

Time is Money
Li Jinghu Solo Exhibition

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时间就是金钱
Time is Money

李景湖
Li Jinghu

2014.7.26 - 9.14

Exhibition view

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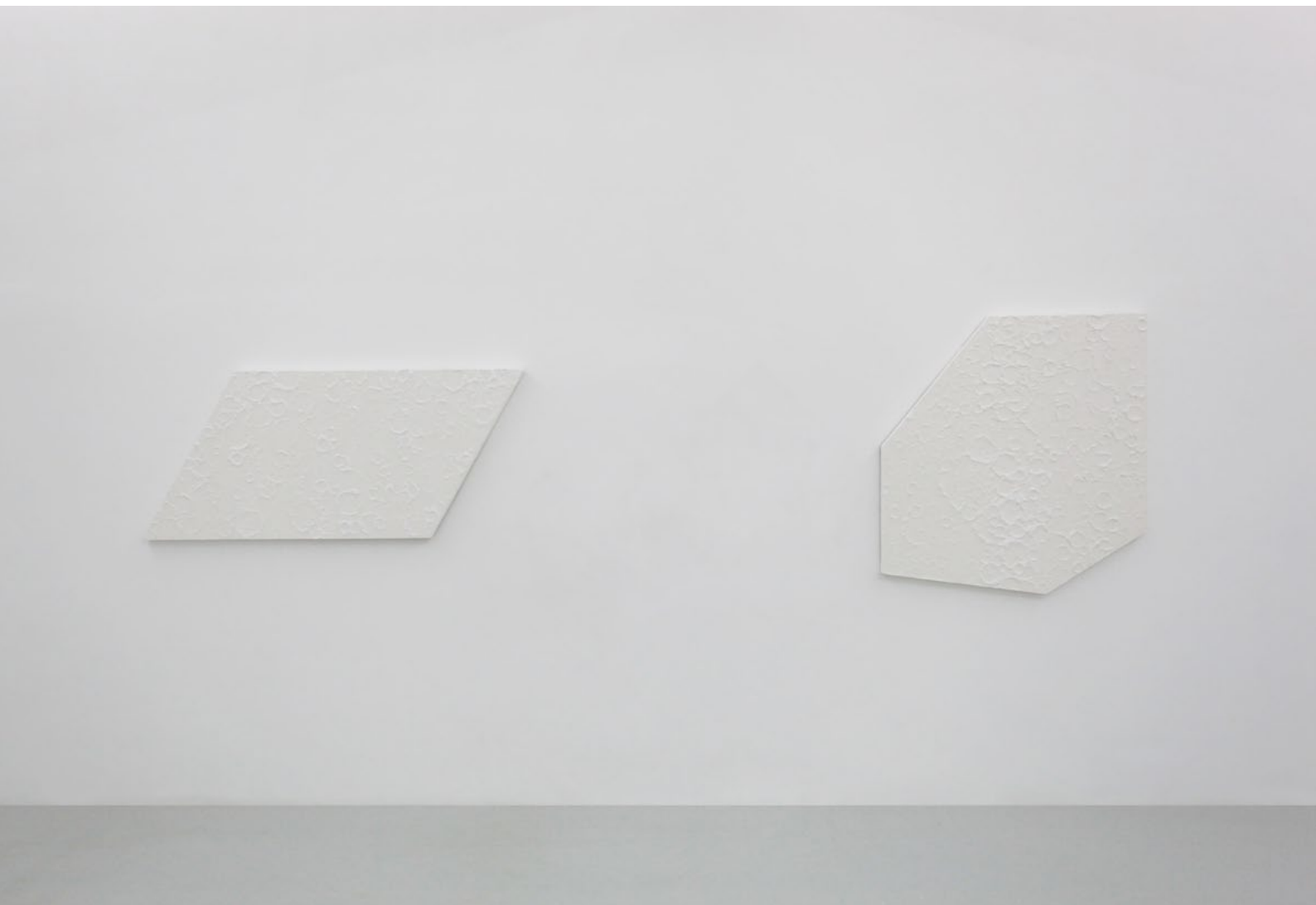
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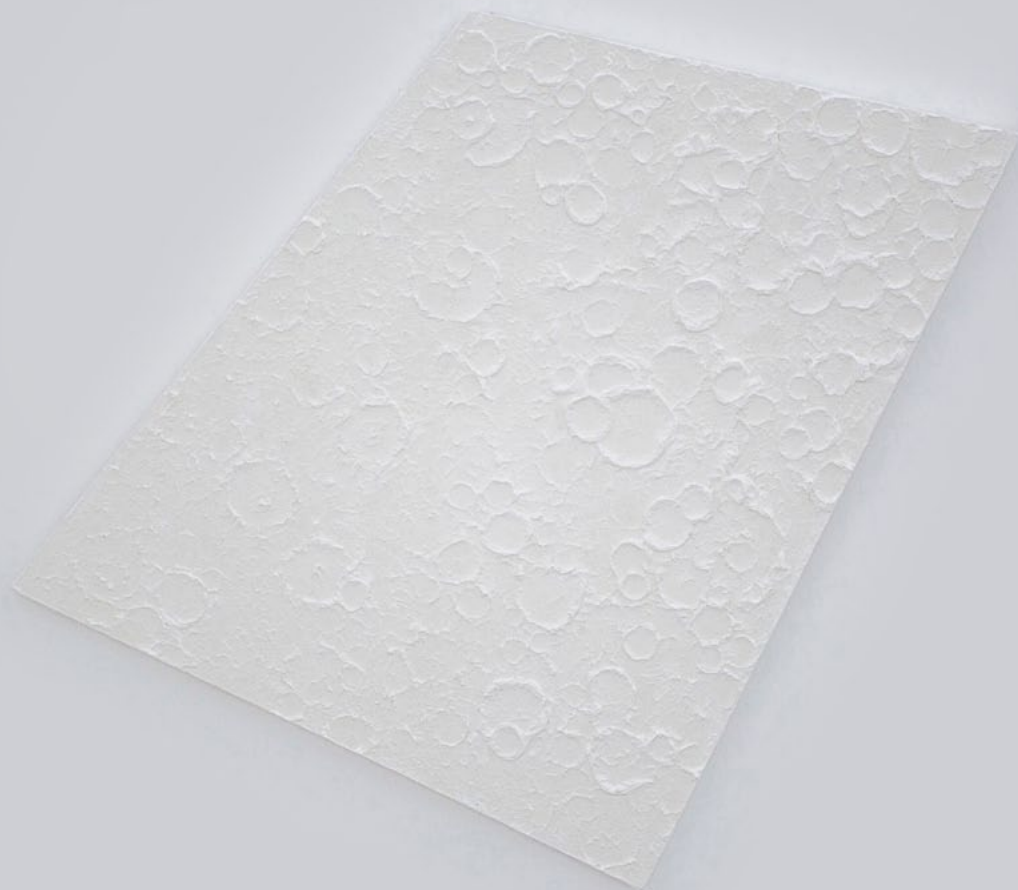
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‘Moonlight’ inhabits the main exhibition hall, marking a new series of wall-based works. As tempo, subject matter, and soundtrack shift through different cadences in the smaller room, ‘Moonlight’ offers a further counterpoint through a fixed sequence 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.

