

Liu Zhan

The Mysteries of Animal Reproduction

18 November to 31 December 2017

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魔金石空間
MAGICIAN SPACE

The gallery is also very pleased to present a new site-specific work by Beijing-based artist Liu Zhan. A founding member of the art collective UNMASK, the exhibition is his first project as a solo artist and incorporates video, printed material, found objects, and sculpture together into a site-specific installation.

After discovering a vast number of bootleg artworks related to UNMASK, Liu has initiated a project investigating the wider mechanics of legal, social, technological and commercial processes, which together define the labor of an artist working today. Examining the role of artist subjectivity in relation to these dynamics, he follows a trail of encounters leading beyond the confines of the contemporary art world and into a parallel, more complex reality of informal shanzhai economies. The *Mysteries of Animal Reproduction* eschews a moralistic position to the copies. He instead looks to unravel a network of relations so dispersed that they transcend beyond the autonomy of a given object, and that has expanded into a system so vast that it is impossible to comprehend in its entirety. Trained as a sculptor, Liu employs different skills in order to rationalize and forge his own way of connecting back to the original artwork he was once author to. The artwork has since undertaken a long detour, proliferating into multiple versions beyond his control, and the artist observes how these newly augmented sculptures thrive within an ecology of ad-hoc indigenous vendors, flexible factory work floors, mail-to-order production lines and speculative enterprises that span multiple geographies.

The exhibition alludes to a wider continuum of a history of art filled with works of questionable provenance, infringements of intellectual property, which happen within an economy of appropriation. The components of his original sculpture have evolved through the reverse engineering of others - echoing the dynamic of natural selection - their formal qualities have been overridden by adaptations determined by questions of efficiency, automation, craftsmanship and commercial survival. Liu has followed the elliptical journey of this sculpture, coming back full-circle to the original site of its first exhibition appearance, returning with a newly mutated body and displayed inside of a vitrine. A video and newspaper give insight to online conversations that position the artist directly in relationship with his counterfeiters, using a loop interspersed with footage from animal documentaries and other content. Displayed on the floor, Liu channels his experiences, creating a new sculpture controlled by a set of intuitive responses to the shanzhai object. Facing an endemic phenomenon that expands far beyond the intentions of the artist, the new sculpture is an attempt to reclaim something back. Rather than forcing redundancy onto the artist, the installation proposes a series of counter-methods to the audience.

Liu Zhan (b.1976, Luoyang) currently lives and works in Beijing. He graduated from Sculpture Department, China Central Academy of Fine Arts in 2002.



The Mysteries of Animal Reproduction, 2017

Mixed media installation, video, found object, vitrine, sculpture, printed newspaper, notarial certificate, dimensions variable

The Mysteries of Animal Reproduction

2017

Mixed media installation

Video, found object, vitrine, sculpture, printed
newspaper, notarial certificate

Dimensions variable





The Mysteries of Animal Reproduction, 2017 (detail)



