



Li Jinghu

Li Jinghu was born in Dongguan City in 1972, Guangdong (a coastal city in southern China, known as the 'World's Factory' due to its developed processing and manufacturing industry). He currently lives and works in Dongguan. Li Jinghu works primarily with sculpture and installation, which presents an intertwining and ongoing personal 'historiography' of a landscape in flux – his poetically charged work frequently utilize humble materials gathered from his everyday locale. His practice seeks to both capture and transcend the line between collectivity and personal forms of expression, through a constant rumination on society, industry, and capitalism.

He has participate in Chengdu Biennale (2021), Gwangju Biennale (2016), Yinchuan Biennale (2016), Shenzhen Sculpture Biennale(2014). He had his solo exhibitions at Shenzhen Art Museum, Magician Space, Arrow Factory and Observation Society. He had participated in the group exhibitions at Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Times Museum Guangdong, OCAT Shenzhen, Minsheng Art Museum (Shanghai/Beijing), Guangdong Museum of Art, Cass Sculpture Foundation, Para Site, Red Brick Art Museum.

Solo Exhibition

*No Ground Underneath*

Duende Art Museum, 2022

In the morning, you wake up one step ahead of the sound of the alarm clock. With one hour to go before the allotted time, you have enough time to get all ready - or at least that's how you feel. When you come downstairs - that's when pedestrians and transport start to pick up - you realise that it has just rained last night and the water on the road is flowing slowly and orderly into the sewers. Like water flowing towards an ordained end, all the people and things that are travelling know where they are going.

You are born into a world where the choice of transport is important because it determines the time it takes to get from one location to another, but who is driving is not something you are hung up on most of the time. You just need to do the maths, no need to think about the big questions of beginning and being. You begin to realise that everything is the same. Streets, street lamps, stations, convenience stores, even parks. It doesn't really matter much if there's any difference, there's big news on your phone every day, there's always someone on the other end of the dialogue box, just remember, charge up before you go to bed. Then there's the game world and the ACGN, where you take on the guise of a hero and feel in control of everything in that world that does no work or harm to reality.

But can you really control everything? In the morning, you wake up one step ahead of the sound of the alarm clock, you go downstairs, the small trees just planted are uprooted after a violent storm all night, and when the pedestrians get more, you find them all wearing masks. The time spent waiting for the bus became long due to the rain, and the traffic jam was even more unbearable. You can't tell the emotion you feel when the person on the other end of the phone is late in answering messages.

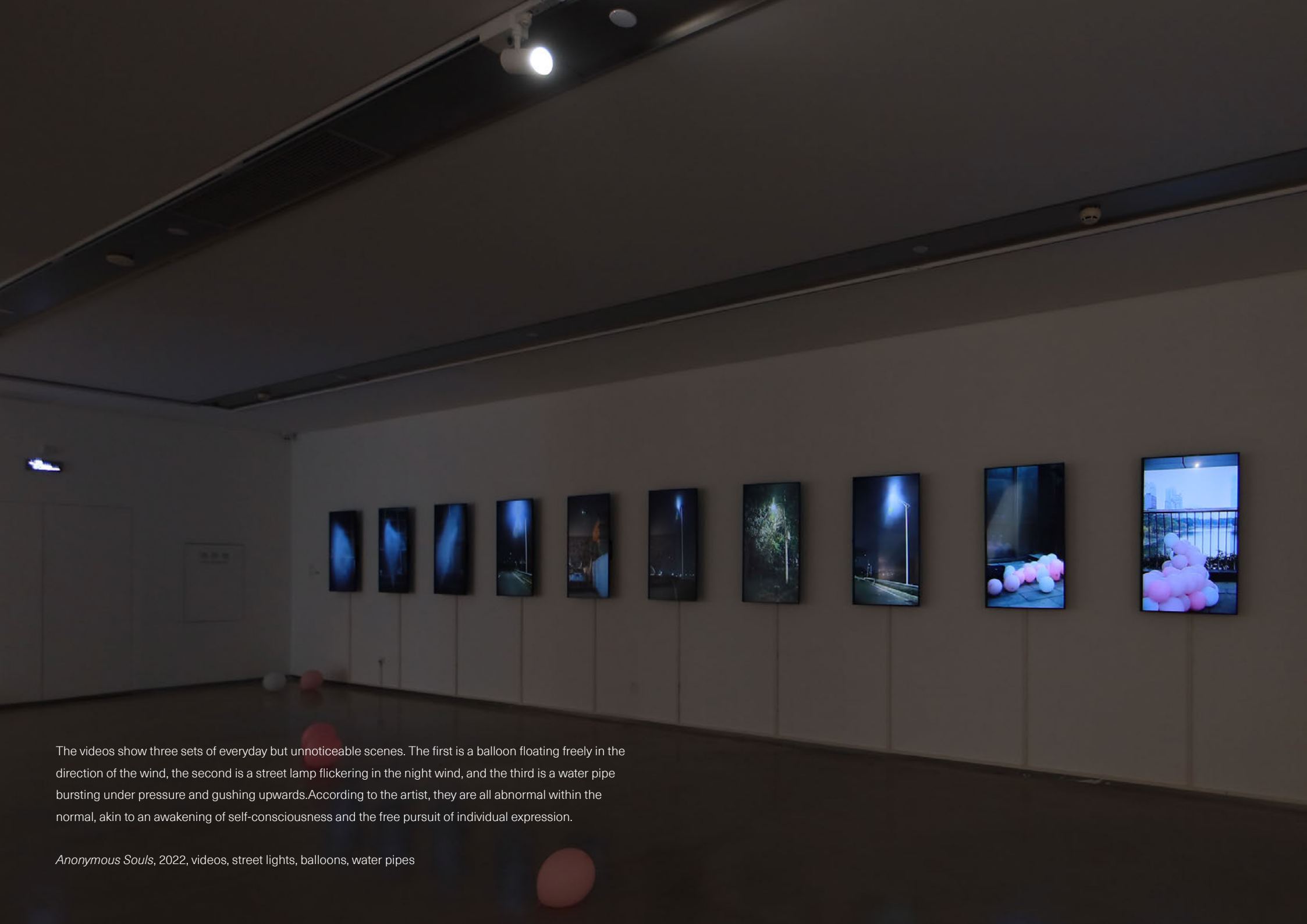
The car goes onto the viaduct in this area called the Pearl River Delta, the view out of the car window is all flat factory roofs. Trees grow between the gaps of the factory, maintaining the territory of green. The tree is embedded in the earth whereas you are embedded in a myriad of systems, inhabiting a web that emanates from the factory as its centre, calculating time and space. You are no longer compared to a plant, or even a reed.

Plants have lost their roots, people have lost the feet from the ground - we call this emotion "no ground underneath". If one is to grow roots and return to the earth, one must first face the the silence - the inevitable unspeakable. When we try to shape the leaves of a tree with language, we become a third party between the tree and its own meaning, and in forcing it to accept a shape, the opposition between language and meaning creates the most acute grief. The tiles of the old house have grown mossy, and as it collapses and crumbles under the urging of the huge machine, perhaps we will have to carve them into stars to reminisce, instead of words, about all that is irreversible. When a thousand words come to an end, the silence is woven into a web that separates thought from naming.