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Moonlight Piece 1

Installation

Mixed media on canvas

120 x 100 cm

2014

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Moonlight Piece 2

Installation

Mixed media on canvas

70 x 120 cm

2014

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Moonlight Piece 3

Installation

Mixed media on canvas

120 x 100 cm

2014

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Moonlight Piece 4

Installation

Mixed media on canvas

160 x 125 cm

2014

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Moonlight Piece 5

Installation

Mixed media on canvas

145 x 205 cm

2014

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Moonlight Piece 5 (Detail)

Installation

Mixed media on canvas

145 x 205 cm

2014

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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.

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Today's Screening

Video Installation

Showreel of found films, rhinestone, projection screen, sound

Dimensions variable

2014

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Today's Screening (Detail)

Video Installation

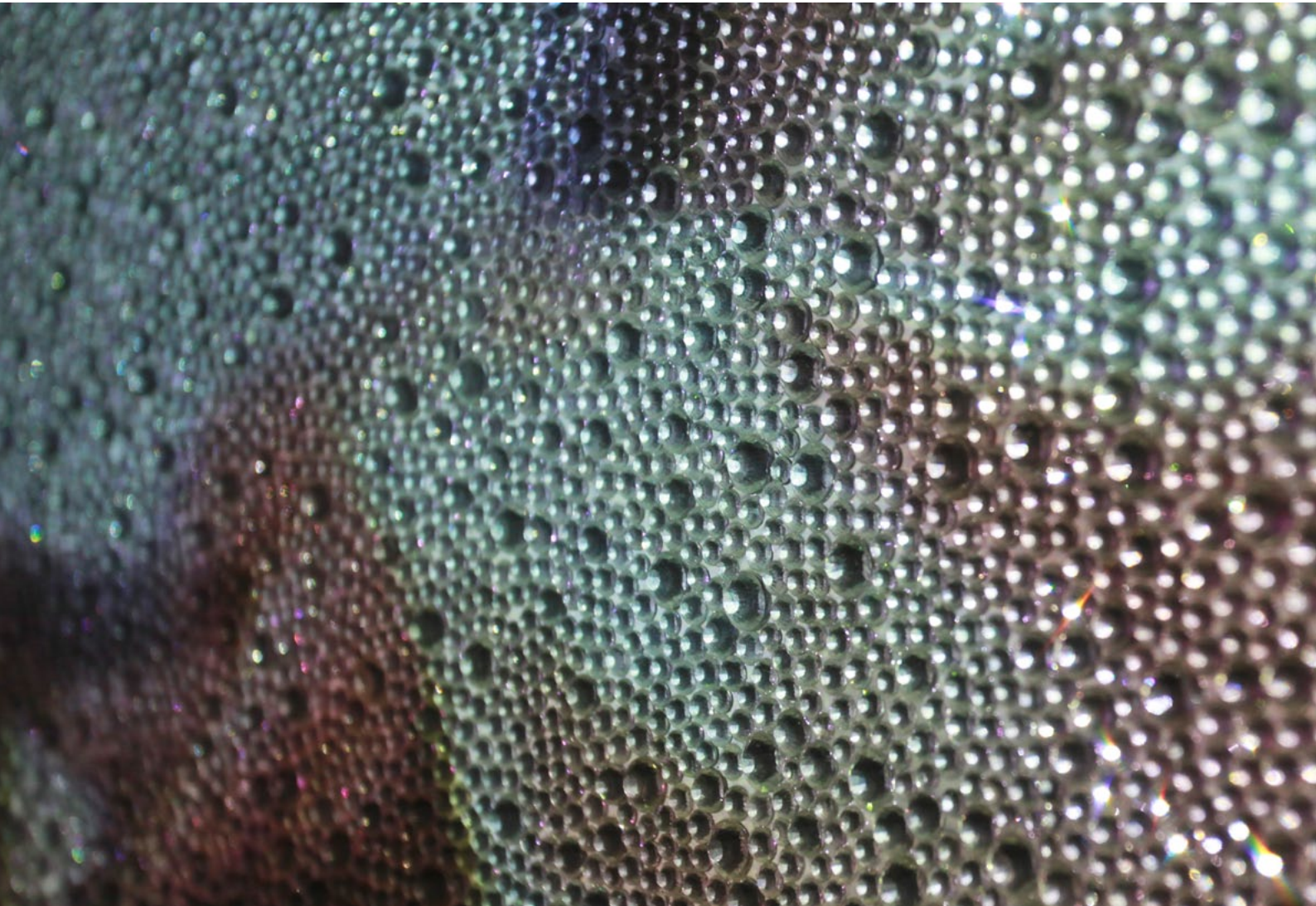
Showreel of found films, rhinestone, projection screen, sound

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Murder

Installation

Stainless steel rubbish bin, knife

100 x 110 cm

2011

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Murder (Detail)

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Murder (Detail)

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Interview with Li Jinghu by Billy Tang

June 2014

B: Can you talk about the era and culture that inspired you to make the work Today' s Screening?

