

VICE, *Chen Wei Recreates China's Neon-Lit 90s Clubs*, Written by STUART BRUMFITT, March 23, 2017



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Chen Wei Recreates China's Neon-Lit 90s Clubs

The artist imagines the dancefloors where rebels, thinkers and creatives got together

Written by STUART BRUMFITT



"While they were once the realm of intellectuals and artists as a place to exchange ideas, nightclubs are no longer radical spaces," says Chen Wei of the scene in China. Such glorious past club cultures have been heavily documented in Europe and the USA, but that has never been the case in China, which is why Chen Wei has decided to fabricate his own visual archive of it through photography and installations.



CHEN WEI, DISCO #1004, 2015, ARCHIVAL INKJET PRINT, 60 X 75 CM, EDITION OF 6 + 2 AP, IMAGE COURTESY CHEN WEI / LEO XU PROJECTS

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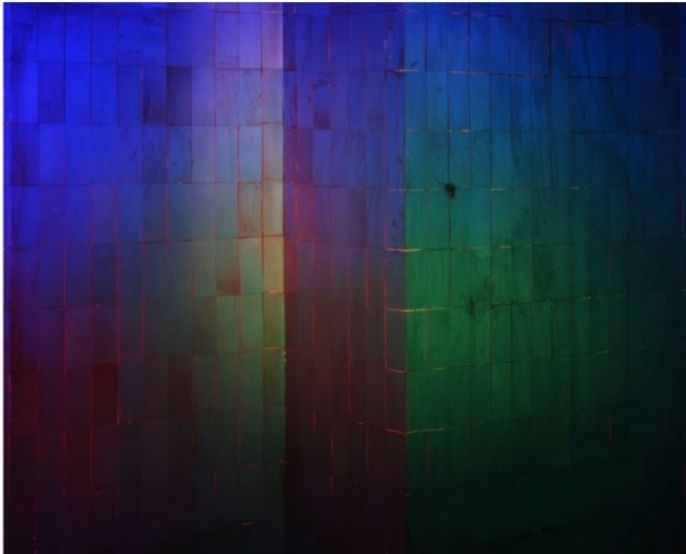
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Sweaty dancers, alluring lights, smoke machines and trashed dancefloors are all depicted in the show that opens today at Melbourne's Centre for Contemporary Photography. The Beijing-based artist wanted to celebrate the club scene that emerged in the early 1990s as a space where people gathered to freely express themselves within the Communist country.



CHEN WEI, ENTRANCE, 2013, LIGHT BOX, 100 X 125 CM, IMAGE COURTESY CHEN WEI / LEO XU PROJECTS.



CHEN WEI, COLORFUL WALL, 2015, ARCHIVAL INKJET PRINT, 120 X 150 CM, IMAGE COURTESY CHEN WEI / LEO XU PROJECTS.

The show's curator Elias Redstone says, "Chen Wei skilfully interrogates the psychology of contemporary China. He has painstakingly reconstructed the architecture and interiors of clubs in his studio and on films sets based on interviews he has conducted with clubbers and intensive research into clubs past and present. The resulting images are a visceral celebration of nightclubs and discos in all their neon-lit, sweaty, ecstatic glory. Through the prism of club culture, Chen Wei is ultimately exploring the individual's place in a rapidly modernising country."



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CHEN WEI, HISTORY OF ENCHANTMENT – DOCUMENT OF THE MIDNIGHT #3, 2013-2015 INSTALLATION, 47 X 120 X 0.9 CM.
EDITION OF 3 + 1 AP. IMAGE COURTESY CHEN WEI / LEO XU PROJECTS

The Club runs until 7th May at Centre for Contemporary Photography ccp.org.au