There are souls that do not want to be named, often summed up as "individuals", weak but determined against the hard boulders. Like the water pipe that cannot bear the weight of the pressure will suddenly burst, some of all the same lamps are brave enough to flicker, while the scattered balloons are guided by the wind to their respective determined places. Free will is the potential of the soul, therefore there are no two souls exactly alike, if we lose our words in the face of reality, then we will, each and every one of us, confront the barrenness of language with a constant flicker.

What do you yearn for when all objects are "constant" and "consistent"? Just like the furniture you see in front of you, they are produced, bought, placed and then used, perhaps the same way they are placed in another home, and they are simply the result of a design in which you are embedded. Between "home" and "homeless", you are in a strange position - birds returning to the forest is inhabitation, while the intermittent birdsong on the mobile phones is just the yearning for inhabitation, nothing more.

"The gods fled and human beings were uprooted." How the human beings are to re-rooted to the earth is not told by Heidegger either. He simply says to let it be, and then commit to the enlightenment and obscurity that poetry and art bring. When there is no ground underneath, one suspends everything. As with every morning when one opens one's eyes and begins to see the world, between one point in time and another, awareness of the situation becomes a calculable view of nature. However, when you are in art, the vague, the subtle, the perverse - the kind of things with no ground underneath - are really happening, stare at them! Guard those that are still worth protecting, such as the birdsong, the stars, and the forest in which they dwell.



The videos show three sets of everyday but unnoticeable scenes. The first is a balloon floating freely in the direction of the wind, the second is a street lamp flickering in the night wind, and the third is a water pipe bursting under pressure and gushing upwards. According to the artist, they are all abnormal within the normal, akin to an awakening of self-consciousness and the free pursuit of individual expression.

*Anonymous Souls*, 2022, videos, street lights, balloons, water pipes



In the modern world, the mobile phone has become human organ or status symbol, the most important channel for communication and emotional exchange with the outside world. The work creates scenes of different people's lives through several groups of furniture. In these scenes, each mobile phone placed on the furniture plays a kind of bird's call on a loop, just like the state of each person - both yearning for freedom and at the same time being lonely and vulnerable.

*Home*, 2016, furnitures, second-hand mobile phones



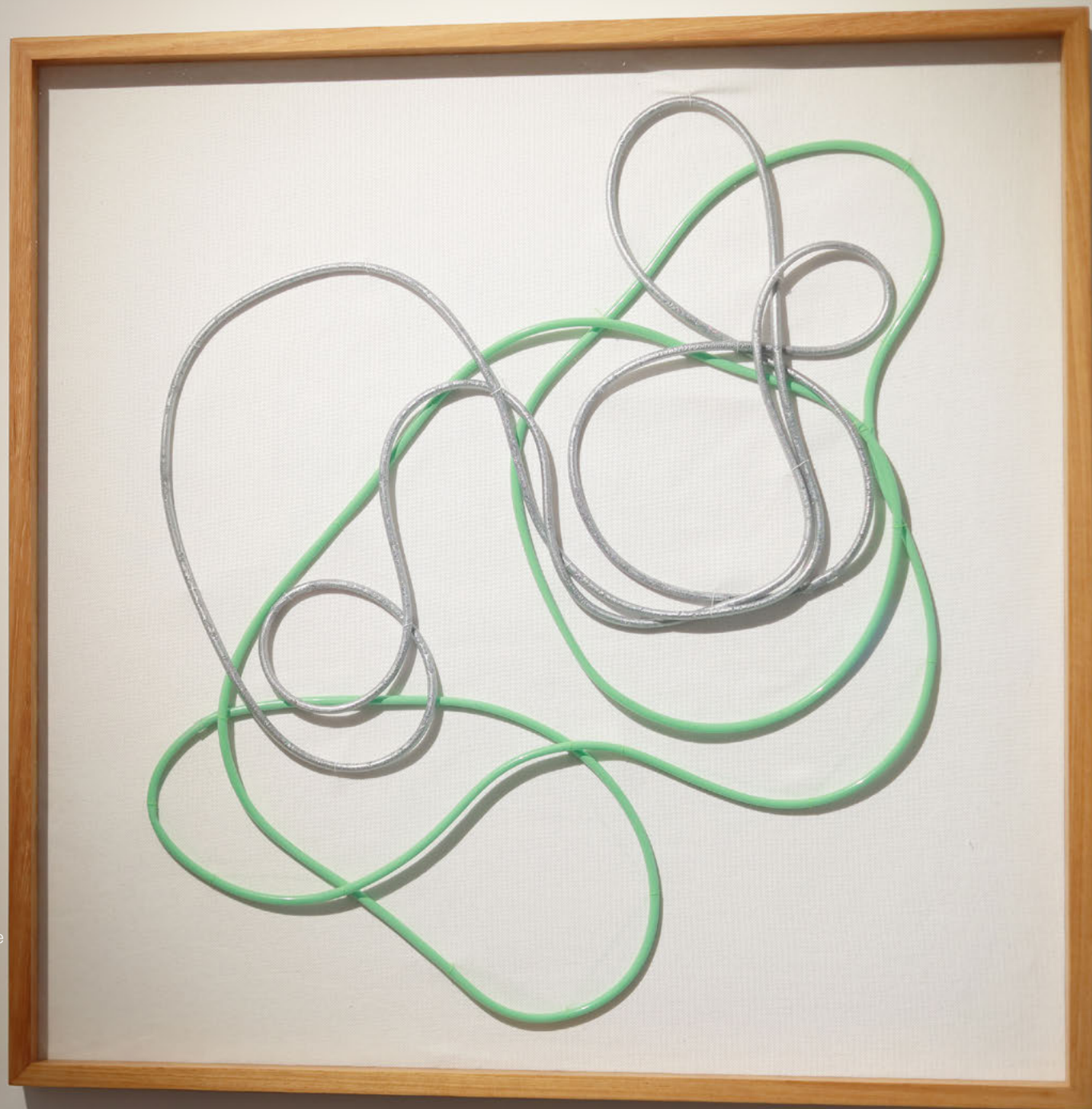


A group of twinkling table lamps, varying in height and size, each representing an individual in a different form. The lamps are placed together like a corner of real life, a group of sculptures. The work reflects a resistance to normativity and a respect and appreciation for individuality.

*Varied Souls*, 2022, installation, table lamps, dining table

Blood is necessary for the functioning of living organisms. in modern society, especially in the predominantly female working areas of Guangdong, itinerant women workers and their work act as the blood production centres of the region, producing goods that are transported through the channels to the world to meet the continuous operation of the organism of the commodity world. in the work, the nail polish in the pipeline symbolises women's hands and their desire for good.

Venus is the goddess of love and beauty in ancient Roman mythology, as well as the goddess of life and navigation, for which the work is named as a tribute to a woman of silent devotion!