L: 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 you 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 think the idea of 'flavor' embodies a notion very similar to memory in relation to an era' s atmosphere.

B: You amassed a large collection of bootleg copies of films from Hong Kong. What is your relationship to Hong Kong cinema and how did they enter Dongguan?

L: From the mid 80s onwards, there were a lot of factories established along the coastal lines of Guangdong province and were established by foreign investors. At the same time this brought about new work, a new life, and new forms of entertainment culture. In the 80s and throughout the 90s, the Chinese entertainment industry had not really began as common entertainment forms were things like television, film, music, and novels – almost all of this were from either Hong Kong or Taiwan. In the Guangdong region, Hong Kong was perhaps more important and at the time a lot of these factories were established to attract workers from across the country. After the factory work, they needed some entertainment activities, so there were cheap and affordable options that made the most of this situation: video halls, ice skating rings, discos – the 'One Kuai' entries for video halls were the first choice for many. This meant many of the streets surrounding the factories were lined with numerous video halls, both big and small. Looking back at this time, entertainment such as these video halls was absolutely vital – they provided the fundamentals for a favorable spirit suited to the type of 'idea worker' required for capitalist production. These workers were from the countryside and had to straightaway work within the capitalist system, which of course they were not immediately adapted for. But with these forms of capitalist entertainment and films from Hong Kong – things brimming with money, desire, speed, stimulation, and adventures, these experiences certainly enabled the workers to reestablish their own system of values.

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B: Can you talk a little about the selection process when choosing the films to project?

L: The standard used to select these films is that they have to be produced by Hong Kong Cinema during this time period. I first looked at the traditional audio video shops to collect the DVDs from this era, but found they were very difficult to get by. Eventually the small markets near the factories turned out to practically have all of the Hong Kong genres of films from this era – the kinds haphazardly manufactured, often with very crude content, and precisely the ones popular in the video halls during this time. While there are now far less video halls today than before, the market places selling them still exist in these areas. One explanation for this is that perhaps many of the workers are still very fond of these films. So really it isn't me who does any selecting at all – its simply just there.

B: Also you have begun to work with sound in this work. It is going to be more of an immersive experience for viewers when they enter the room – does this mean there will be a different approach?

L: 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.

B: Films work like a depository of different moods, each moving to a different rhythm and pace – and as you mentioned it is strongly connected with the role of memory too.

L: That's right. All the elements are there, but it's also not the most significant issue. 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'.

B: I am interested to know what your relationship to painting is in terms of your work as an artist.

L: I see Moonlight like an installation and it just so happened that I could not find material more suitable or adequate for the idea than oil paint on canvas. So that is why I used these specific materials, which happen to have a particular significance in relation to painting. But I am really not only thinking of issues confined to just painting, I am also using an industrial air gun rather than a brush – so its not really appropriate to talk of its meaning exclusively as a painting.

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B: So lets talking about the two contrasting elements in the work: there are the geometric variations to the canvas stretcher and a consistent surface is applied to each canvas, which mimics the texture and visual elements of the moon. What was the starting point for this idea?

