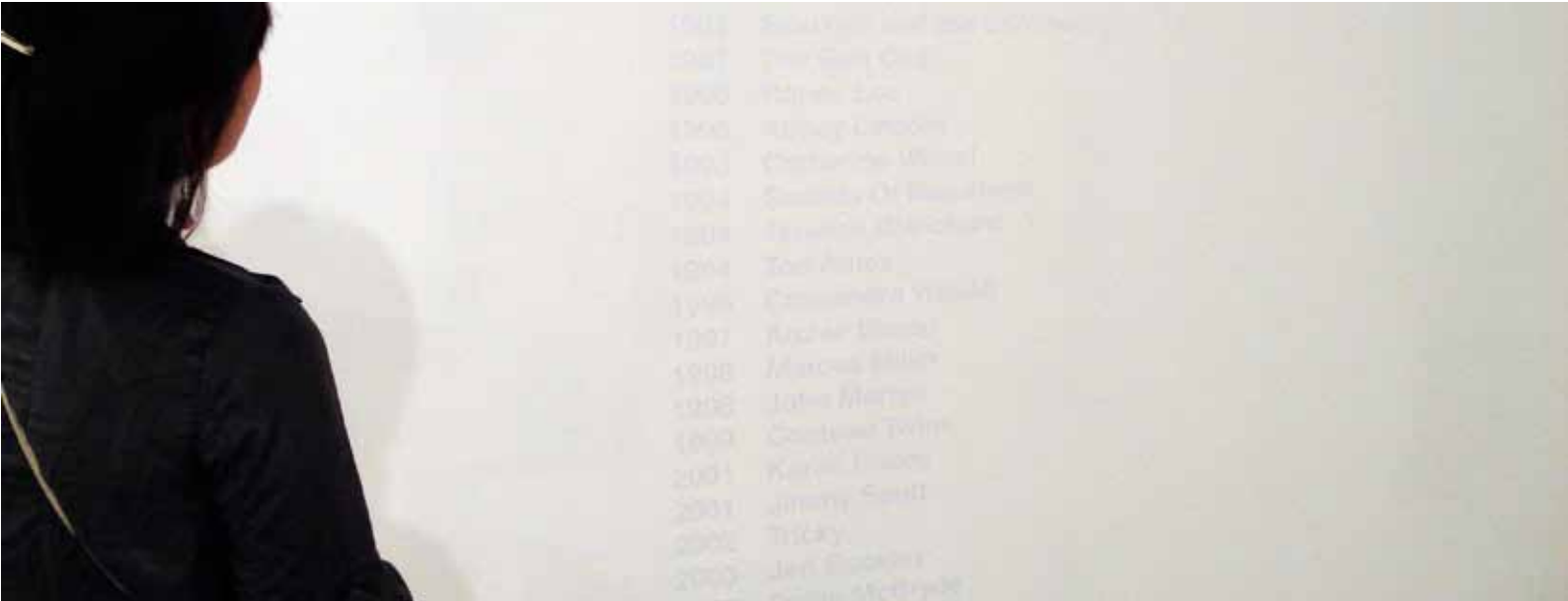
The third speaker had VooDoo KungFu's new rendition.

The white wall, approximately 4.5 meters long, had white vinyl lettering listing out the artists who had covered this song as an official recording and the dates the recording was made.

