

对角线

DIAGONAL

2020.07.04-08.15

Curator: Leo Li Chen

Artists: Avita Jinhong Guo, Lau Wai, Ho Rui An, Zhangbolong Liu, Ming Wong, Wuji Ye, Yu Cheng-Ta, Yu Guo

Identity politics seems to have become a highly conceptualized and abstract issue. Regardless of our detailed storytelling, emotional revelations, or investigate, embrace, or even abandon the marks on our bodies without reservations, we'd be nevertheless unable to circumvent from subjective categorization or otherness. We tirelessly answer the questions of "Who are you?" "Where are you from?" but people are rarely interested in asking, "Where are you headed?"

To the extent of, we are immersed in the effectiveness of such annotations and began to perform them. This continuously enhanced performance is one's claim of identity, which by no means alleviates one's anxiety about it. Moreover, in a moment of crisis externally, such coordinates established under relative frameworks may seem fragile. Without an objective reference, the subject is compelled to break away from the universal for new ways of identification.

Nation, ethnicity, border, gender, and generation are some of the vocabularies that haunt the individual. Once we resort to language, their distinctive dichotomies inescapably point us to the embodiments of otherness. The video works present in "Diagonal" reveal a degree of self-exposure: how does the notion of Asia shaped and expanded through individual interactions; the various types absurdities invoked in everyday life within the context of otherness in both the East and West; the different types of alienation of the queer body in traditional and popular culture; the border, to an individual, is the center.

These listed frameworks are not conceived to set an enclosed limit but reveal an overlapping resonance. More importantly, the so-called subject matter languages fail to iterate address the artist's most earnest lived experiences, extracted from their respective living environments, and thereby translated into general and universal interrogations. The performativity of the subject, present or absent, conveyed through the moving image's multifarious languages, braids together the discussion on identity politics and self-claim. The works on view encompass a variety of positions, be it historical, geographical, or cross-cultural, which address the collapse of individual circumstances, and the desire to reclaimed despite being in a deviated unstable and displaced gap.

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AVITA JINHONG GUO



这完全封闭的,自我循环的,即使是愤怒和悲伤都依然只能内部存在的场域。
this total closed, self-cycling field, all indignation and sadness could only exist and recycling inside.

Avita Jinhong Guo | *Towards the Darkest Direction of Inner Mind*

2020

HD video, colour, sound, 15'21''



In my latest video installation *Towards the Darkest Direction of Inner Mind*, I use the stories of last generation to establish some 'forgotten fragments' of personal memory (and those unspeakable stories). These memories came from my family's old photographs which I found is the only way to re-connect my blur memories. I tried to visit those spots that appear in the pictures and found they are all disappeared through the gentrification and development, just as the same as every Chinese city. Thus the only clue in those pictures is disappeared as well. From then, I felt that my body fell into some kind of emptiness which cannot be described by words. Therefore, I decided not to follow the anthropological methodology to do the research, but to start the poetic texts, and slowly develop the narrative from the crack of memories.

Even these fragments are cracked and unconnected, I still could be able to find and organized a serial logic: following the scene of road trip from Xining to Golmud, we are going deep down into the frog. Just as the same as the process of falling into a dream, a full-long shot makes a period of unproved personal history starts. For decades, our personal memories were disordered by the 'great era' then reorganized chaotically, every individual's life is indescribable in a single-liner narrative. For the instinct of a sensitive individual to breath and feel, poems are produced. In the end of the video, I went back to the Qinghai Lake of my dreams, but could find 'peace' even in those portraits of Vajrayana. During the short revisit of the town where I was born, obviously I haven't got the confidence and willpower for deep research except collected some romantic abstraction. All in all, I see this video installation and the following paintings as a shallow summary of my 'childhood', and for sure it has to be the beginning of a narrative, therefore, I use the phenomenological methodology to analyze some of our unpopular personal elegies.

About the Artist | Avita Jinhong Guo

Avita Jinhong Guo was born in 1988 in Golmud, Tibetan plateau. Grew up in Qinghai and Russia. She received her BA degree of Oil Painting Department in Ilya Repin State Academic of Fine Arts. In 2012, she was offered scholarship for MA Fine Art degree in University Arts of London, she graduated from Central Saint Martins College of Arts and Design in 2015. In 2017, she paused her Mphi/PhD of Material and Visual Culture of Anthropology in University College of London. She was one of the chef-editors in feminism magazine *HYSTERIA* from 2015 to 2017, meanwhile she established the performance research group 'White Torture' with performance artist Bjork Grue Lidin and active often in east London underground art scene. In 2017 and 2018, she had experimental personal projects showed in 305 Space.

Her current works pay attention on the collapse in between personal inner land and realistic political society, the changes of the political filed and personal position in the modernity at large, the changes of the poetic moments in between inner mind and outer cracks. From 2019, she started to re-paint again and trying to explore the relationship between painting and her formal video installation experiments.

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LAU WAI



Lau Wai | *I am invincible...on the screen/False motion tracking*

2019/2020

2 channel video, colour, sound, 3'13"



The screen on the left consists of still images extracted from eleven Hollywood movies and American TV series produced from the late 1930s to the late 1980s, in which they centered around the portrayals of characters with Chinese descent, also including stories being filmed in Hong Kong. I use a mobile application that has synthetic media technology to convert the characters from the still images and rewrite their lines.

The screen on the right is a character which I perform, named as the 'Pre-CGI body'. The body which has dressed in a tight suit with a lot of motion tracking data points attached is widely seen in the pre-productions of commercials and movies where their actions and performances are used as a 'material' for post-production to generate computer graphics or 3D animations on top of them. In spite of that, this 'Pre-CGI body' I perform in the video is attached with fake tracking data points which do not function as it might suggest. This video was filmed after the one on the left was made. The body is re-enacting what has been created on the screen at the left, and they are not altering the characters on the other screen as it might appear to be from the setting.