L: When I was 7 or 8 years old, I woke up one night in the evening. There was stillness all around and a beam of moonlight suddenly appeared, coming from the old courtyard, onto the head of the bed – it was then that I suddenly had this really strange profound question, why am I me? Why am I in this body? Finally I came up with the answer that heaven had sent me down to experience this world, I suddenly felt that the moon and myself were both divine entities. This was an early and very profound first experience I had looking at the moon. Throughout my youth, I always had a spiritual connection to the moon. It can move through the gaps of tree leaves to shimmer on the floor, helping you to see things faraway like the wind blowing on grass. The moonlight helps me not to be too conscious towards feelings of loneliness. But following urbanization, the moonlight has changed into another appearance: changing into a linear, more motionless shape as it goes through the gaps of buildings. By the time the moonlight enters from the window, there is already none of the glimmer around the edges – likewise there is no life to it either. Sometimes if I wake up in the lonely night, there is just light through the window to accompany you, it' s like an mute old friend and one who quietly just lies there, silently feeling all your emotions. I think that the majority of workers have this feeling too – this one window of moonlight is probably the only friend they can talk to. The moonlight embodies homesickness, yearning, loneliness, aspiration, and dreams, as well as other intangible sentiments. As you grow older, you realize there are also craters and ridges on the moon surface – I see it as the living skin of the moon. Every ray of moonlight is really a part of its living body. The ray of moonlight resting next to me isn' t simply one flat surface, but rather like breath, an extension of this unique entity. For me, I felt that only oil painting would be adequate enough to express the grandeur and purity of the moon.

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Li Jinghu Biography

1972 Born in Dongguan , Guangdong Province

1996 Graduated from South China Normal University , Fine Arts Department

Now settle down in Chang'an , Guangdong Province

Solo Exhibitions

- 2014 *Time is Money*, Magician Space, China
Efficiency is Life, Magician Space, China
- 2011 *gie*, Yangtze River Space, Wuhan , China
Snowman, Arrow Factory, Beijing, China
- 2009 *Li Jinghu: Forest*, Observation Society, Guangzhou, China
Li Jinghu:One Day in Dongguan, J&Z Gallery, Shenzhen, China
- 2006 *No Problem*, Shenzhen Sculptureacademy , Shenzhen , China

Group Exhibitions

- 2014 *The 8th Shenzhen Sculpture Biennale 2014*, Shenzhen, China
Positive Space, Times Museum, Guangzhou, CN
- 2013 *Countryside Poetic*, Gland, Beijing, China
PAINT(erly), BANK, Shanghai, China
The 14th OPEN international performance art festival , Space Station, Beijing, China
ON | OFF: China' s Young Artists in Concept and Practice, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), Beijing, CN
- 2012 *Daily of concept: A Practice of Life – The 15th Shanghai Duolun youth Art Exhibition*, Duolun Museum of Modern Art, Shanghai, China
What is it about the end of the world that makes it so appealing?, V-ART CENDER, Shanghai, China
Pulse Reaction – An Exchange Project on Art Practice, Times Museum, Guangzhou, China
- 2011 *Smile*, Hemuse Gallery, Beijing, China
Something Will Inevitably Happen, K11 Art Village, Wuhan, China
Exhibition, Taikang Space, Beijing , China
The Border Show, Society for Experimental Cultural Production, Hong Kong

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- 2010 *THE THIRD PARTY – An Exhibition in Three Acts*, Platform China Space B, Beijing, China
1st Nanjing Biennale, Jiangsu Art Museum, Nanjing, China
Arrow Factory: Collection Highlights, Arrow Factory, Beijing, China
2010 Get It Louder, Beijing Venue | Sanlitun SOHO, Shanghai Venue | 800show, China
- 2009 *Work-in-Progress: How Do Artists Work*, Iberia Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China
- 2008 *Out Of Love*, Soka Art Center, Beijing, China
Homesickness, T Space, Beijing, China
- 2006 *In and Out*, Shenzhen Sculpture Academy, Shenzhen, China
Dream a little dream, Para/Site Art Space, Hong Kong
- 2004 *Special Visual Zone*, Shenzhen Youth Experimental Art Exhibition, Shenzhen Art Museum, Shenzhen, China