

City of different speeds

By Tang Lingshen

A multimedia performance event entitled "Mapping Territories," organized by Canadian artists, Mylena Bergeron and Caroline Hayeur, opened in the Duolun Museum of Modern Art on Friday night.

The work, guided by the artists' conception of "aesthetique de la lenteur" (slow aesthetics) was created by means of field recording and animated photography.

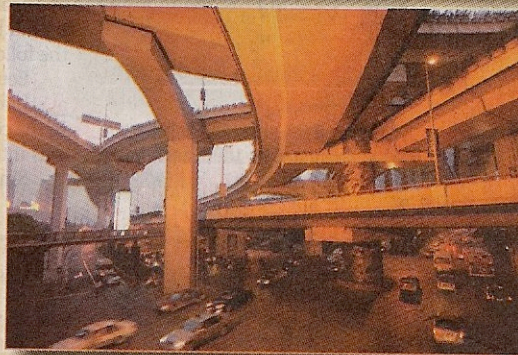
"What we are trying to do is to portray a territory that is in constant mutation, what's left untouched, altered or vanished, what is actually in transformation in Shanghai, by means of sound and images. We have created Mapping Territories to show the metamorphosis not only of the Hongkou District but of the whole city," said the two artists.

"We focus on the speed, scale and density of Shanghai development and the changing pace of the urban landscape and the citizens here. We have been very surprised to witness the changing speeds of Shanghai. We try to convey to the public that Shanghai is the stage of a metamorphosis both intimate and collective," they added.

When the Canadians arrived in Shanghai this May, they began to collect source materials for the work. They familiarized themselves with the real Shanghai and its rapid growth by getting up early in the morning and wandering around in the downtown area to meet people face-to-face. They used their audiovisual recording equipment to capture the scenes of moving crowds in the streets, metro lines, parks, shops and open markets. They expose the daily life of Shanghai residents in their Shikumen lanes and new neighbourhoods, where they play mahjong, cook meals, and chat together — sitting outside in small chairs to escape the heat — or prepare themselves for relocation. The result is the multimedia image of a dynamic and changing Shanghai, combining fast-moving people and vehicles with



Above: Canadian artist Mylena Bergeron (left) and Caroline Hayeur (right) enjoy the view of Shanghai from a Huangpu River cruise ship.



Left: One of the works by the Canadian artists.

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tranquil untouched old villages.

"Mapping Territories contains a lot of innovation and maintains the vitality of our artworks. We began to co-operate more than three years ago and have participated in various exhibitions. However, our experience in Shanghai sparked the inspiration for a different work, because there are so many new elements here, unknown by Westerners," said Bergeron, who was mainly responsible for sound recording.

The two Canadian artists dressed in *qipao* for the presentation. Not only are they fascinated by the development of Shanghai, they are becoming Chinese culture lovers.

"Shanghai has always been a developing metropolis that can be described as 'incredible.' We have seen the hustle and bustle of the city as well as kind neighbours and smiling pedestrians. Shanghai also has a well-developed metro system, which leaves a good impression," they said.

"I will leave with piles of souvenirs with Chinese characteristics, including a small wooden bench discovered in a local market," said Hayeur, who took more than 30,000 pictures in Shanghai.

"Personally speaking, I really would like to live in Shanghai for several years if possible. I think it would do our art a lot of good," she added.