

Making Chinatown

Ming Wong

2012
7-channel HD video installation with sound

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Presented in collaboration with the Gladstone Hotel, 1214 Queen Street West, September 6 to 16.



Ming Wong is among the most sophisticated contemporary artists contending with the history and culture of cinema. Through vigorous re-enactments of famous films, he brings to the fore complex ideas about race, gender and sexuality. His work is oddly shocking—and also very funny. It's also interested in the deceptive qualities of cinematography and montage; his humour often emerges from the naked brutality of his deconstructed remake, as he satirizes how great filmmakers create meaning in their work by revealing their most devious cinematic tricks.

Making Chinatown is Wong's most accomplished work to date. A series of backdrops, lifted from Roman Polanski's *Chinatown*, occupy each room in tribute to the artificiality of Hollywood's version of Los Angeles. Playing in each room is a video recreating a different scene from the film, but with Wong himself recreating the legendary performances of Faye Dunaway, Jack Nicholson and John Huston. The effect is startling and initially absurd, until the work gradually but insistently reminds us of the ways in which questions of identity continue to haunt our collective imagination.

NOAH COWAN

Ming Wong was born in Singapore and is now based in Berlin. Known for performance, video and installation that questions constructs of identity, he won a special mention for his work in 2009 at the 53rd Venice Biennale. His most recent work explores Hollywood tradition and has deconstructed some of world cinema's most notable productions.

Image: Ming Wong, *Making Chinatown* (still), 2012.
Commissioned by REDCAT, Los Angeles.