

# SOUTHBANK CENTRE

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## Press Release

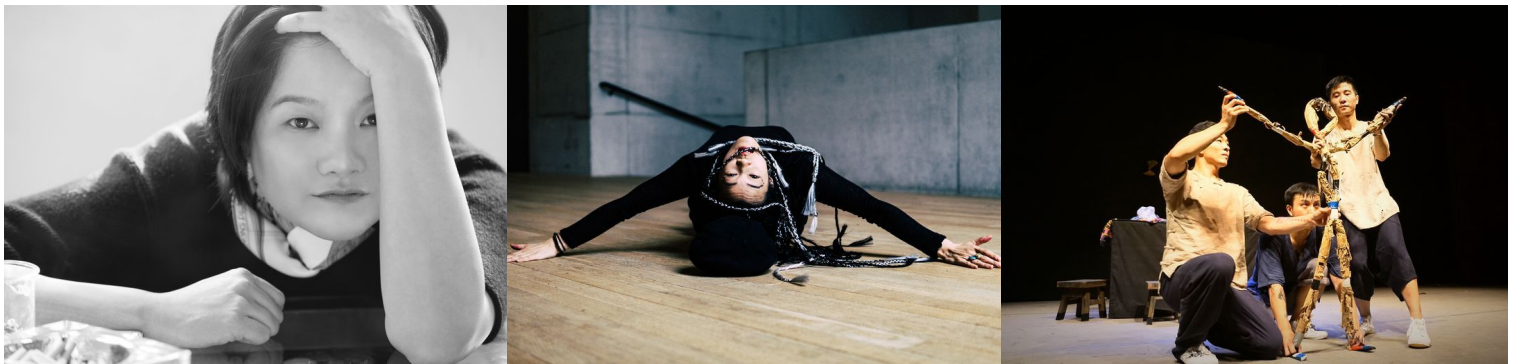
**Date:** Thursday 24 August 2017

**Contact:** Sasha Haughan

[sasha.haughan@southbankcentre.co.uk](mailto:sasha.haughan@southbankcentre.co.uk), 020 7921 0992

07730 528022 (Out of hours)

## China Changing Festival returns for a second year celebrating innovative contemporary Chinese culture



(L-R: Hung Huang. Credit Wen Xiaoyang; Julia Cheng. Credit Zsuzsa Zico; Little Soldier Zhang Ga. Credit Li Xun, Jinsepindian)

Southbank Centre's *China Changing Festival* returns for its second year, on Saturday 7 October 2017 showcasing contemporary China and exploring its creative connection with the UK. Launched in December 2016, this three year international festival returns to London presenting some of the most innovative artists practising in China today and celebrating inspiring work from British-based Chinese and South East Asian artists.

*China Changing Festival* brings us closer to current Chinese culture, exploring modern interpretations of ancient artistic techniques, the role of the media and women in contemporary society and the international reach of Chinese literature. Over fifty per cent of the programme is free, bringing together an eclectic day including new perspectives on traditional sounds, digital and electronic art, surreal film, breakdance, comedy, modern puppetry, theatre and topical panel discussions.

### Highlights of this year's *China Changing Festival* include:

- TV host, publisher and media mogul **Hung Huang**, often referred to as 'China's Oprah Winfrey', who discusses her life, work and the role of the media in contemporary China, in conversation with Guardian leader writer, and former China Correspondent **Tania Branigan**.
- *Little Soldier Zhang Ga*, the story of one boy's spirit in World War II in northern China, from the puppetry director of *War Horse China* **Liu Xiaoy**. His story is told through puppetry and

physical theatre, and is co-written by **Guo Yan**.

