

## MAP OFFICE

### *The Oven of Straw, 2012*

single-channel version of 2-channel video  
and mixed-media installation, 12 minutes

MAP OFFICE is a multidisciplinary platform devised by Laurent Gutierrez (Casablanca, 1966) and Valérie Portefaix (Saint-Etienne, 1969). This duo of artists/architects has been based in Hong Kong since 1996, working on physical and imaginary territories using varied means of expression including drawing, photographs, video, installations, performance and literary and theoretical texts. Their entire project forms a critique of spatio-temporal anomalies and documents how human beings subvert and appropriate space.

Laurent Gutierrez is an Associate Professor at the School of Design, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University where he leads the Environment and Interior Design discipline and the Master of Strategic Design as well as the Master in Urban Environments Design. He is also the co-director of SD SPACE LAB. He is currently doing a PhD on the “Processes of Modernization and Urbanization in China focusing on the Pearl River Delta region”.

Valérie Portefaix is the principal of MAP OFFICE. She received her Master of Architecture degree from School of Architecture Paris-Belleville and a PhD in Urbanism from University Pierre Mendès France. She is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor at the School of Design, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

## THE OVEN OF STRAW, 2012

Ukraine is traditionally the barn of Europe and one of its most important agricultural producers. Against a background of food crisis and financial speculation on agriculture, we would like to use wheat as a point of entry for thinking about the impact of speculation on the land. *The Oven of Straw* was originally a video installation, and is shown here as a film weaving together narrative fragments linked by their relation to wheat. The installation was a small construction inviting the visitors to enter a confined space in the shape of an oven made of straw. The structure of the oven echoes the structure

of a bank with its thick wall and small entrance suggesting the opposite effects of potential danger and safety. The interior is designed like a small cinema, where visitors are presented a short film. Mixing archival material from various films, *The Oven of Straw* explores the role of wheat as a valued system of exchange. [MAP OFFICE]

### SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2013** *The Oven of Straw*, UCCA  
**2011** *Runscape*, Momentum Worldwide, Berlin, Germany  
**2010** *Runscape*, 10 Chancery Lane, Hong Kong, China  
*The Chinese Box*, Fondazione Volume and Officine Farnetto, MAXXI, Rome, Italy  
*Moving Sideways*, Tang Contemporary Art, Hong Kong, China  
**2008** *J'aime l'argent\** (*\*I Love Money*), Goethe-Institut, Hong Kong, China  
**2004** *Territories*, Para/Site Art Space, Hong Kong, China

### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

MAP Office projects have been exhibited in major international art, design and architecture events including: 7th Asia Pacific Triennial (2012); 1st Kiev Biennale (2012); 6th Curitiba Art Biennale (2011); 7th, 11th and 12th Venice Architecture Biennale (2000, 2008, 2010); Evento 1st Bordeaux Biennale (2009); 4th Tirana International Contemporary Art Biennial (2009); 2nd and 3rd Canary Island Biennale (2009, 2012); Prospect.1 New Orleans (2008); 7th Gwangju Biennale (2008); 10th Istanbul Biennial (2007); 52nd Venice Art Biennale (2007); 15th Sydney Biennale (2006); 1st Paris Triennial (2006); 2nd Guangzhou Triennial (2005); 1st Singapore Biennale (2006); 2nd and 3rd Hong Kong-Shenzhen Bi-City Biennale (2007, 2009); 1st Architectural Biennial Beijing (2004); 1st Rotterdam Architecture Biennale (2003). The pair took first place in the 2013 Sovereign Asian Art Prize for their photographic print, *Back Home with Baudelaire*, No. 5 (2005).