

# Asian American Arts *Calendar*

Asian American Arts events in New York City and around the country

## CULTURES IN COLLISION

Conceived and directed by Ping Chong, *Chinoiserie* is a prismatic exploration of China and its relations with the West: past, present, and future.

Ping Chong describes *Chinoiserie* as a poetic documentary — poetic because it communicates through images and allusion, and documentary because each element is either inspired by or referenced to a historical event or archival document.

*Chinoiserie* is organized along a historical arc stretching from the first encounter in 1793 between British Ambassador Lord McCartney, the trade emissary from King George III and Qianlong, the Celestial Emperor of China.

From there, *Chinoiserie* is a collage from the detritus of East-West relations including the events leading up to the Opium War, the observations of an early Chinese diplomat about the peculiar habit of kissing in America, the European obsession with tea, the fascinating but little known history of Chinese settlers in America, the murder of Vincent Chin in 1983 and the continuing trade disputes between China and America.



*Chinoiserie* will also include material based on Ping Chong's childhood in New York's Chinatown and his experiences in the East and West.

The use of the term "chinoiserie" in the 18th century referred to an elaborate and very popular style of decorative art that reflected, or was felt to reflect, the Chinese aesthetic. Thus, the European aristocracy, hungry for new diversions, transformed Eastern culture into Western fashion with the willingness of Chinese merchants.

Eventually, the word came to mean "Chinese export goods," or things neither truly Eastern nor Western but the curi-

ous product of the two. In Mainland China, the word "chinoiserie" represents a major cultural reversal and a willingness to exploit the historic monuments in the name of international tourism and the pursuit of hard currency.

*Chinoiserie* is part of the Brooklyn Academy of Music's 1995 NEXT WAVE Festival, sponsored by Philip Morris Companies Inc. The New York premiere of *Chinoiserie* will be performed November 14-18 at the BAM Majestic Theater, 651 Fulton Street, Brooklyn, NY. See inside listing for details.

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**CHINOISERIE** is part of the Brooklyn Academy of Music's 1995 NEXT WAVE Festival & is the second in a trilogy of works by Ping Chong that explores China & its relations with the West. A 'poetic documentary' & collage from the detritus of East-West relations, *Chinoiserie* includes events surrounding the Opium War, observations of an early Chinese diplomat about the American habit of kissing, the history of Chinese settlers in America, the murder of Vincent Chin in 1983, & continuing trade disputes between China & America. For ticketmaster at 212/307-6510. BAM Majestic Theater, 651 Fulton St, Brooklyn, NY: 718/636-1111. Nov 14 at 7pm, Nov 15-18 at 8pm. \$20, \$30, \$40.