- *Around China with a Movie Camera: a Journey from Beijing to Shanghai*, is an epic filmic journey into the history of China, with a live atmospheric score, composed and performed by Ruth Chan and ensemble blending Chinese music with western classical influences, electronica and jazz.
- *SINK*, a play based on the true story of Chinese writer **Lao She**, which asks questions about freedom, history and identity.
- A screening of internationally celebrated filmmaker and author **Xialou Guo's** *UFO: In her Eyes*, a surreal story of a Chinese villager whose life changes after seeing a UFO.
- *Cyema*, an immersive audio visual performance by Berlin based designer turned artist **Florence To**, where a digital soundscape of reconstructed iron gongs, originally discovered in old clocks, rings out as responding visuals surround the audience.
- **Jun Tian Yun He Ensemble** spread the music and culture of the majestic seven stringed instrument, the **guqin**, performed in partnership with xiao and throat singing, alongside an impressive tai chi performance.
- *Gongs, Songs & Hong Kong Thongs*, inspired by American stand-up and Chinese cross-talk, takes a tongue-in-cheek look at Asian stereotyping in a new musical comedy show by **Chris Chan**, that's part-culture guide, part biography, part parody.
- A powerful dance double bill includes **Julia Cheng**, who explores the myth of a modern Mu-Lan through wu-shu martial arts and contemporary waacking in *Orlando Warrior* and **Si Rawlinson**, who mixes break and contemporary dance to explore the struggle between the desires of state and citizen with *Ink*.
- A series of panel discussions explore personal insights on women in society through discussion and literature including an exploration into women and the new two child policy. Leading Chinese writers **Xiaolu Guo** and **Liliaj Zhang** will read from, and discuss, their most recent books.
- China Exchange, in partnership with Southbank Centre present *Square Dancing: How do you guangchang wu?*, a taste of China's square dancing craze with workshops and performances.
- Experiential multidisciplinary artist **Li-E Chen** invites audiences to contribute to the development of the libretto for a silent opera, in *Proposition For Making A Silent Opera At An Invisible Museum*, an experiment in new opera making.

**Rachel Harris, Creative Producer, Festival Development, Southbank Centre** said: "*China Changing Festival launched in December last year and we're very excited to bring it back with a new action-packed programme celebrating artistic excellence and Chinese and UK partnerships. China is a multifaceted country, experiencing an impressive expansion of cultural infrastructure in the context of its rich, ancient artistic heritage. With this festival, we hope to explore and give an insight into the breadth of China's creativity and creative influence.*"

Press images can be downloaded [HERE](#).

Twitter: #chinachangingfest

# ENDS #

## FULL EVENT LISTINGS BELOW

### **UFO in her Eyes: A film by Xiaolu Guo**

**Sat 7 October 2017**, from 10am, Green Side Foyers, Level 2, Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, Free  
From acclaimed filmmaker and author Xialou Guo, *UFO in Her Eyes*, based on Guo's novel of the same title, offers a surreal insight into China as it undergoes profound changes. One afternoon, the life of an anonymous Chinese village woman abruptly changes when she believes she has witnessed a UFO flying through the sky. Xiaolu Guo is an internationally celebrated filmmaker and author whose books include *A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary For Lovers* and *I Am China*. Her latest book, *Once Upon a Time in the East*, is a memoir which charts her life from a run-down shack in a poor fishing village to film school in a rapidly changing Beijing. The film, lasting approximately 1hr 50 minutes, will be played on loop throughout the day.

<https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/124012-ufo-her-eyes-film-xiaolu-guo-2017>

### **How Mandarin Changed Me: An Animation film with Archbishop Sentamu Academy**

**Sat 7 October 2017**, from 10am, Green Side Foyers, Level 2, Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, Free  
A three-minute animation film created by a Yorkshire-based class of KS3 pupils from Archbishop Sentamu Academy in Kingston upon Hull. Working alongside an artist animator, the students have produced a film exploring the students' experience of learning Chinese Mandarin within an English-speaking school. This is the second year in which Southbank Centre and the Institute of Education's Confucius Institute work together to facilitate a digital education project linking secondary school pupils to China Changing Festival. The film, lasting approximately three minutes, will be played on loop throughout the day.

<https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/123880-how-mandarin-changed-me-animation-film-archbishop-sentamu-academy-2017>

### **Little Soldier Zhang Ga**

**Saturday 7th October**, 12pm, 3:30pm, The Clore Ballroom at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, Free, Age 6+  
An uplifting tale of one boy's solidarity and spirit in the face of conflict from the puppetry director of *War Horse China*, Liu Xiaoyi. Set in northern China during World War II and co-written by Guo Yan, Chinese director of *Dragon* (Edinburgh International Festival 2015), *Little Soldier Zhang Ga* is a heartwarming story inventively told using both puppets and physical theatre. Presented by Jingying Group with the support of Performance Infinity.