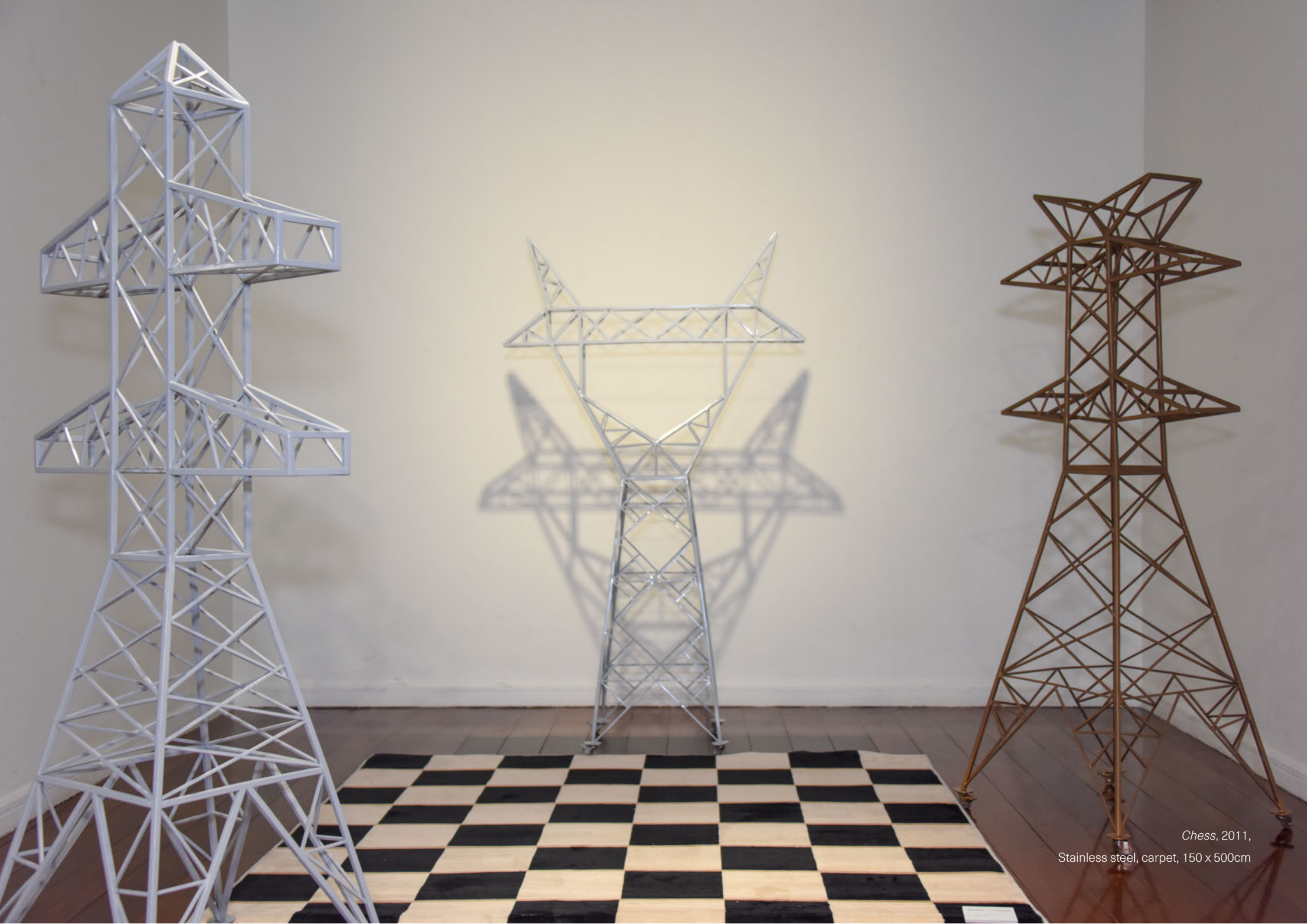
*Blood*, 2022, installation, nail polish, tubes



*One World -  
Li Jinghu's Art Exhibition*

Shenzhen Art Museum, 2022

The "One Universe - Li Jinghu Works Exhibition", planned by You Jiang, directed by Hu Bin as academic facilitator, and hosted by the Shenzhen Art Museum with financial supports from the Shenzhen Publicity and Cultural Fund, will be held at the Shenzhen Art Museum from December 16, 2022 to January 8, 2023. The exhibition will display the contemporary Chinese artist Li Jinghu's new works in 2022, such as Whose Dream Did You Decorate, Chess and The Sun Rises from the Horizon, etc. As a contemporary artist in China, Li Jinghu mainly uses ready-mades for artistic practice and creates a plenty of Readymade Art works. His works present the times through a unique perspective, simple artistic language and spatial meaning construction. The artistic appearance of logos and personal characteristics not only reflects the reality, but also has a certain ideological depth, which has attracted the attention of the art circle.

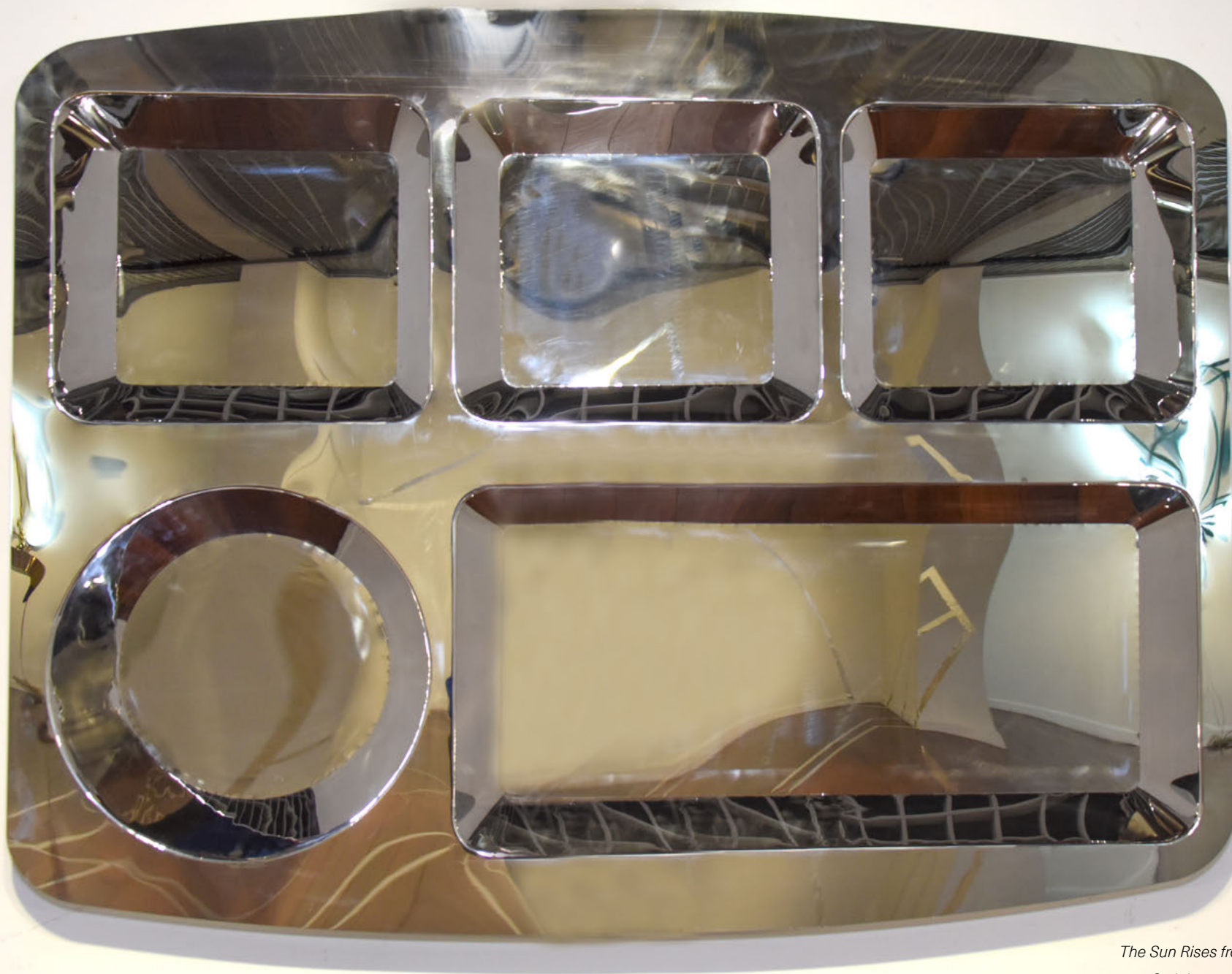


*Chess*, 2011,  
Stainless steel, carpet, 150 x 500cm



*Whose Dream Did You Decorate, 2022,*  
Stainless steel, lamps and lanterns, 120 x 100 x 30cm