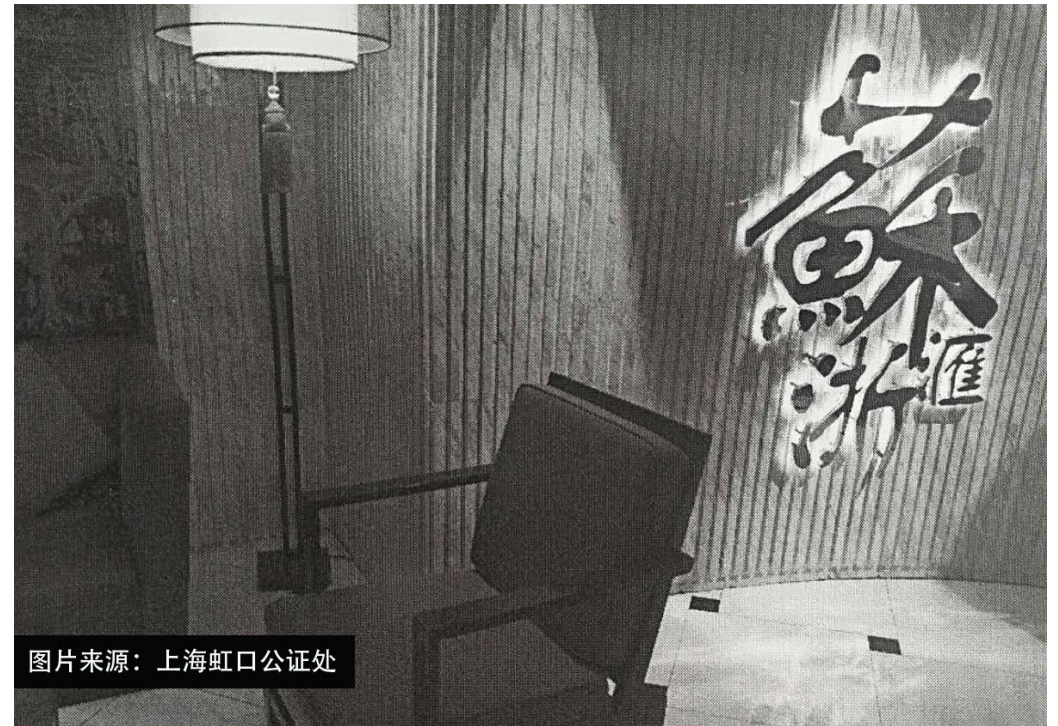
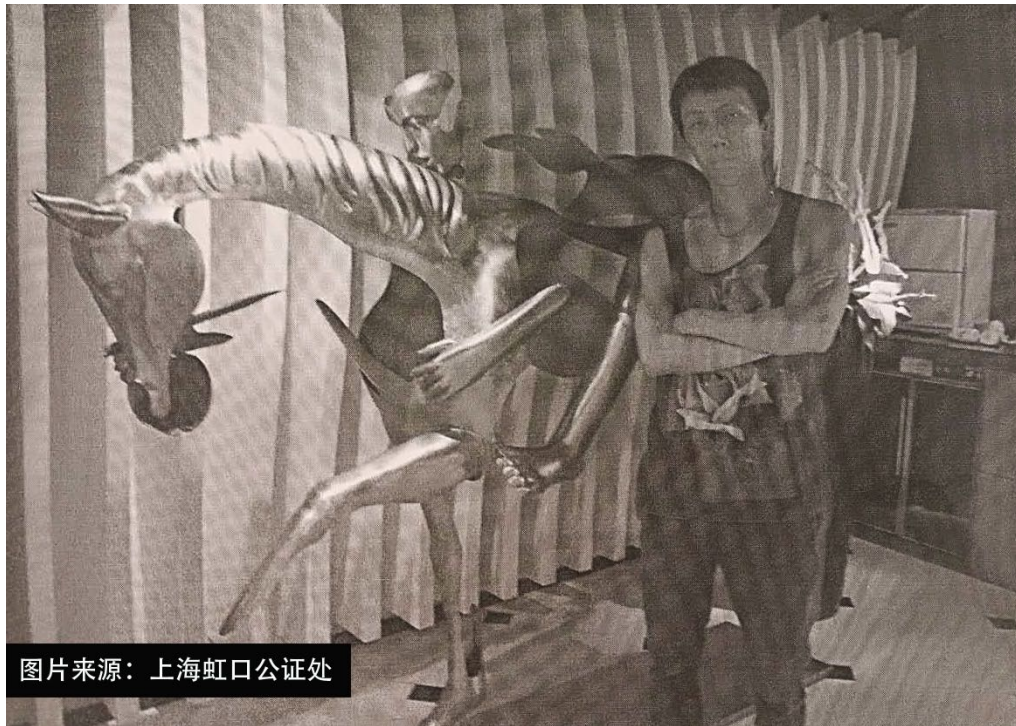
The Mysteries of Animal Reproduction, 2017 (detail)





The Mysteries of Animal Reproduction, 2017

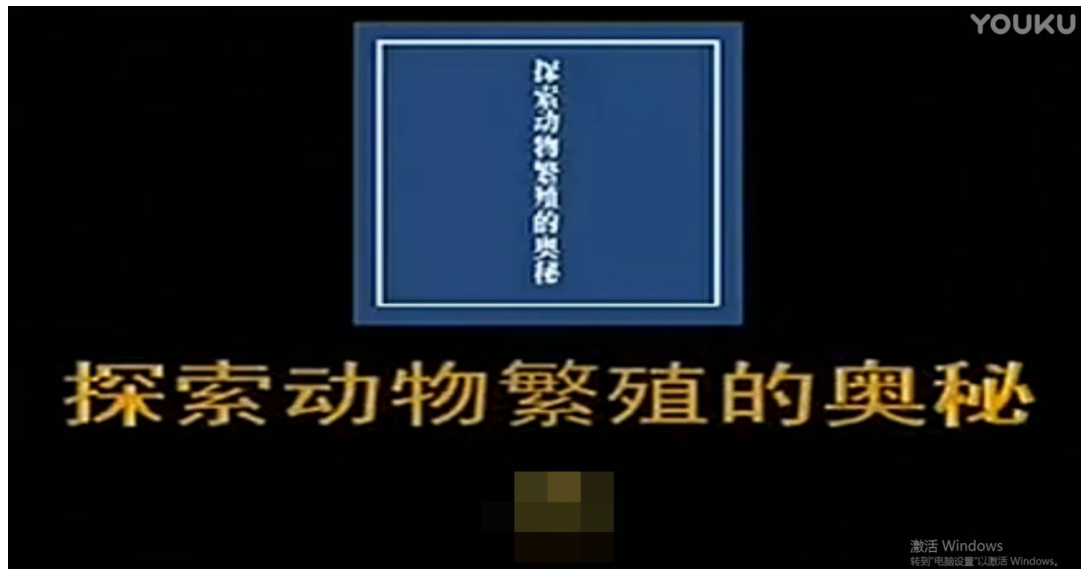
Mixed media installation, video, found object, vitrine, sculpture, printed newspaper, notarial certificate, dimensions variable