<https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/124011-little-soldier-zhang-ga-2017>

### **Li-E Chen: Proposition For Making A Silent Opera At An Invisible Museum**

**Sat 7 October 2017**, 1pm, Level 3 Function Room, Level 3, Blue Side, Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, Free

Artist Li-E Chen invites audiences to join her experiment in making new opera and to become part of the process in developing an opera's aesthetic. This event focuses on the development of an opera's draft libretto, which is written in the form of propositions for thinking and action. One of four participatory-conversation experiments that Li-E Chen is conducting for her research and development of a silent opera project on the life and art of Tehching Hsieh.

<https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/124010-li-e-chen-proposition-making-silent-opera-invisible-museum-2017>

### **Li-E Chen: Thinking Posture**

**Sat 7 October 2017**, 1pm, Green Side Foyers, Level 2, Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, Free

Participants are invited to write and speak four Chinese characters with artist Li-E Chen in this learning and participatory exercise through the use of four Chinese characters [Sī Xiǎng Zī Tàì]. These characters translate as 'thinking posture', the artist's term for the disposition of mind and body that governs one's ways of thinking, living and artistic-making. Chen invites the audience to question what their 'thinking posture' is by learning to write and speak the characters.

<https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/124009-li-e-chen-thinking-posture-2017>

### **Women, China, and the Two Child Policy**

**Sat 7 October 2017, 1pm, Level 5 Function Room, Green side, Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, £10 (£5 series discount when also purchased with a ticket for China Changing Festival Keynote or Hidden Stories: Chinese Women Writers)**

How will the new two child policy affect women's lives? Bringing discussions directly from WOW - Women of the World Festival - Beijing, speakers from China and the UK discuss the possible pressures, freedoms, and social implications the two child policy could bring.

<https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/123992-women-china-and-two-child-policy-2017>

### **Square Dancing Performance: How Do You Guangchang Wu?**

**Sat 7 October 2017, 1.30pm, 3.15pm 4.30pm The Clore Ballroom, Level 2, Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, Free**

In partnership with China Exchange, Southbank Centre present guangchang wu performances and a short film about the phenomenon. 100 million people square dance regularly in China. Not square dancing in the European or American sense, but group dances led in public squares by a dance leader known as guangchang wu. Dancers meet in a public place and spend hours perfecting and performing routines, often set to techno pop or dreamy electro Chinese pop music. This familiar sight is so ordinary in China that sightings of 'dancing aunties', as they are known due to the large number of retired women who belong to dance troupes, are pretty much guaranteed in all towns and cities. Men, young people and children are also hooked. This performance sees a group of dancers who have come together through China Exchange and Southbank Centre to experience the joy of guangchang wu. Participants interested in participating in the performance project should email [info@chinaexchange.uk](mailto:info@chinaexchange.uk).

<https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/123869-square-dancing-performance-how-do-you-guangchang-wu-2017>

### **Square Dancing Workshop: How Do You Guangchang Wu?**

**Sat 7 October 2017, 2pm, The Clore Ballroom, Level 2, Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, Free**

China Exchange, in partnership with Southbank Centre present Square Dancing: How do you guangchang wu?, a taste of China's square dancing craze.

100 million people square dance regularly in China. Not square dancing in the European or American sense, but group dances led in public squares by a dance leader known as guangchang wu. Dancers meet in a public place and spend hours perfecting and performing routines, often set to techno pop or dreamy electro Chinese pop music. This familiar sight is so ordinary in China that sightings of 'dancing aunties', as they are known due to the large number of retired women who belong to dance troupes, are pretty much guaranteed in all towns and cities. Although larger numbers of older women join groups, men, young people and children are also hooked. This workshop, suitable for all ages and abilities, is an opportunity to learn how to guangchang wu with dance leaders and understand what makes China's famous dancing aunties so committed to their daily dance sessions.

<https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/123869-square-dancing-performance-how-do-you-guangchang-wu-2017#events>

### **Hidden Stories: Chinese Women Writers**

**Sat 7 October 2017, 2.30pm, Level 5 Function Room, Green side, Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, £10**  
(£5 series discount when also purchased with a ticket for China Changing Festival Keynote or Women, China and the Two-Child Policy)

Two leading Chinese writers, Xiaolu Guo and Liliaj Zhang, read from and discuss their most recent books that shine a light on the experiences of generations of women in modern China. Lijia Zhang is a former rocket-factory worker turned freelance journalist, social commentator and the author of *Socialism is Great! A Worker's Memoir of the New China*. Her new novel *Lotus* was inspired by the deathbed revelation that the author's grandmother had been sold to a brothel in her youth. Xiaolu Guo is an acclaimed filmmaker and author whose books include *A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary For Lovers* and *I Am China*. Her latest book, *Once Upon a Time in the East*, is a memoir which charts her life from a run-down shack in a poor fishing village to film school in a rapidly changing Beijing.

