

15<sup>th</sup> February, 2009 – 5:00pm / **DEBBY CHENG + ATHENA WU**

Antique was a busy place on Sundays. There was buzz to it, there were power women taking their teas with their mothers and girlfriends talking about their holidays. There was a time when I had a life like theirs. The afternoon hours from three to six are the few precious hours on the weekends where you could stop and take teas. It would be the last reprieve before another week. This would not be the same experience for the two women who were coming to the show; there would not be the silence and relaxation before the noise and pollution of the streets.

They had never drunk teas which were pink in colour, Debby rarely came to this part of Central and Athena never met Linda but she majored in Anthropology.

They both elected to lie on their stomachs hugging the pillows. When they finished, I invited them to join me for a drink. It was then a young lady was at the door. She wanted to see the show. How much was it? She said. We were a non profit art space, I replied, the whole experience had to start in a tea room but sure, I would let you see the video if you would not tell our curator.

Athena was the first one to speak after we all settled down with a glass of Chardonnay. They did not say what I was going to record here all at once but their answers were given to me as a result of different questions. Sometimes, I let the music played on and gave them a chance to think about it. Sometimes, I would urge them to respond.

Athena said "These were familiar images, house chores, TV, mum, news on the background. And the 1990s seemed such a long time ago and I did not seem to have been part of it. Like the Repulse Bay scenes, these are things that I would have done, nothing to do and you take photos with your friends on the beach. Then you point this way and then that way, just like in the video. I definitely think more about my family after watching the video. I do not think I necessarily know more about Linda after this video. Is this all real? I think the wedding is real but some these scenes could be made up. So you ask me if I know Linda more, the answer is I do not really know if I do. It is very strange that Linda would think about starting such a project when she was much younger. I wouldn't know what I wanted to do when I was younger, let alone planning to start a video project for the next decade. The biggest difference between my life and Linda's life is that I have never done a film or film project like this one. Linda has taken a route or has done something which is not considered normal in our society. And I have always done things which are normal. Like I go to university and then I take a normal job. Yes, Norway is a faraway place but I do not think going to Norway is not normal. I went there for two years under a scholarship. I did not choose to go but it was assigned to me. I went to a place called Flekke which is a really remote place. 200 students had to live and study together. Not every one could take the pressure."

Debby said "These are images of Linda's close relatives. They seem so remote. They seem distant and yet they are so close. They are like second hand reality. I do not know what I want to say. I have not been to Repulse Bay for such a long time now. Do I get to understand Linda more? I do. They show her younger, doing things that we all do and now she is an art professor. She is more distant but now, after watching this video, I know that she does things that I do too, that we are not that different after all. But Linda has changed little over the years. The biggest difference between my life and Linda's life is that I have never lived abroad and tried to live on my own. Linda must have been much younger when this video project started. That is very strange. I do not quite agree that Athena only do normal things. I do not think going to Norway for two years is something that every one does in Hong Kong."

At this point, the young lady who came in finished watching the video. What they all said then, as they say, is another story.

(Gina Wong / LiTA)