*The Sun Rises from the Horizon, 2022*

Stainless steel, 120 x 150 x 10cm



*Companionship*

Li Jinghu Solo, Magician Space, 2019

For every one of us, all of our encounters, companionships, and separations have been fair. As much as we'd like to be irrevocably immersed in kindness and sweetness, we are also made aware of the responsibility and burden that come with intimacy. Furthermore, fortune, knowledge, class, health are often the quantifiable realities and external factors that determine an individual's turn of life, which do not necessarily command the prospect of an individual's emotional commitment. The question that motivates Li Jinghu's practice becomes, "How do we transcend these setbacks in reality, so we sense the passion and restrains of emotions, the pain and the unspeakable amid the barriers between people?"

Li Jinghu's practice has always attempted to dissolve those existing meanings and flat narratives, while seeking out the common yet at times, overlooked energy and desires in life. Like the mosaic tiles amassed from the market of construction supplies, some vibrant in colors, others plain and simple, some intricate and favorable, others broken and scratched, are all made of quartz regardless of their differences from each other. All of the tiles have been processed, colored, set, and lined up, whose values have been actualized in a standardized fashion regardless of whether its exterior matches its internal intent or not. What concerns Li Jinghu is the juxtaposition of the objects, and the ways in which companionship come together. And once the social identities of an object are removed, how will it live and survive?

When two pieces of entirely different tiles are placed next to each other, hence a personal and independent relationship becomes apparent. The piece of tile is no longer a member similar to the rest of the group, but an existing piece reliant of the others. They are not glued together seamlessly, instead, narrow crevasses are left between them. One would not be able to determine what's parting and approaching, which resonates with the independent individuals engaged in an intimate relationship, who at times embrace each other tightly, other times, part their ways. Intimacy is often inseparable from reticence, which is indeed its most honest temperament.

If two pieces of mosaic tiles, in each other's company, project the reality of the so-called intimate relationship, then bringing together jewelry and metal radium disk would emulate the clash of love and desire of adolescence. These cheap pieces of jewelry, often processed by women, are placed over the metallic radium disks, processed by men, are transformed into raindrops and fall into the water. They become one with each other while creating a crescendo of ripples. Industrial materials are often cold and rigid, but their encounter ignites passionate, unhinged desires, as well as irrevocable parting. Before the feelings of a previous love affair are fully fled, the raindrops from the next encounter have already fallen, as parting and encountering often happen simultaneously. Agreement and ethics often seem powerless and dismal in the confrontation of the irrational love and loathing, and faced with our desires and fate, we have to admit that the most wonderful things in life are ultimately destined for transience and fragility.

Throughout the inescapable life of the mundane, hope, frustration, depravity, and the subtle yet tangible kindness are tangled together. This has turned Li Jinghu into a scrounger, who hopes to excavate those precious things amid the numbness of reality. Those found objects, be they the cheap pieces of jewelry, quartz, or the mosaic tiles, embody the individuals who are assigned with symbolic social attributes, as well as, analogies of himself. In the course of being selected, eliminated, and rediscovered, the invisible surfaces from the visible - this is the desperate fight against the cruelty of reality. While the unexpected encounters, companionships, struggles, and separations are not necessarily pleasant at all, as they often come with suffering and unspeakable feelings, but this precisely manifests the most truthful desire of living.





Since the 80s to 90s of the last century, when development is massively and swiftly spreading in southern coastal cities of China, mosaic as a cheap practical architectural material was broadly used to decorate the exterior surface of architectures that were built up in a short period of time, therefore the little square made of quartz became a significant symbol of the high-speed developing time. Just like a mosaic, off-farm workers at that time were showing in a huge number of groups.

I used to think of this group with the tag “off-farm worker” just like everyone else. But as communicating with individuals from this group more, I started to realize that they all have their different personalities, different trends of their lives, they share the same sorrow and joy with us. Since then the difference of each labor started interests me. There was one time, in an architecture material market, I saw a lot of different mosaics were spread all over the ground, at that moment, an idea came into my mind, aren't those mosaics just like each off-farm workers who live around us? They are all different in terms of size, texture, color, even feel like they have their personalities. Mosaic is made of tones of small granules, just like the group “off-farm workers” is made of many individual labors. It has been 17 years since I moved back to Dongguan from Shenzhen, the place where I live is a sub-urban located in the center of that town. Countless families or couples who work in the near factories are live in rental houses around where I live. Because the dormitories are not very convenient for couples or families to live so they have no other choices but rent and live in those small spaces. They live together, supporting each other and face the pressure of life together without leaving. This reminds me of a saying—Companionship is the longest confession.







Dongguan, a city in southern Guangdong Province, China, is home to countless factories and migrant workers. Due to the rapid mobility and the tedious nature of factory work, this community of migrant workers has a particularly strong need for intimacy. Recurring factory demolitions and relocations in this flailing economy, as well as a gender imbalance resulting from industrial agglomeration, have led to the rise of outlawed relationships. As a result, practices such as polygamy and temporary marriage have become commonplace among this young community marked by high-intensity work and transient living vis-à-vis low incomes and education levels.

Li Jinghu installs jewelry and custom-made aluminum plates from Dongguan's factories, on a table that resembles an assembly line platform. When the larger metal objects, which are mostly manufactured by men, are met with the dainty jewelry, usually made by women, they generate faint ripples before instantly vanishing, resembling the momentary lovers brought together alongside these products in this factory town.

Qu Chang, Curator, Para Site  
Crush, Para Site, Hong Kong, 2018



*Foundation 1#*, 2019, concrete, metal, quartz, 1x1x1 m



Dongguan, as the “factory of the world”, while providing tones of good quality merchandise, a big amount of inferior quality products are also produced. Unlike their qualified “brothers and sisters, inferior quality products will be dumped or taken back to the factory to be melted and reproduced. The metal jewelry, accessories and raw materials of mosaic in this piece were found in scrap recycling station. I collect them because to me, these inferior quality products have some sort of similarities with people whose dreams and wishes are hard to come true for complex reasons. The development of this country is uneven and classes are gradually solidified, as “inferior-quality product” this group might be jammed at the bottom of society. The bottom of society is like a concrete foundation, those people are buried and dumped in there, but it is they who are caring the weight and keeping the balance of the society. In *Foundation 1#*, I cut the top of 1 cubic meter concrete open just like archaeologist opens the ground, I want to let people see in there not just sand and mud, but as well those so-called “inferior-quality products”, people will see they are still shining, even though they are compressed, yet still have not given up their effort to struggle.