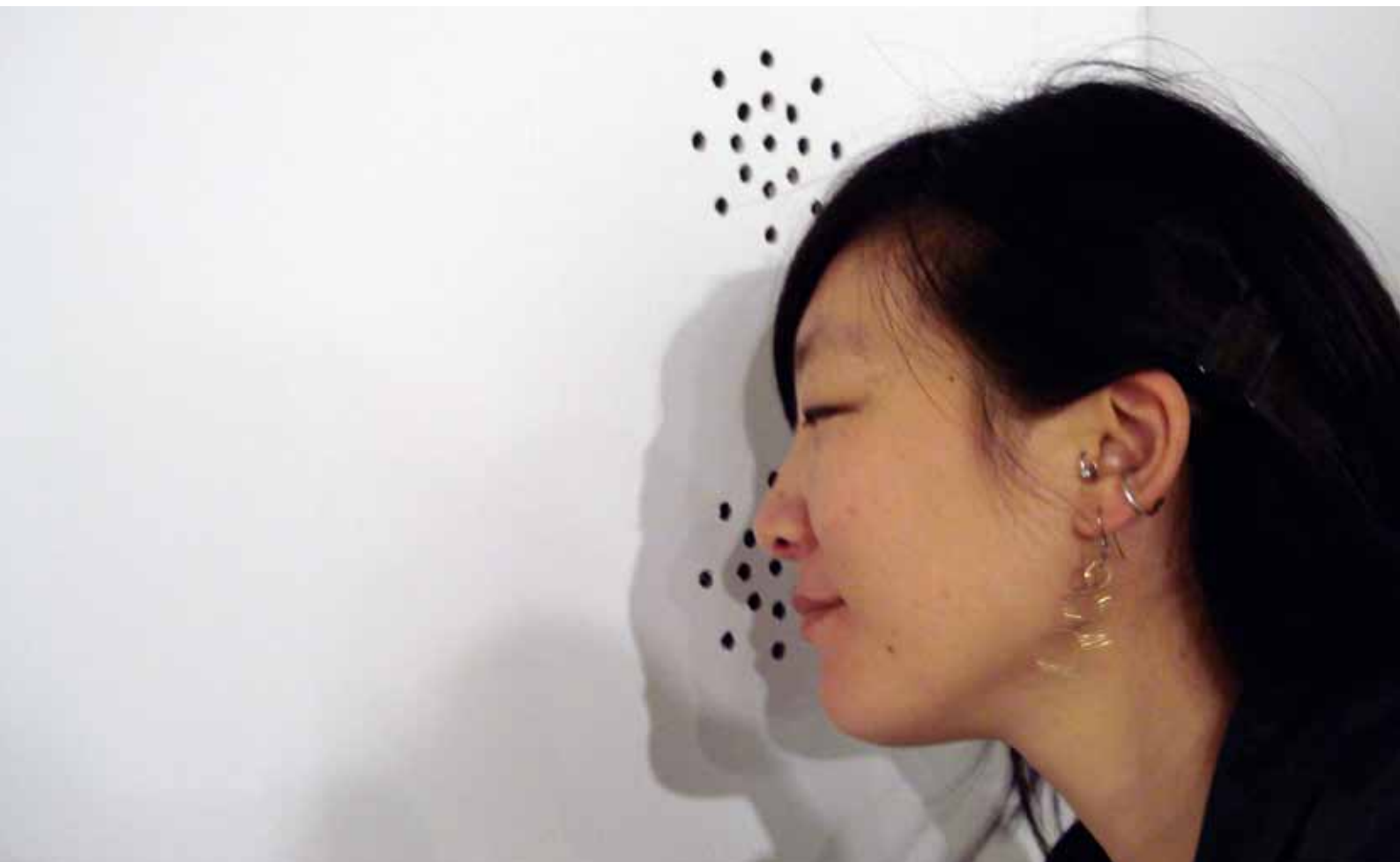
COVERS

- 1939 – Billie Holiday
- 1941 – Sidney Bechet
- 1951 – Josh White
- 1957 – Webster Young
- 1958 – John Sellers
- 1965 – Nina Simone
- 1972 – Diana Ross
- 1980 – UB40
- 1982 – Robert Wyatt
- 1987 – Siouxsie and the Banshees
- 1987 – The Gun Club
- 1990 – Raneé Lee
- 1993 – Abbey Lincoln
- 1993 – Catherine Wheel
- 1994 – Sounds Of Blackness
- 1994 – Terence Blanchard
- 1994 – Tori Amos
- 1995 – Wilson, Cassandra
- 1997 – Archie Shepp
- 1998 – Marcus Miller
- 1998 – John Martyn
- 1999 – Cocteau Twins
- 2001 – Karan Casey
- 2001 – Jimmy Scott
- 2002 – Tricky
- 2003 – Jeff Buckley
- 2003 – Deian McBryde
- 2004 – India Arie
- 2004 – Sting & Gil Evans
- 2004 – The Twilight Singers
- 2005 – Karate
- 2005 – Lester Bowie's Brass Fantasy
- 2006 – Lou Rawls
- 2007 – Artificial Animals
- 2008 – Snowman
- 2008 – This Bike is A Pipe Bomb
- 2009 – Common Featuring John Legend
- 2010 – Dee Dee Bridgewater
- 2010 – The Wynton Marsalis Quintet
- 2010 – Voodoo KungFu [Beijing, China]

Installation view. Side of wall.



Installation view.



Installation view. Speakers connect through pipes and are audible on the other end of the wall.