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Tim Yip

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# CROUCHING DESIGNER, HIDDEN CULTURAL IDENTITY

## TIM YIP: BLUE — ART, COSTUMES AND MEMORY

17 NOV 2018 - 31 MAR 2019  
HKDI Gallery

The multimedia exhibition *Blue* at HKDI Gallery (17 November till 31 March, 2019) features costume designs, sculptures, installations, photography and videos by world-renowned visual artist, art director for stage and film, and costume designer, Tim Yip — the first Chinese to be awarded an Oscar (“Best Art Direction” for the film *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*).

In collaboration with HKDI Gallery, Tim Yip’s *Blue* reflects the world we live in: increasingly noisy and fragmented, and progressively virtual — showcased by a humanoid sculpture of a Chinese woman, *Lili*, a long-standing muse and creative theme in the art of Tim Yip. As we face the prospect of losing our sense of cultural identity, *Lili* connects the spectator with a boundless area of shared memory.

*Blue* is the starting point for this exhibition, one of a series of such projects that have been developed by Yip and his studio in Beijing over the last decade.

### **Blue is the colour of the ocean.**

As the imagination is limitless, it can be described as being as vast as an ocean. The subconscious mind, soon after it was defined at the start of the 20th century, was described as being as deep as an ocean.

### **Blue is the colour of the planet.**

When astronauts stepped off our planet and looked back at their point of departure, they saw a sphere enclosed in vast expanses of water. Whereas the Moon is a ball of silver-grey ash and Mars a parched zone of sand and dust, the Earth is a blue planet luxuriating in its waters.

### **Blue is the colour of memory.**

Blue defines our place, and with it, our collective history, measured not in centuries but in the millennia of our evolutionary past.

### 01. *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, 1999 movie

Set in the Qing Dynasty during the 43rd year of the Qianlong Emperor, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* is based on the fourth novel in the *Crane Iron Pentalogy*, by Wuxia novelist Wang Dulu. Tim Yip won the Academy Award for it for Best Art Direction and the British Academy of Film and Television Award for Best Costume Design.

### 02 *Robot Lili*, 2018

Unveiled at HKDI, *Robot Lili* is the next frontier in *Lili*'s evolution. In the realm of Yip's imagination, Artificial Intelligence may create new bodies for our “spiritual DNA” or the collective memory that allows us to shuttle between different layers of time and space.





03



04



05



06

03.  
**Lili, 2010**

*Lili* began as naked bronze statue labelled *Desire*, evolved to be more human-like and resembling a stereotypical 16-year-old with a variety of wigs and costumes. She is faithfully present throughout Yip's working excursions. In physical reality she is a manikin, yet she occupies a psychological space into which one can project from the deeper recesses of one's own memory.

04.  
**Blue, 2018**

For a decade Lili has played the lead role in Yip's video works such as: *Amiens Lili*, a film that commemorated the centenary of the Battle of the Somme; *Shanghai Lili*, as part of his exhibition "Tim Yip: Reformation" at the Power Station of Art in Shanghai; and *Seville Lili*, among others. In *Blue*, Yip's most personal film to-date, he visits his home through *Lili*.

05.  
**Collapsed Lili, 2010**

*Collapsed Lili* is a giant form, separated into her composite parts, and it reinforces the obvious: that she is not real. But, besides its beauty, the connotation reminds us that the human body has clearly defined boundaries — which prevent us from sensing our limitlessness. When pondering the space between the parts of *Collapsed Lili*, we might find ourselves reminded of what we are.

06.  
**Shaping - Swarovski On Stage & Screen, 2016**

A gothic corseted dress embellished with more than 100,000 crystals in black and grey hues, which glint with a dark beauty. Working hand-in-hand with the stars as well as the costume and set designers who bring screen dramas to life, Swarovski has provided generations of moviemakers with precision-cut crystals that can bring a magical quality to any scene.

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