

## ENGLAND

### Manchester

#### Tsang Kin-Wah at the Chinese Art Center

There are, for humanity, no alternatives to modernity and modernization, but modernization, insofar as it is fuelled by capitalism (to which, at the moment, there seems to be no serious alternative,) tends to put all human relationships on the cash nexus and corrupt them. And this applies to the most hallowed relationship between a man and a woman, called love. The corrupt state of this relationship in the modern world is the central theme of Tsang Kin-Wah's two-part text installation at the Chinese Art Center.

For Tsang Kin-Wah, 32, this is his first solo exhibition in the United Kingdom. Entitled *What are you looking at?* the show features two site-specific text installations. The first one runs along the walls of the large, rectangular gallery on the ground floor, while the second, called *I love U*, is located inside the washrooms in the basement.

Entering the large unlit gallery, one discerns only the four walls. A faint light, passing through the hall, the reception and a narrow passage before entering through the doorway of the gallery, dilutes the darkness but fails to dispel it. Nothing appears to be visible on the walls. The question of the show's title, *What are you looking at?*



Tsang Kin-Wah, *I love you more than anything else in the whole world and I would never do anything to hurt you...*, 2008, clear vinyl, sound, installation in main gallery, Chinese Art Center. Photograph by Tim McConville.

induces one to peer at the dark walls. A clue is provided when your eyes fall on a fragment of the text, smoothly cut in white glossy paper, made visible by the sunlight filtering through one of the two horizontal slits high on a wall.

As the viewer walks along the walls of the dark gallery trying to decipher the text, somewhere an edited clip from Stanley Kubrick's horror movie, *The Shining* (1980), is played, creating an atmosphere of foreboding. The text installed in the gallery—*I love you more than anything else in the whole world and I would never do anything to hurt you*—demands to be read against the music in the background. The text is apparently an overt declaration of a woman's love and her promise *never* to do anything to hurt her lover. Yet the promise remains contingent, conditional. Hurting is what she will never do, but how long will the *never* last? Will her power of hurting, now withheld, last for ever? Or only as long as the lover remains the most coveted object in the whole world? If so, what will qualify him to remain the most coveted object of love?

The clue to the answer is given in the second of the two installations, sited in the washrooms, and titled *I love*

*U*. Entering the washrooms, one is pleasantly struck by the patterned, stylized tulips in their vases printed on white wall-paper. A closer look at the flowers reveals the text: *I love your dollar Honey, I love your credit card, I love your money, I love you Handsome Guy*, etc. What was hidden in the text in the darkened gallery is brazenly declared in the privacy of the toilet. The lover who, in the title, is addressed with text-message brevity, *U*, is now displaced by the actual objects of love—dollars, money, credit cards, looks, etc. What makes the lover lovable is his possession of these objects and qualities. He is not negated, but simply transformed into a

possessive pronoun. The lover survives in the text, if only as a grammatical figure. In the aesthesis of floral design in iconic pink, symbolizing romance, he is simultaneously displaced and relocated in the predicates.

Osman Jamal

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## HONG KONG

#### Pauline Chan So Yee at Art Beatus

As people all over the world have slowly surrendered their privacy and many basic freedoms for



Tsang Kin-Wah, *I Love U*, 2004–2008, printing, installation in washroom, Chinese Art Center. Photograph by Tim McConville.