*Efficiency is Life*

Li Jinghu Solo, Magician Space, 2014

*Efficiency is Life* the debut solo exhibition in Beijing of artist Li Jinghu. Based in the southern city of Dongguan, Li works primarily with sculpture and installation, altering and reworking existing objects and materials accrued in a region renowned as the industrial hub in the Pearl River Delta. Li's poetically charged body of work utilizes elements gleaned from the reality of the artist's everyday locale, seeking to both capture and transcend the line between collectivity and personal forms of expression.

*Efficiency is Life* presents a comprehensive survey of his practice, including two large-scale installation works *Prisoner* and *Rainbow* exhibiting in the large exhibition hall. *Prisoner* encompasses the walls in a work that conjures a conceptual and physical action in the space. With its low-production cost and ease of mass-production, the barbed chain-wire fence has functioned almost universally in the world as a divisive symbol of containment and restraint. Mimicking its minimal and economic means of production, Li recreates the ubiquitous zig-zag wire mesh, cutting its geometric form directly into the walls – a gesture that accentuates and unsettles the edifice of the walls.

Li's persistent pursuit of a 'collective' expression of reality in Dongguan finds itself also in a second work *Rainbow*, comprising a motley collection of household used objects collected by the artist to create the semblance of a rainbow. "What is it that gives most ordinary people the ability to endure the arduous and weariness of life day after day? Rainbow is a form that expresses aspiration and conviction." Under the rubric of formulating this sign, Li accrues an assembly of common items once possessed by anonymous individuals, redirecting the flow of these everyday objects through a progression into different color registers.

*Efficiency is Life* is the first of a unique two-part exhibition series at Magician Space with artist Li Jinghu. Marking his first major survey in Beijing, the exhibitions present an important mid-career presentation of early and recently commissioned work. Firmly situated in the city of Dongguan, Li's position is a rather obdurate practice that seeks to unravel and expose the complex layers of reality reflecting the reality at the front lines: combining his own subjectivity work-by-work, he explores the affective potential of materials, working both in counterpoint to and in friction with the rhythm of working life there. To quote art critic Bao Dong, "With the course of modernization as its backdrop, Li's lyricism cannot help but exhibit some nostalgia, but this nostalgia is not aloof or exalted. In Li's world, nostalgia does not come from past tradition or an idealized future. Rather, it is a present reality."





What's supporting people to go on, facing the prosaic and hard daily routines? The longing for the future and the yearning for a better life are the simplest and purest wishes of people. All the materials utilized in the artwork of *Rainbow* are second-hand daily necessities from the working class. Here, behind the objects, they may represent those who are absent. By arranging these objects in chromatography, the artist constructs new symbols of meaning with a thrilling power.

*Rainbow*, 2009, installation, second-hand objects, dimensions variable



*Prisoner*, 2011, installation, Cutting machine, walls, Dimensions variable

*The broom*, 2005, Installation, brooms





*Stone Feces*, 2006, installation, concretes, acrylic paints



*Fresh Flowers*, 2005, installation, flowers, female leather shoes



*Powder*, 2003, installation, rice, porcelain bowl, fluorescent tube, goldfish bowl, stone, plastic ceiling block, beer bottle, dimensions variable



*Time is Money*

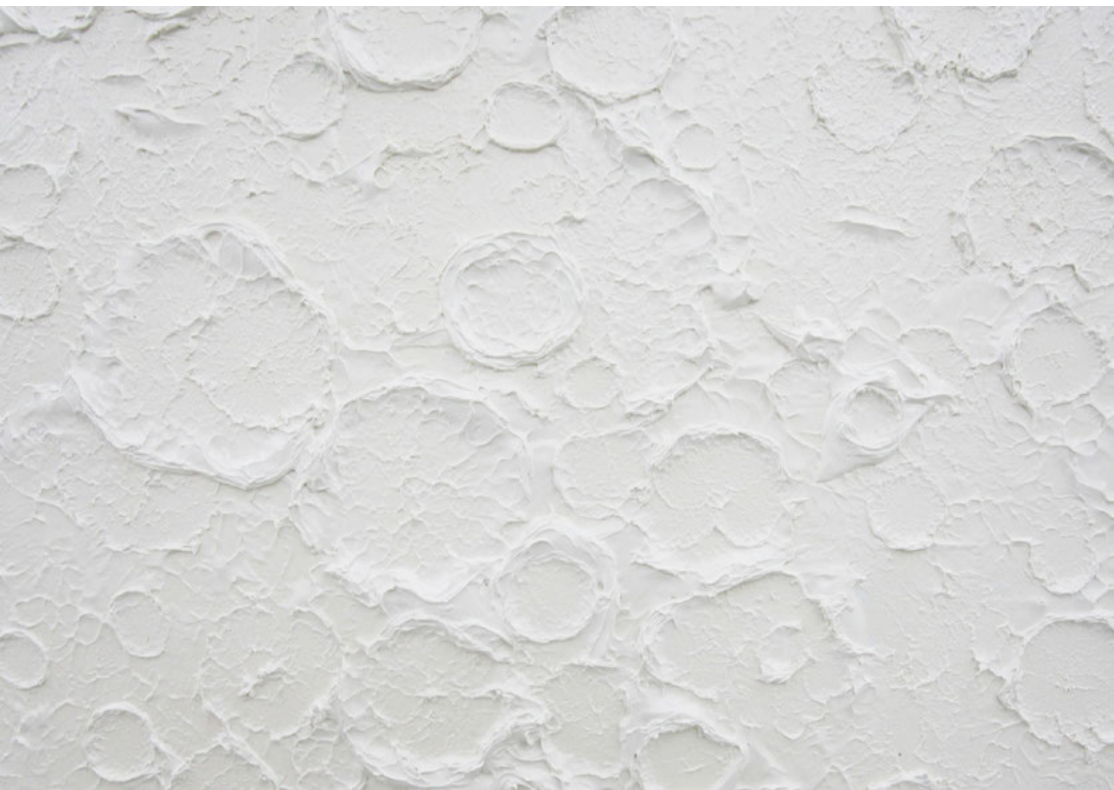
Li Jinghu Solo, Magician Space, 2014

*Time is Money* the second installment of a unique back-to-back exhibition series with Guangdong artist Li Jinghu. The exhibition brings together two newly commissioned works, offering a poetic rumination on society, industry, and capitalism - of the boundaries erected that separate humanity from nature. Comprising moving-image, sound, as well as sculptural and painted elements, the exhibition moment is translated into a nocturnal setting inspired by the reality of Dongguan – an emerging 'factory of the world'. In continuation of the first exhibition, the title embodies the missing half of the billboard slogan 'Time Is Money, Efficiency Is Life' – an ominous phrase used in South China throughout the 80s.

