



維也納大學漢學系

March of the Elephants 象征: Screening and Online Lecture

The Asian elephant can be a symbol of strength, resilience, and power, and a layered image in moments of transition. In *March of the Elephants* (2022), artist Cheng Xinhao explores the entangled symbols and histories of the elephant across historical periods, geographical areas, and representational media. The screening and online lecture will be accompanied by a display of research materials from April 2024 in the Department of Chinese Studies.

Focusing on the “encounter between elephants and historical contexts,” Cheng examines the entwinement of things and discourses, thus opening up the question of “象征” (symbol) as the “march (征) of the elephants (象).” The video contains three main passages concerning the elephant: the Dai mythology and legend, the Maoist period, and the 2020s. Cheng uses a wide range of visual, audio, and textual materials from the 19th century to the present: colonial prints, Buddhist monastery murals, films, photographs, comic strips, mobile phone screens, surveillance images, and drone footage. *March of the Elephants* was commissioned by Guangdong Times Museum.

Cheng Xinhao currently lives and works in Kunming, China. He received his Ph.D. in Chemistry from Peking University in 2013. Cheng’s works are usually based on long-term field studies centered on his hometown in Yunnan Province. With video, installation, photography, and words, he investigates the polyphonic relationships between logic, discourse, knowledge, and the role that nature, society, and history play in them.

DATE: Wednesday, 17 April 2024
TIME: 14:00-14:45 (screening), 14:45-16:00 (lecture, discussion)
LOCATION: **Bühne, MediaLab, UZA 2**, Rotunde, Stiege H, Ebene 1, Josef-Holaubek-Platz 2, 1090 Wien