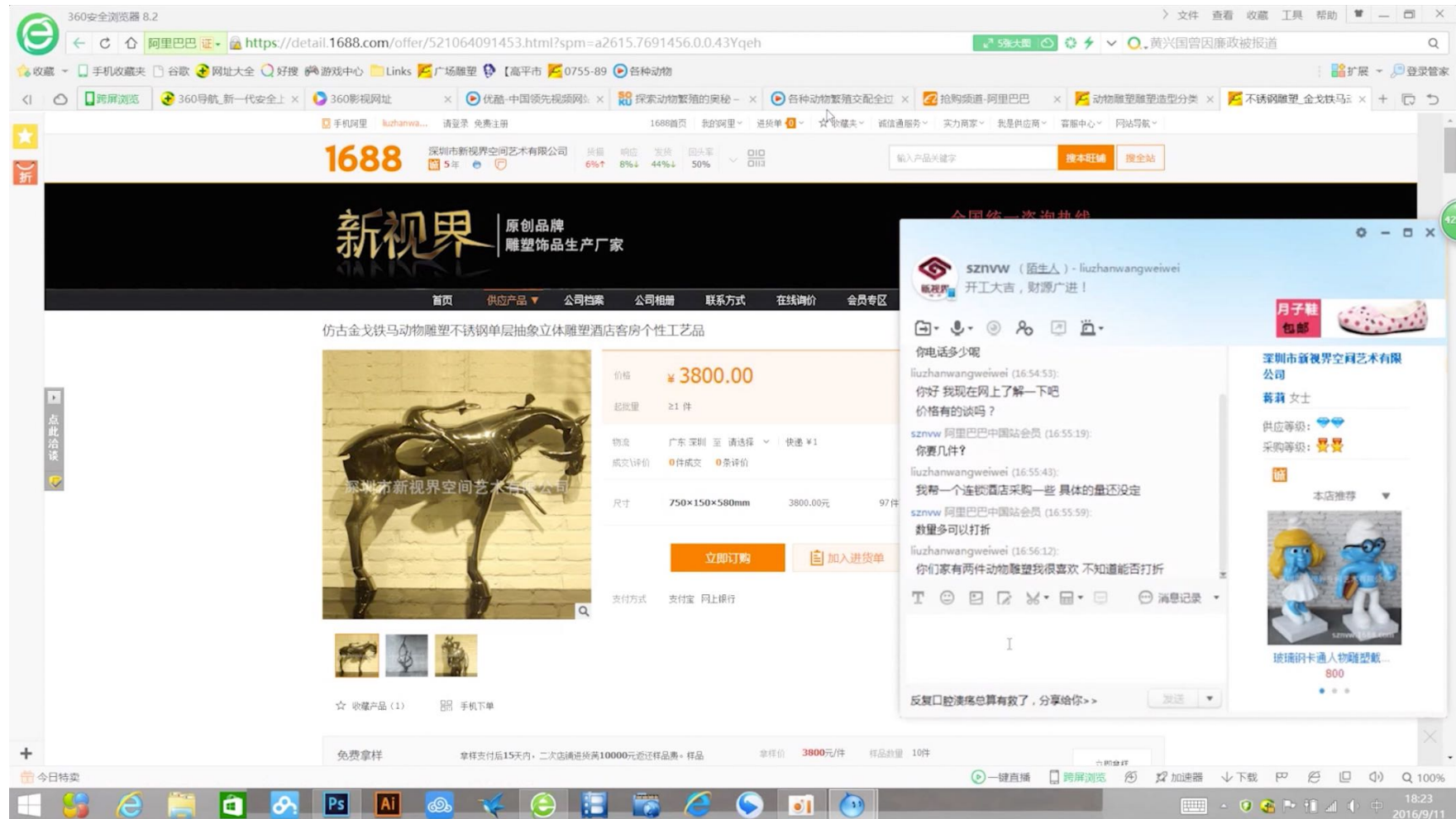
The Mysteries of Animal Reproduction, 2017 (detail)



The Mysteries of Animal Reproduction, 2017, screenshot



The Mysteries of Animal Reproduction, 2017 , screenshot



The Mysteries of Animal Reproduction, 2017, screenshot



The Mysteries of Animal Reproduction, 2017 (detail)



The Mysteries of Animal Reproduction, 2017 (detail)



The Mysteries of Animal Reproduction, 2017 (detail)



The Mysteries of Animal Reproduction, 2017

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