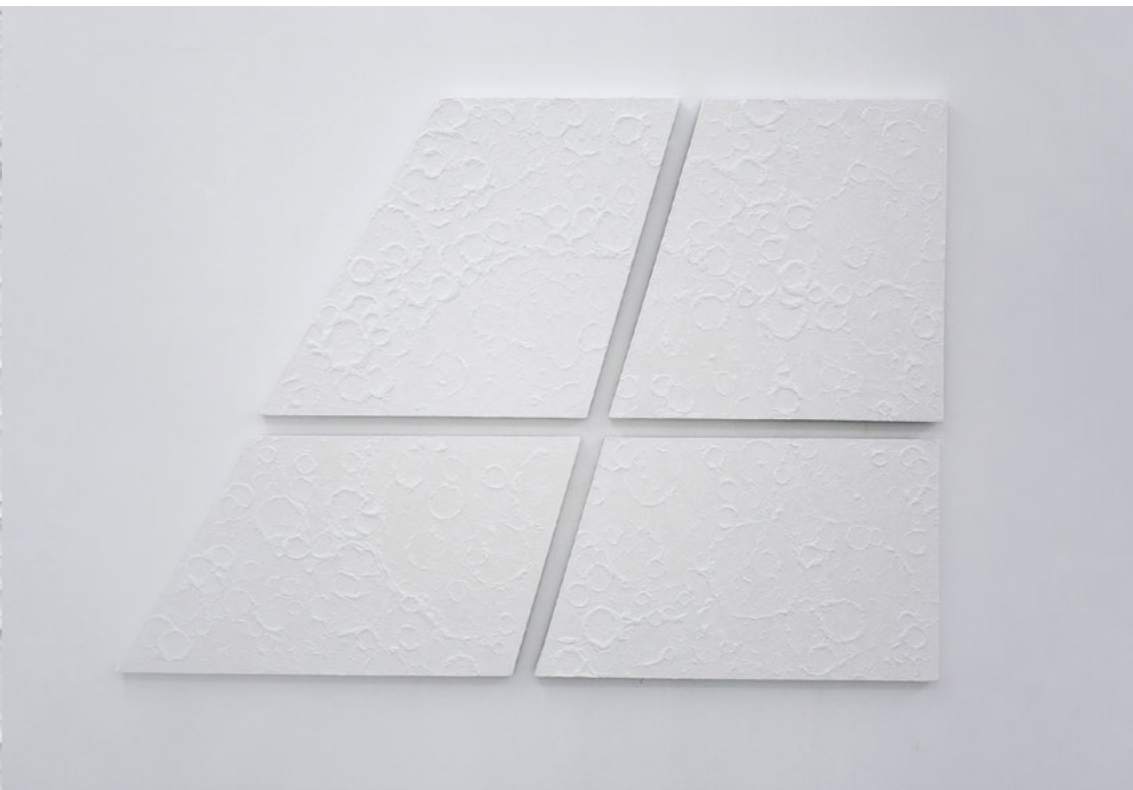
Two distinct installations will occupy each of the exhibition rooms, underscoring an intertwining and ongoing personal 'historiography' of Dongguan in flux. Reflecting an ongoing interest in the fugitive imprints of labor and life, the exhibition includes the installation *Today's Screening* - a re-staging of video halls that once littered streets nearby factories. A popular nighttime activity for factory workers, the setting of the video hall is distilled into its most basic components: the soundtrack and projected image. Mass-produced plastic crystals – a source of livelihood and at once an incongruous presence in this city – cover the projection film-screen, abstracting a continuous circularity of images into a refracted dazzle of darkness and light. With this sleight of hand, a social moment transforms into a spectral image, as projection becomes the performing act.

The second installation *Moonlight* inhabits the main exhibition hall, marking a new series of wall-based works. As tempo, subject matter, and soundtrack shift through different cadences in the smaller room, *Moonlight* offers a further counterpoint through a fixed sequence of varying geometric forms. Here, each form alludes to moonlight as it traverses through crevices and the elongated gaps of buildings – in the city, moonlight neither dances nor shimmers like it does between living branches of trees. It instead retains a rather motionless etiolated glow, but with an industrial airbrush to coerce the surface paint into craters and ridges, the 'skin' of these indelible marks provide a new sensory field held together in a state of pleasant suspension. We are reminded of this celestial being in the sky - of the void beyond the quotidian and of its enduring visual potential.





*Moonlight* (detail)



*Moonlight Piece 5*, 2014, wall-based installation, mixed media on canvas, 145×205 cm



*Murder*, 2011, installation, stainless steel rubbish bin, knife, 100x110 cm



Group Exhibition (selected)



*White Clouds*, 2009, installation, white fluorescent tubes, fixtures, 1145 x 430 x 130 cm  
11th Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju, Korea, 2016





Li Jinghu has re-assembled lighting from factories and transformed them into clouds. This gesture takes inspiration from the countless rows of lighting the artist would observe while passing by factory buildings. Once used to illuminate the production work floors and offices, the artist creates an image that seeks to instead draw focus towards the migrant workers who constitute the bulk of the workforce. Arriving into Dongguan from predominately rural areas in China, the clouds symbolize a time when they could look up at open skies instead of endless strip lights used in their present environment.





More than a decade ago, going through the roads of the factory area at night, there would be a cascade of noise from all the different video halls. The syrupy dialogue would be mixed with the wailing of ghosts, and then a turn around the corner there would be images of swords - these video halls left me with a very profound impression. Things like our surroundings and the objects around us - they might be things you are familiar with but they initially might not really move you. But the moment you leave your surroundings or when they exist only in the past, the fragments of these forms reappear only in mind, building up as a record to a certain atmosphere. It's within the processes behind its re-emergence that the unique characteristics of an atmosphere can become pertinent and slowly refined - it then can turn into an enduring symbol in your memory. I do not want to reduce it to a simple setting, but I want to rather recreate something that approaches something close to authentic 'memory'.

*Today's Screening-To Where The Sentiment Belongs, 2014 -2016, video installation, sequin, fabric*  
*That Has Been and May Be Again, 2016, Para Site, Hong Kong*





*Today's Screening-To Where The Sentiment Belongs (detail)*





I started to acquire discarded factory bronze molds for producing toys at scrap yards around Dongguan. The appearance is something similar to an archaeological site, whilst at the same time also appearing like an abstract museum site.

Dongguan since the 80s has become the factory of the world. The region at one point was responsible for 50 percent of the world's manufacture of toys. These toy molds have been collected from scrap stations; it's really the origin for many of the plastic toys that now cover the entire world. The molds have now started to rust, appearing like bronze sculptures of an ancient age, but upon closer detail you see the details of popular cartoons from earlier and present periods. They follow the development of the global economy, as a result today Dongguan's manufacturing has also begun a period of decline, it is no longer a factory of the world. This work really portrays in a pertinent way Dongguan's short history with globalization.



This ambitious installation is an abstraction of the artist's home city, Dongguan, which the artist imagines as a living archaeological landscape. As a boomtown that developed rapidly as China entered a period of economic reform in the 1980s, Dongguan has since undergone a period of intense industrialization. Representing two contrasting sides to China's drive towards modernization, the artist evokes the flux of materials transforming the region, with immense volumes of commodities manufactured at speed for global distribution, but also reflecting the transient status of these material objects as they fall just as quickly back into obsolescence. Viewed from another angle, Li Jinghu also explores Dongguan's fluctuating position within the Urban/Rural divide: of the transition from rural farmland into an industrial region - where a relationship with nature has become irrevocably tainted.

Li Jinghu has arranged an assembly of artifacts into an abstract museological display. Acquiring an orange and turquoise patina through time, these objects were once the industrial molds used for the mass-production of toys. The display has been designed to heighten their perception as historical relics from an ancient age - but upon closer inspection, details of popular cartoons ranging from Homer Simpson to Dragon Ball Z begin to emerge. Accumulating en-masse from scrap stations as an on-going archive - they reveal Dongguan's short-lived status as leader of the world's global output of toy production. Beginning in Dongguan and then shipped around the world, the peak of this period of intense production has already begun to already falter into decline.

