

HENRY TSANG / Orange County

Orange County (2003) is a video installation with four projections that surround the viewer, depicting four houses in Orange County, California, and Beijing. The houses in China are part of a subdivision named Orange County, where architects and interior designers from Orange County, California, were hired by a Chinese developer to create an “authentic” American-style gated community near the site of the 2008 Summer Olympics. A lone figure walks past each home in this uncannily seamless space of similitude, then is joined by another figure, then another. They slip across and through in an endless game of follow-the-leader, crossing and blurring boundaries of cultural, national, and architectural difference.

Orange County evokes questions about the confluence of urban design, politics, and global capital. What does it mean for the Chinese to earnestly replicate authentic southern California residential architecture when the housing design styles offered for sale are marketed as “Spanish,” “Italian,” and “French?” What happens to the local in this importation of the American Dream, when it is translated into Chinese?



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Orange County, 2003
4-channel video installation, 4:00 min.





