

ArtReview Asia



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**What's on during Art Basel Hong Kong
Shanzhai special**

Yin-Ju Chen *Extrastellar Evaluations III: Entropy: 25800*

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Yin-Ju Chen's latest solo exhibition is the third and final chapter of her *Extrastellar Evaluations* series. Like the previous two iterations, based on the legend of the 'lost continent' of Lemuria and Galileo Galilei's *A Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems* (1632), *Entropy: 25800* takes for its starting point a text, in this case a series of five philosophical monographs 'channeled' between 1981 and 1984 and known collectively as *The Law of One*. Using video, drawings and animation, Chen constructs a narrative exploring the end of the universe as described in prophecy.

Entropy: 25800 revolves around an eponymous 16 min 47 sec single-channel videowork (2018), in which a computer-synthesised voice introduces itself: "I am Ra, I greet you in the love and light of the infinite Creator, I will now communicate..." Ra is the unified consciousness of extraterrestrial beings who, in *The Law of One*, communicates with humanity through three authors known collectively as L/L Research. Here

he delivers the message that the death of the universe, brought about by humankind, will occur after the Age of Iron. The video, projected on a screen in a dark room, mixes landscape shots with animations and archive footage of thermal and nuclear phenomena, while terms borrowed from thermodynamics and astronomy, such as entropy and Great Year (the period of one complete cycle of the equinoxes), rush in along with the subtitles.

The rapid edits and psychedelic effects obscure any theoretical interpretation of the work. The viewer is asked to make a decision between laboriously deciphering these unfamiliar concepts or treating the video as a speculative fiction that does not intend to educate or convince, or even to communicate on a discursive level, but to point out alternative ways of perceiving and reflecting on the future of human society. The objective perspective on earth provided by Ra seems, despite the farfetched premise, useful in the context of current existential threats to humanity, ecological and military.

The project recalls the artist's previous *Liquidation Maps* series (2014), which links astrology and astronomy to historical massacres in history, a concept that is surprisingly impactful.

The exhibition also features a sanctuary-like space with five charcoal and pencil on paper drawings on the wall, representing the flower and tree of life (*Flower of Life*, 2017) and basic elements of nature (*Fire, Earth, Air, Water*, 2017); lying on the floor is a form of planetary sun gear made from a sheet of steel. As with the video, these can be read as occult symbols with ritual significance, as artistic studies of pattern and form, or as something in between. A small-scale diagram of Pisces and Aquarius is projected on the wall opposite the video, perhaps indicating a farewell to the Age of Pisces and the beginning of the Age of Aquarius, a period during which humankind will supposedly put more emphasis on the spiritual side of life. If we are now in a phase of transition, it calls for inventive new ways of speculating on our very existence. *Guo Juan*



Extrastellar Evaluations III: Entropy: 25800 (still), 2018, single-channel video, 16 min 47 sec. Courtesy the artist and Chi-Wen Gallery, Taipei