*Archaeology of the Present (Dongguan)*, 2016, bronze, marble, dimensions variable  
*South by Southeast. A Further Surface*, Curated by Patrick D. Flores and Anca Verona Mihuleț  
2016, Guangdong Times Museum





*Escape (My Family History)*, 2016, stainless steel, rotating spotlight, dimensions variable  
*A Beautiful Disorder*, 2016, Cass Sculpture Foundation





*Escape (My Family History)* is both site-specific and durational, functioning during the day and evening throughout the exhibition. The installation is produced from the artist's subjective memory and features a replica of a border zone separating Mainland to Hong Kong, layered onto the natural surroundings of a sculpture garden.

Searchlights and barbed fences are devices used by border control and the military to demarcate one territory to another, whilst seeking to detect and deter illegal outside bodies coming from one place to another. The avoidance of light means an avoidance of detection, therefore the increased opportunity for a successful passage from one side to the other. With Li's signature sleight of hand through the act of re-staging this moment: the path of the search lights combine with processes of photosynthesis to activate the surrounding flora and fauna, encouraging the exposed grass to grow uncontrolled and taller. As time passes, mounds of overgrown grass will form outlines of overlapping arcs, as the path drawn by the searchlights become visible to gradually form a new 'symbol' on the ground – a symbol of a flying bird.

*Escape (My Family History)*, 2016, stainless steel, rotating spotlight, dimensions variable





Li Jinghu cuts the marble flagstones at Dongguan's central plaza into pieces of variable sizes, and puts them together into a pyramid-shaped monumental structure that interrogates the plaza as an architectural form and symbol of authority.

*Square*, 2015, installation, 300 x 300 x 200 cm  
*Digging a Hole in China*, 2016, OCAT Shenzhen





*Square*, 2015, installation, 300 x 300 x 200 cm  
*Digging a Hole in China*, 2016, OCAT Shenzhen





*Sea Breeze*, 2014, mixed media installation, tableware, water, dimensions variable





Working in the industrial area of Dongguan, Li Jinghu has purchased and collected used vessels, mainly stainless steel tableware, from the junk market near his studio. Filled with water, these containers are arranged in a field on the gallery floor as a poetic evocation of the near yet absent sea whose cooling breeze is felt even in the factories.

The workers from inland areas, most of whom the artist says have never seen the sea, left home 'longing for the sea' as metaphor for their dreams of achieving a better lifestyle. While their decision was inspired by the economic development that is concentrated along China's coastal areas, their day-to-day work itself constitutes the continued economic prosperity of the area and contributes to the continued growth of the coastal myth. According to Li Jinghu, *Sea Breeze* turns a collection of objects that are shaped by the lives and labor of the workers into a landscape that reflects their desire for a better life.

*Sea Breeze*, 2014, mixed media installation, tableware, water, dimensions variable  
*The 8th Shenzhen Sculpture Biennial*, 2014, OCAT Shenzhen



*Waterfall*, 2016, android phones, video, electric phone charger, metal, dimensions variable

*Trace of Existence*, 2016, UCCA



Li Jinghu works primarily with sculpture and installation, altering and reworking existing objects and materials accrued in a region renowned as the 'factory of the world' in the Pearl River Delta. *Waterfall* comprises a collection of used Android mobile phones and epitomizes Li's desire to capture the reality of an area under incessant flux. Each phone has been hacked and its system altered to create a continuously looped video sequence of water as it flows from a tap. These adapted found objects are further ordered in an on-going configuration of vertical geometric structures, connecting the exhibition wall to the floor and within this space evoking the outlines of the work's titular waterfall. On closer inspection the video sequences have been individually shot, differentiated through subtle changes in pixel resolution and shifts in physical location – each video records a momentary connection to a population of occupants living in a nearby local housing block. At a distance the screens might suggest the generic kind of stock photographic wallpapers proliferating on desktop computer screens worldwide. Li Jinghu intervenes within the networked physical and virtual flows that define our most elementary relationships to the world, re-adapting the tainted technologies of this age to highlight our attempts to harness the energy and splendor of nature.





*Constellation* originates from family-run workshops specializing in inlaying rhinestones found on the streets of Chang'an Town in Dongguan. This industrial city has become partly dominated by manufacturing businesses producing these accessory items - often outsourcing rhinestone-inlaying procedures to low income families. A mixture of imitation gold and rhinestone accessories are spread onto crude tables, forming an incongruous combination that gleams in contrast to the surrounding environment. For spectators, this scene appears like a fictional world - especially during nighttime when bathed with dim streetlights. Each table is lit on a table lamp to evoke a cluster of stars in the night sky – an image of pureness that is unsettled in relationship to hardship of these families who labor with these materials.





*Constellation*, 2015 (detail)





In 2006, I received an invitation letter from Tobias Berger, the curator of Para Site Art Space in Hong Kong. This was the first group exhibition I was invited by a curator. I'm excited about the new role and experience. What does a curator do? What is the relationship between the curator, the artist, and the audience? What is the relationship between the works of other artists and mine? These new problems arise for me.

In the work *Letter from Tobias*, I arrange the prototype letter cookies from the curator's invitation letter in English in the exhibition hall. The audience could take away or eat the cookies. The letter is disappearing slowly, while the audience is participating. The final completion of the work is the cookies of the letter finally disappears. This work starts with the invitation of the curator and ends when it gets into the body of the audience. I want to present the process of art in a simple way so that the curator and the audience have a direct relationship in this work.





*Snowman*

Arrow Factory

2010

*Snowman* by Li Jinghu is a site-specific installation and event that takes a lighthearted approach towards the consumption and distribution of everyday consumer products. Using everyday items such as packaged toilet paper, Li creates a larger than life size snowman, which will steadily 'melt' over time as the items are sold off at bargain prices. At once sculptural installation and interactive event, *Snowman* explores the intricacies of pricing, buying and selling of everyday goods within a localized setting while transforming Arrow Factory into a temporary shop for salt, washing powder and cheap low-grade toilet paper. Effectively relocating a wholesale market from the remote outskirts of town to the city center, *Snowman* attempts to infiltrate and disrupt the local economy by introducing wholesale prices amongst a growing retail environment.

Taking up his earlier concerns with the formal qualities of everyday objects, here Li selects only white color products and sculpts them into snowmen—a whimsical and imaginary form for the artist, whose first encounter with snowfall occurred just days before he began his installation. However, as in real life, snowmen are not intended to last. The artist has engaged the assistance of a neighboring shopkeeper to sell the items everyday for approximately one month until the snowmen gradually disappear. Coincidentally, the brand name of the toilet paper Li purchased is called 天天见 "Tian Tian Jian" (literally 'seen everyday'), a phrase which speaks to the work's two conceptual edges: the fleeting, ephemeral presence of snowmen and unfaltering daily encounters with these common products.

Living and working in Dongguan, Guangdong, one of China's infamous 'world factories', Li Jinghu's artistic practice is highly informed by his own upbringing, everyday experiences and imaginations within and beyond this southern industrial city. Having witnessed the changes that have occurred in the region—from reform and opening until the most recent economic downturn—Li has developed a keen interest in the patterns of daily existence and the lives of ordinary citizens that surround him. Arrow Factory's hutong is a fitting location for an artist who has grown accustomed to working away from the art centers of Beijing and Shanghai, and whose practice seeks to melt away the borders between art and life.





*Li Jinghu: Forest*

Observation Society, Guangzhou

2009-12-13 ~ 2010-2-13

Li Jinghu takes his materials from his everyday life in Dongguan. In this exhibition, Li Jinghu uses metaphors to reconstruct different elements of an industrial town into a natural landscape, a new forest...At the end of the exhibition, when all the materials were sold for recycling, going back into the karma.