<https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/123997-hidden-stories-chinese-women-writers-2017>

### **How Mandarin Changed Me: Panel Discussion**

**Sat 7 October 2017, 3pm, Green Bar, Level 4, Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, Free**

Southbank Centre has been working with a Yorkshire-based class of KS3 pupils from Archbishop Sentamu Academy in Kingston upon Hull, who alongside an artist animator, have produced a three-minute animation film exploring their experience of learning Chinese Mandarin within their school. Mandarin teacher Liqun Dai and pupils from Archbishop Sentamu Academy discuss their experience and impact of learning Chinese and the subject and process of making the film.

<https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/123923-how-mandarin-changed-me-panel-discussion-2017>

### **Florence To: Cyema**

**Sat 7 October 2017, 3.30pm, 5pm, 6.30pm, Blue Room, Level 1, Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, £5**

Created by Berlin based designer turned artist Florence To, *Cyema* is an immersive audio visual performance. Featuring an instrument constructed of reconstructed iron gongs, originally discovered in old clocks that produce a reverse-chord when struck, this progressive performance mixes the acoustics of this instrument, together with a synced visual element, exploring the emotional triggers within vibrations and how the harmonies and overtones created work within the space.

<https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/123996-florence-cyema-2017>

### **SINK**

**Sat 7 October 2017, 4pm, Level 5 Function Room, Green side, Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, £10**

Freedom, identity and history are questioned in *SINK*, a play based on the true story of Chinese writer Lao She. An author who was given the title of People's Artist early in his career, Lao was later deemed a public enemy during the Cultural Revolution. In this performance, audiences are invited to watch as the characters grapple with their sense of place and role in contemporary society, and struggle to make sense of the changes happening around them. The production comes to London straight from a successful Edinburgh Fringe run, and is performed in Mandarin Chinese with English surtitles. Presented by Xinxi Du Studio, a director-led theatre company, and produced by Performance Infinity.

<https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/123994-sink-2017>

### **Dance Double Bill: Julia Cheng and Si Rawlinson**

**Sat 7 October 2017, 5pm, The Clore Ballroom, Level 2, Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, Free**

Julia Cheng and Si Rawlinson perform contemporary dance accompanied by live music in this dance double bill.

- Julia Cheng's *Orlando Warrior* is a solo contemporary dance piece exploring the myth of a modern Mu-Lan. Externalising her inner battles through wu-shu martial arts and waacking, this piece examines displacement and hybrid identity, masking a yang (male) fighter behind a yin (female) form, travelling through time via physical paintings of a Warrior Poet in motion. *Orlando Warrior* is presented by Chinese Arts Space as part of Project New Sun: Sinosynthesis (Part 1). The creation of this work has been supported by Southbank Centre.



- Si Rawlinson's *Ink* draws inspiration from the imagery of cinematographer Zhang Yimou (*Hero*, *House of Flying Daggers*) and the social commentary of contemporary artist and activist Ai Weiwei. *Ink* was developed with Breakin' Convention.

<https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/124005-dance-double-bill-julia-cheng-and-si-rawlinson-2017>

### **China Changing Keynote**

**Sat 7 October 2017**, 5.30pm, Level 5 Function Room, Green side, Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, £10, (£5 series discount when also purchased with a ticket for *Women, China and the Two-Child Policy* or *Hidden Stories: Chinese Women Writers*.)

TV host, publisher, and media mogul, **Hung Huang** is often referred to as 'China's Oprah Winfrey'. With over a hundred million blog followers, Hung Huang is known for her straight talking, and was named one of TIME magazine's 100 Most Influential People in the World. She speaks to The Guardian lead writer and former China Correspondent Tania Branigan to discuss her life, her work and the role of the media in contemporary China.

