

The Renaissance Society
at The University of Chicago

Feng Mengbo

January 13–February 24, 2002

Opening reception: Sunday, January 13, 2002, 4:00–7:00pm

Q4U

Play on line <http://www.Q4U1.uchicago.edu>



The Renaissance Society

Museum Hours:
Tuesday - Friday: 10 am - 5 pm
Saturday, Sunday: 12 - 5 pm
Closed Mondays

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The Renaissance Society
at The University of Chicago
5811 South Ellis Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60637
Phone: (773) 702-8670
<http://www.renaissance-society.org>

Non-Profit Organization
US Postage
PAID
Chicago, IL
Permit No. 2338

You Fucking Die!!!

Scary thought. One that begs the question as to whether civil liberties do indeed apply to the imagination. In a post- 9/11 environ where fear, fantasy and reality have merged in all the wrong proportions, most would hesitate before answering yes. Obviously thoughts are free to roam. The imagination, however, does not reside exclusively in the psyche. The imagination's industrial forms include movies, television and video games, all of which have ratings boards.

For his exhibition at The Society, Beijing-based artist Feng Mengbo has created *Q4U*, a customized version of *Quake III Arena*, the popular internet game whose plot is simply kill or be killed. Designed by id software, *Quake* is a follow-up to their hit game *Doom*, which alongside *Mortal Kombat*, both released in 1993, set new standards in video game violence. In *Quake*, scavenging for body armor, health capsules, ammunition and plasma rifles, is all part of the quest to kick as much ass as possible in a maze of intergalactic dungeons. *Quake III Arena* is written in open code, a feature that allows users to customize the game. *Q4U*, Mengbo's customized version features a 3D likeness of the artist holding a video camera in

one hand, and a plasma rifle in the other. There will be three play stations in the gallery and over the course of the exhibition, Mengbo will engage players via the internet. Given the dynamic audio visuals of contemporary video games, *Q4U* is formally stunning. It is projected over three large screens (10 feet x 13 feet) each featuring a different point of view.

Although we have come a long way since G.I. Joe, have we really come that far from *Pong*? Aside from "kill or be killed" what protocol could govern the conduct of players from all over the world whose actions are delimited by what is essentially a binary system? In this respect, *Quake*, although it has taken the form of a violent romp, represents what the video game medium is, was and always will be at its core, winners/ losers, zeroes/ ones. In any case, Mengbo's philosophy of gaming is in the playing. He wants any and all viewers to grab the mouse and have fun. He is an avid gamer who boasts of having died a thousand deaths. Watching his character grunt, hurdle and return enemy fire, it's obvious he can't wait to die a thousand more. As for the rules, What rules?? You Fucking Die!!! Everybody knows that rule. No manual needed.

Q4U has been made possible through generous support from The National Endowment for the Arts; Bert Lies and Rosina Lee Yee; and Judith Neisser. Additional support has been received from the CityArts Program of The Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, a municipal agency; The Danielson Foundation; the Dorothy and Gaylord Donnelley Foundation; the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; The Lannan Foundation, The LHM Foundation; The Peter Norton Family Foundation; The Pritzker Foundation; The Sara Lee Foundation; The Siragusa Foundation; WPWR - TV Channel 50 Foundation and our membership. Indirect support has been received from The Institute of Museum and Library Services, a federal agency offering general operating support to the nation's museums.

AmericanAirlines

is the official airline of The Renaissance Society's 2001-2002 season.

Related Events

Talk with the artist
Sunday, January 13
5:00 to 6:00 pm

Quake III Arena: Showdown 2002
Sunday, January 13
1:00 to 4:00 pm

Good at *Quake*? Mengbo needs a serious ass whoopin! Mengbo, who boasts of his *Quake* skills, welcomes all local competitors for a live *Quake* Showdown. Survive and win valuable prizes! This event is free and takes place in the gallery.

The Art of Mu Xin: Landscape Paintings and Prison Notes
January 24 – March 31, 2002
Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago
5550 South Greenwood Avenue

This exhibition explores the work of contemporary Chinese artist Mu Xin (b. 1927), revealing his distinctive personal and artistic responses to tumultuous changes within twentieth-century China. Jointly curated by two leading scholars — Alexandra Munroe, Director of the Japan Society Gallery, New York and Wu Hung, Harrie A. Vanderstappen Distinguished Service Professor in Chinese Art History at the University of Chicago — this exhibition features a suite of 33 landscape paintings (1977-78) created through a unique synthesis

of Western and traditional Chinese paintings styles, and 66 pages of Mu Xin's Prison Notes, written while in solitary confinement from 1970 to 1973. This exhibition is jointly organized by the Smart Museum and the Yale University Art Gallery.

Lecture
Steven L. Kent
author of *The First Quarter: A 25 Year History of the Video Game*
Sunday, January 27, 3:00 pm

Kent will give an informal talk about historical developments within the industry as they lead up to the present. Topics include new technologies, the Entertainment Software Review Board (ESRB), and the post- 9/11 fallout. Kent, author of *The First Quarter: A 25 year History of the Video Game* is also a columnist for MSNBC and *The L.A. Times* as well as a frequent contributor to *Wired* and *Next Generation*. He is called upon regularly to testify before Senate Committees about the industry. This talk is Free and will take place in Cobb Hall Room 307 (directly below the gallery).

Special Exhibition Tour:
Mu Xin and Feng Mengbo
Sunday, February 24
1:30 pm

Join Smart Museum Associate Curator Stephanie Smith and Renaissance Society Education Director Hamza Walker for a special tour. Visitors will move between two poles of recent Chinese art, beginning at the Smart Museum among Mu Xin's evocative landscape paintings and ending at the Renaissance Society in Feng Mengbo's leading-edge video installation.

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Feng Mengbo
Q4U
video game still

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