

Come Home/ 回家, 2016

"I hope this performance provides an opportunity for audiences to question the notion of home, no matter if the "home" is physical, symbolic, virtual, or imaginary."

Come Home is a participatory durational performance and installation that investigates the concept of "home" through language and gestures. Created over the span of five hours during the exhibition's opening reception, the performance begins with the artist entering the gallery with a black suitcase. She opens it, revealing squares of red fabric and heaps of fragrant jasmine rice. She takes a piece of fabric, places it on the floor and pours rice onto its centre, then ties the fabric with a ribbon to create a small bundle. The artist proceeds to press the parcel of rice to her forehead, calling out, "Chun Hua, come home!" three times in Mandarin, and then places the bundle down. This action is repeated until the suitcase is empty and a row of bundles weaves across the gallery floor.

During the performance, audience members are encouraged to participate by making their own rice parcels, which they can then bring home at the end of the night. As the artist explains:

This work seeks to restore the narrations of the past through visual expression of memories, striving to recast everyday existence into a symbolic structure that has potential to bring people together. The power of memory is, for me, grounded in the way in which it is shared. I am interested in what kind of memories it will trigger for audiences when they participate in the performance and what the links are between geographical, social and cultural displacement and identity in today's globalized world.

Moving from China, Dong's own notion of home shifted from singular to plural when she settled in Canada. In, *Come Home* language can be seen as the bridge used to connect people through time and space. The phrase uttered during the performance echoes back to a childhood memory: the artist's mother repeating these words while performing a traditional healing ritual for her daughter. The child's sickness, believed to have been caused by the soul partly escaping the body, could be cured by calling the spirit back 'home' and leaving rice bundles as offerings by the sick child's bed. In the gallery, the artist's actions mirror those of her mother, but this time it is the daughter who calls out to be reunited. Left like breadcrumbs on the gallery floor, the red bundles also act as a navigational aid, creating a physical path back home, wherever that might be.

Chun Hua Catherine Dong, born in China, is a visual artist working with performance, photography, and video. She explores themes of "East/West" and "self/other" within the contemporary context of global feminism. Her work deals mainly with cultural intersections created by globalization and ask what it means to be a citizen of the world today. She received an MFA from Concordia University and a BFA from Emily Carr University of Art & Design. She

has performed in multiple international performance art festivals and venues, such as, The Great American Performance Art in New York, Rapid Pulse International Performance Art Festival in Chicago, USA, Infr'Action in Venice, Italy, Dublin Live Art Festival in Dublin, Ireland, to name a few. Among many other awards and grants, she is the recipient of the Franklin Furnace Award for contemporary avant-garde art in New York in 2014. Her performance is featured at Marina Abramovic Institute and was listed amongst the "Top Nine Political Art Projects of 2010" by *Art and Threat* magazine. Dong now lives in Montreal.