



PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Su Hui's Reversible Poem focuses on a poem written by Su Hui, a Chinese woman poet in the 4th century. Her poem, Xuanji Tu, can be read in any direction to yield nearly 8,000 possible readings.

This video installation is a work in progress and will focus on how contemporary Chinese women understand this complex poem, including those embroidering and reading it in textile-based time.

Su Hui composed the poem in a 29 x 29 character grid embroidered in silk in five colors in a scheme based on an astronomical gauge. In the story widely associated with it, Su Hui's poem had an explicit intended reader, her husband, Dou Tao. In all versions of the story, Su Hui's poem, both brilliant and effective, reunites the couple for life.

Working closely with experts in Suzhou, China to create a double-sided silk embroidery of Su Hui's poem, Jen Bervin and Charlotte Lagarde aim to draw renewed international attention to Su Hui's work, and to start new conversations around how Chinese women read and interpret this ancient Chinese poem today, both as a literary work and as a textile.

The research for this project is supported by a Lucas Artist Program Fellowship from Montalvo Arts Center, an Asian Cultural Council Fellowship, and a grant from Creative Capital.

ARTISTS:

Jen Bervin is an interdisciplinary artist and poet whose conceptually driven works weave together art, writing, science and life in a complex yet elegant way. Her work explores acts of reading, writing, listening, often through the lens of textiles or traditional crafts, to facilitate cross-cultural encounter, exchange, and feminist critique.

Recent major projects include *Silk Poems*, a poem written nanoscale in the form of a silk biosensor in collaboration with Tufts University's Silk Lab. She is currently a SETI Institute Artist in Residence, a program that facilitates a cross-disciplinary exchange of ideas between artists and scientists. Bervin's work has been covered in media outlets such as Huffington Post, NPR, The Nation, LA Times, Artforum, Frieze, Hyperallergic, The New Yorker, and The New York Times, and can be found in more than thirty international collections, including Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Stanford University, Yale University, and The J. Paul Getty Museum.

Jen Bervin is the recipient of numerous awards and honors, including The Rauschenberg Residency (2016) and a Creative Capital Grant (2013). Her work is the subject of solo exhibitions at the Des Moines Art Center, BRIC, and Granoff Center for the Arts at Brown University, and has been featured in group exhibitions at MASS MoCA, MCA Denver, The Power Plant in Toronto, and the Walker Art Center. She has published nine books, including *Nets*, *The Desert*, and *Gorgeous Nothings: Emily Dickinson's Envelope Poems* with Marta Werner. *Silk Poems* is forthcoming from Nightboat Books in Fall 2017.

<http://jenbervin.com/>

Charlotte Lagarde's films have aired on PBS series POV and Independent lens, the Sundance Channel, HBO, Canal +, and have been exhibited at Mass MOCA. Lagarde's love of the ocean has led her to document magnificent women surfers in her award-winning short films *Zeuf* and *Swell*. The feature-length documentary she directed about the Hawaiian surfing legend, Rell Sunn, *Heart Of The Sea*, was broadcast in over 30 countries and won numerous awards including the PBS Independent Lens Audience Award and Best Documentary Award at the Ashland Independent Film Festival. A 2016 Camargo Foundation Fellow, Lagarde is currently developing a new essay film *Dear Zeuf*, a reflection on the fluidity of friendship, mortality, film, and the ocean.

Her producing credits include Shaleece Haas' *Real Boy* (PBS/IL 2017), Deann Borshay Liem's *In The Matter Of Cha Jung Hee* (PBS/POV 2010), and Carrie Lozano's Academy award-winning *Reporter Zero*, which premiered at the 2006 Berlin International Film Festival. Her latest documentary *The Ballad Of Fred Hersch*, about the legendary jazz pianist and AIDS activist Fred Hersch, premiered at the 2016 Full Frame Film Festival.

Lagarde's video, *Jen Bervin's Silk Poems*, was recently on view in the exhibition *Explode Every Day: an Inquiry into the Phenomena of Wonder* at MASS MoCA. Bervin and Lagarde are collaborating on an

upcoming project in Suzhou, China, titled *Su-Hui's Reversible Poem*.
<https://charlottelagarde.com/>

TEAM:

Violet Du FENG (Producer) is an Emmy Award winning documentary film producer. She produced *Mainland* about two "parachute" students from elite Chinese families which premiered at the SXSW 2017 and won a Special Jury Award for Excellence in Observational Cinema. *Please Remember Me*, a film of an intimate love portrait of an elderly couple in Shanghai, premiered at IDFA in 2015 and won three jury awards at China's biggest documentary film festival GZDoc. In 2008, she co-produced *Nanking*, which received a Peabody Award and a Sundance Grand Jury Award. It was the highest grossing documentary in China. Her first documentary short *Changing the Taste of Mud* was nominated for the Golden Gate Award.

From 2011 to 2013, Feng worked as the in-house producer at CNEX in Beijing. The films she produced received support from Sundance Documentary Fund, Ford Foundation, ITVS and co-productions from Asia and Europe. Her producing credits for the CNEX projects include: *A Young Patriot* (2015) won the Jury Prize at Hong Kong Intl. Film Festival, *Look Love* (2015) won the Mecenat Award at Busan Intl. Film Festival. Feng received a M.A. from UC Berkeley's Graduate School of Journalism in 2004. Before that, she was a broadcast journalist for Shanghai Television and later for the BBC's Shanghai Bureau. Feng is currently producing a documentary series on Chinese Millennials and a video installation project about Su Hui's Reversible Poem.

Andrea Lingenfelter (Literary Translator) has a BA in Chinese Studies from UC San Diego, an MA in East Asian Studies from Yale, and a PhD in East Asian Languages and Literature from the University of Washington. She is a poet, scholar of Chinese literature, and a widely published translator of contemporary Chinese-language fiction. Her translation of selected poetry by Zhai Yongming, *The Changing Room*, won a 2012 Northern California Book Award. A 2008 PEN Translation Fund grant winner and 2014 NEA Translation Grant awardee, she is currently translating Wang Anyi's historical novel, *Scent of Heaven*. She has taught Chinese literature at UC Davis and was 2013-14 Kiriyaama Fellow at USF's Center for Asia Pacific Studies.

Jennifer Feeley (Literary Translator) holds a PhD in East Asian Languages and Literatures from Yale University and has worked at the University of Iowa as an Assistant Professor of Modern Chinese Literature and Culture. She is the translator of *Not Written Words: Selected Poems of Xi Xi* (Zephyr Press & MCCM Creations) and co-editor of *Simultaneous Worlds: Global Science Fiction Cinema* (University of Minnesota Press), as well as the recipient of a Luce Foundation Chinese Poetry and Translation Fellowship.

SUPPORTED BY:

Asian Cultural Council works to advance international respect and understanding between people and cultures through transformative cultural exchange. **Montalvo Art Center's Sally and Don Lucas Artists Residency Program** supports the development of new and challenging contemporary work. Lucas Fellows are identified through an international nomination process then juried by professionals in their respective fields. **Creative Capital** is a national nonprofit organization that awards major grants to individual artists pursuing innovative approaches that are bold, innovative and genre-stretching.