<https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/123991-china-changing-keynote-2017>

### **Lofty Mountains and Flowing Water: Jun Tian Yun He**

**Sat 7 October 2017**, 6.30pm, The Clore Ballroom, Level 2, Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, Free

The Jun Tian Yun He Ensemble perform majestic tunes using the seven-stringed instrument, the guqin, reworking one of the most famous historic musical forms, designed to elevate the soul, The Jun Tian Yun He Ensemble portray beauty, power and versatility of the guqin in natural partnership with xiao (Chinese flute) and throat singing, whilst an expressive tai chi performer weaves between the instruments in a skilled display.

<https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/124000-lofty-mountains-and-flowing-water-jun-tian-yun-he-2017>

### **Around China with a Movie Camera: a journey from Beijing to Shanghai**

**Sat 7 October 2017**, 8:30pm, The Clore Ballroom at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, Free

*Around China with a Movie Camera: a Journey from Beijing to Shanghai* is a filmic journey into the history of China with a live atmospheric score composed and performed by Ruth Chan and ensemble, blending Chinese music with western classical influences, electronica and jazz. From the collection of the British Film Institute National Archive, the films were made by a wealth of British and French filmmakers, from professionals to intrepid tourists and explores 50 years of Chinese history across a diverse range of footage, from Shanghai's bustling, cosmopolitan Nanjing Road in 1900 to a day at the Shanghai races in 1937.

### **Gongs, Songs, & Hong Kong Thongs**

**Sat 7 October 2017**, 8.30pm, Blue Room, Level 1, Royal Festival Hall Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, £10

Created and performed by Chris Chan, *Gongs, Songs & Hong Kong Thongs* is a 45-minute musical comedy inspired by American stand-up and Chinese cross-talk. Packed with comic banter and wicked songs about the weird and wonderful quirks, attitudes and faux pas found in modern day Britain and China, and with the help of digital technology – *Gongs, Songs & Hong Kong Thongs* incorporates a man performing a duet with himself. With tongue firmly in cheek, audiences can hear Chan wax on (and wax off) lyrically about Asian stereotyping in a show that's part-culture guide, part biography, part parody. Presented by Chinese Arts Space as part of Project New Sun: Sinosynthesis (Part 2). The creation of this work has been supported by Southbank Centre

<https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/123998-gongs-songs-hong-kong-thongs-2017>

For more information or to buy tickets please visit the Southbank Centre website [HERE](#) or call 0203 879 9555.

### **For further press information and images please contact:**

Sasha Haughan, Press Officer, [sasha.haughan@southbankcentre.co.uk](mailto:sasha.haughan@southbankcentre.co.uk), 020 7921 0992

Filipa Mendes, Press Manager, [filipa.mendes@southbankcentre.co.uk](mailto:filipa.mendes@southbankcentre.co.uk), 020 7921 0919

(For an out of hours emergency enquiry, please contact 07730 528022)

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **Government support for China Changing**

In 2016 Southbank Centre received a treasury grant towards the three-year long *China Changing Festival*. The grant was one of a series of awards made to UK arts organisations to encourage cultural exchange and artistic collaboration between China and the UK.

### **About Southbank Centre**

Southbank Centre is the UK's largest arts centre, occupying a 17 acre site that sits in the midst of London's most vibrant cultural quarter on the South Bank of the Thames. The site has an extraordinary creative and architectural history stretching back to the 1951 Festival of Britain. Southbank Centre is home to the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room and Hayward Gallery as well as The National Poetry Library and the Arts Council Collection. For further information please visit [www.southbankcentre.co.uk](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk).

### **Let the Light In**

Southbank Centre is carrying out vital refurbishment work on Hayward Gallery, Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room to make the arts venues fit for future generations. The planned works include replacing Hayward Gallery's pyramid roof lights to let natural light into the upper galleries, and carefully restoring the original 1960s architecture. Generous support from Arts Council England, Heritage Lottery Fund and Southbank Centre friends, through the Let The Light In campaign, means we have just £700,000 of our £25m fundraising target left to raise. Southbank Centre's Let The Light In campaign launched in September 2015 and offers people the opportunity to support this major repair and refurbishment project by sponsoring seats, dressing rooms and the Hayward Gallery pyramid rooflights. For more information, visit: [southbankcentre.co.uk/letthelightin](http://southbankcentre.co.uk/letthelightin)