About Dongguan

Dongguan is an industrial town in Southern China. Li's works thoroughly reflect the spiritual faces of this place - the remoteness, the conflicts between backward and prosperous, poor and rich, urban and village. Here is the edge of the country, but he is telling us some exotic tales. We must realize it is all about the boredom, wearing down day by day.



Li Jinghu

1972 Born in Dongguan, Guangdong Province  
 1996 Graduated from South China Normal University, Fine Arts Department  
 Currently lives and works in Chang'an, Dongguan

## Solo Exhibitions

2023 One World, Shenzhen Art Museum, Shenzhen, CN  
 2022 No Ground Underneath, Duende Art Museum, Shunde, CN  
 2019 Companionship, Magician Space, Beijing, CN  
 2018 The Reunion, Nodal Contemporary Art Space, Dongguan, CN  
 2014 Time is Money, Magician Space, Beijing, CN  
 Efficiency is Life, Magician Space, Beijing, CN  
 2011 Gie, Yangtze River Space, Wuhan, CN  
 2010 Snowman, Arrow Factory, Beijing, CN  
 2009 Li Jinghu: Forest, Observation Society, Guangzhou, CN  
 Li Jinghu: One Day in Dongguan, J&Z Gallery, Shenzhen, CN  
 2006 No Problem, Shenzhen Sculpture Academy, Shenzhen, CN

## Group Exhibitions

2022 共感·流殇, Art Museum of Guangzhou Academy of Fine Art, Chuangzhou, CN  
 No Ground Underneath, Duende Art Museum, Shunde, CN  
 2021 Super Fusion - 2021 Chengdu Biennale, Chengdu Art Museum, Chengdu, CN  
 Cantonese Consumerism, Duende Art Museum, Foshan, CN  
 2020 Shenzhen Times: Shenzhen Contemporary Art Archive Exhibition, Museum of Contemporary Art & Planning Exhibition, Shenzhen, CN  
 Dive into Life: Joint Exhibition of Young Artist, Manjinghua Art Gallery, Shenzhen, CN  
 Duration: Chinese Art in Transformation, Beijing Minsheng Art Museum, Beijing, CN  
 From the Mundane World: Launch Exhibition of He Art Museum, He Art Museum, Shunde, CN  
 2019 A Turning Moment: Urban Narratives in Chinese Contemporary Art, 1995-2019, Shanghai  
 Duolun Museum of Modern Art, Shanghai, CN  
 Pantone, HOW Art Museum, Wenzhou, CN  
 Night Tour of the Pearl River, Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, CN  
 In this World, We, Hessel Museum, Bard College, New York  
 UABB2019 Theme- Urban Interactions, Yantian Exhibition Hall, Shenzhen, CN  
 The 4th Today's Documents- A Stitch in Time, Today Art Museum, Beijing, CN  
 2018 City Art Direction, Guangzhou, CN  
 West Bund Art & Design, Shanghai, CN  
 FIAC Art Fair, Paris, FR  
 Crush, Para Site, Hong Kong  
 Art Basel Hong Kong, Hong Kong, CN  
 Front International: Cleveland Triennial for Contemporary Art, The Akron Museum, Akron, USA  
 2017 lei-pā, ST PAUL St Gallery, Auckland, NZ  
 Among Friends, Boers-Li Gallery, Beijing, CN  
 Encounters, Art Basel in Hong Kong, Hong Kong, CN  
 2016 11th Gwangju Biennial, Gwangju, South Korea  
 NEW ORDER: ALTER MONDI ALISME, Just Space, Sanya Edition, Sanya, CN  
 A Beautiful Disorder, Cass Sculpture Foundation, West Sussex, UK  
 1st Yinchuan Biennale, MOCA Yinchuan, Yinchuan, CN

More Than Friends, More Than Lovers, Center for Contemporary Art Futura, Prague, CZE  
 There Has Been, And May Be Again, Pare Site, Hongkong, CN  
 Chéng Shì Cí Dian, 33 Art Center, Guangdong, CN  
 This Future of Ours, Red Brick Art Museum, Beijing, CN  
 South by Southeast. A Further Surface, Guangdong Times Museum, Guangzhou, CN  
 Digging A Hole in China, OCAT, Shenzhen, CN  
 Exotic Stranger, Galerie Paris Beijing, Paris, FR  
 Trace of Existence, UCCA, Beijing, CN  
 Hong Kong Art Basel, Hong Kong, CN  
 Asia Now, Paris Asian Art Fair, Paris, FR

2015 Display Distribute, Shanghai, CN  
 THERMO MATTER, Shenzhen Art Museum, Shen Zhen, CN  
 Back Home, Run Away: A Sample of Artistic Geography, Taikang Space, Beijing, CN  
 The System of Objects, Minsheng Art Museum, Shanghai, CN  
 Institution Production – Ecology Investigation of Contemporary Art of Young Guangzhou Artists, Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, CN  
 Frieze London, London, UK  
 Art Berlin Contemporary, Berlin, DE  
 Hong Kong Art Basel, Hong Kong, CN  
 2014 # "HAMMER HAMMER PENG! ", A-307, Beijing, CN  
 Stone, Wood and Paradise Syndrome, 1933 Contemporary, Shanghai, CN  
 You Can Only Think about Something if You Think of Something Else, Times Museum, Guangzhou, CN  
 Positive Space, Times Museum, Guangzhou, CN  
 West Bund Art & Design, Shanghai, CN  
 Shenzhen Public Sculpture Exhibition 2014, Shenzhen Public Arts Center, Shenzhen, CN  
 The 8th Shenzhen Sculpture Biennale, OCT Contemporary Art Terminal, Shenzhen, CN  
 2013 PAINT (erly), BANK, Shanghai, CN  
 Countryside Poetic, Gland, Beijing, CN  
 ON | OFF: China's Young Artists in Concept and Practice, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), Beijing, CN  
 The 14th OPEN International Performance Art Festival, Space Station, Beijing, CN  
 2012 Daily of concept: A Practice of Life - The 15th Shanghai Duolun Youth Art Exhibition, Duolun Museum of Modern Art, Shanghai, CN  
 What is it about the end of the world that makes it so appealing? V-ART CENDER, Shanghai, CN  
 Pulse Reaction - An Exchange Project on Art Practice, Times Museum, Guangzhou, CN  
 2011 Smile, Hemuse Gallery, Beijing, CN  
 Something Will Inevitably Happen, K11 Art Village, Wuhan, CN  
 The Border Show, Society for Experimental Cultural Production, HK  
 2010 THE THIRD PARTY - An Exhibition in Three Acts, Platform China Space B, Beijing, CN  
 Arrow Factory: Collection Highlights, Arrow Factory, Beijing, CN  
 2010 Get It Louder, Beijing Venue, Sanlitun SOHO, Shanghai Venue, 800show, CN  
 2009 Work-in-Progress: How Do Artists Work, Iberia Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, CN  
 2008 Out of Love, Soka Art Center, Beijing, CN  
 Homesickness, T Space, Beijing, CN  
 2006 In and Out, Shenzhen Sculpture Academy, Shenzhen, CN  
 Dream a little dream, Para/Site Art Space, Hong Kong, CN  
 2004 Special Visual Zone - Shenzhen Youth Experimental Art Exhibition, Shenzhen Art Museum, Shenzhen, CN