About the Artist | Lau Wai

Lau Wai was born in 1982 in Hong Kong, Wai currently lives and works in New York and Hong Kong. Her work utilizes photography, video, drawing and installation exploring the multilateral constructions of identity in relation to race, gender and the notion of belonging. She attempts to investigate how history, fiction, personal memory and virtuality collided in the process of identity formation through personal and historical archives, cinematic imagery, popular culture and digital media.

Her works are in the permanent collections at M+ (Hong Kong) and The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (United States). Her works have been exhibited in Europe, Asia and the United States, including Kunstmuseum Brandts (Denmark); Power Station of Art (Shanghai); Para Site (Hong Kong); Tai Kwun Contemporary (Hong Kong); Kuandu Biennale (Taiwan); Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale (Japan) and The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (United States). She is also exhibiting at Yokohama Triennale 2020 (Japan).

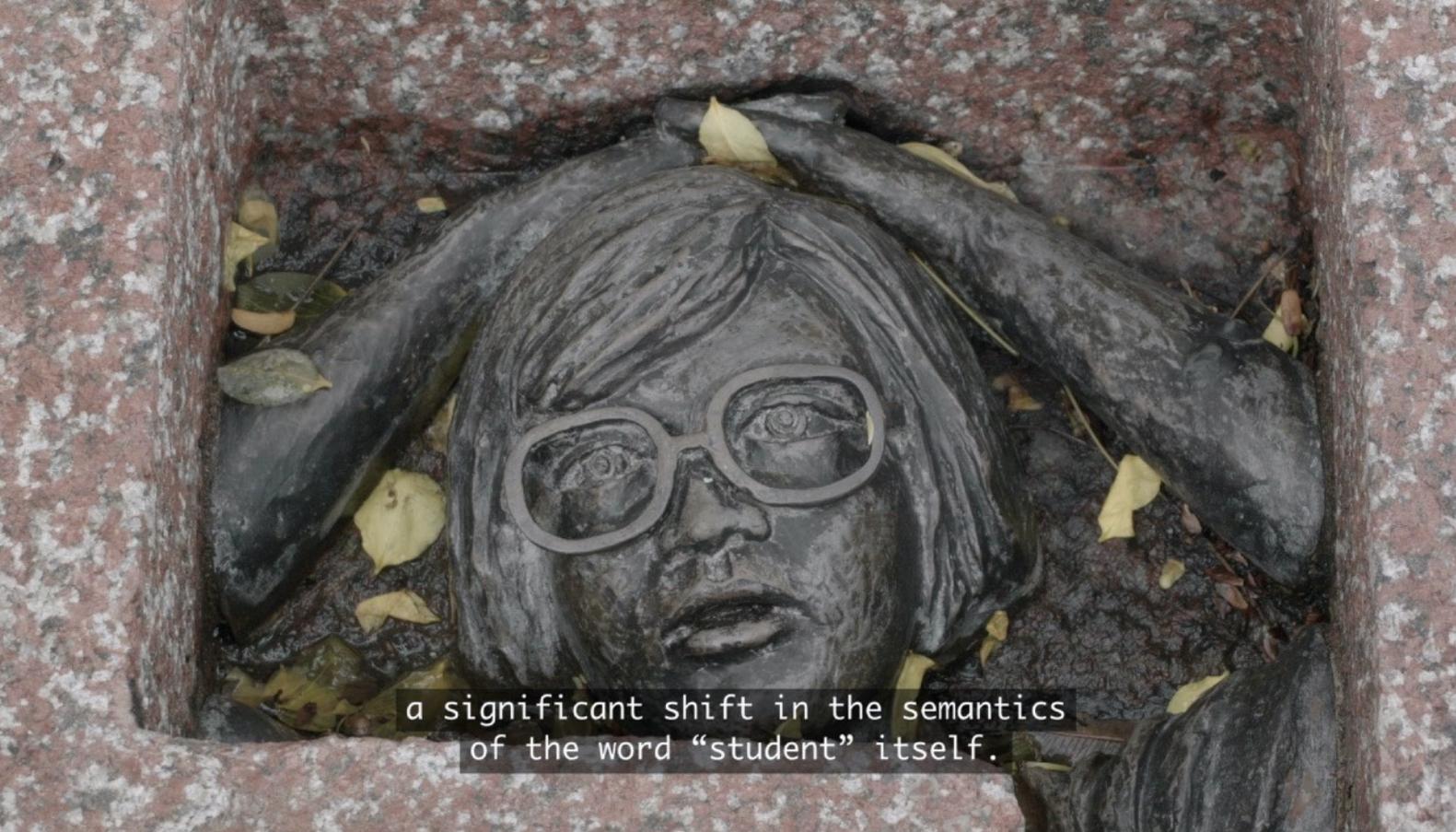
HO RUI AN



Ho Rui An | *Student Bodies*

2019

HD video, sound, 26'30"



a significant shift in the semantics
of the word “student” itself.

Student Bodies is a work of pedagogical horror that approaches the fraught history of capitalist modernity and radical culture in East and Southeast Asia through the figure of the student body. Beginning with the students of Satsuma and Choshu from Bakumatsu-era Japan, who were the first students from the country to study in the West, the work considers the student body as both collective and singular, metaphor and flesh, standing in for the body politic of the region across the successive periods of ‘miraculous’ development, crises and recoveries through to the present day.

The ‘star capitalist pupil’ of the United States, as Chalmers Johnson said of Japan in the postwar period, becomes in the next moment, the dead student protester on the streets, with each reincarnation exploding established analytical frameworks based on class, culture or the nation-state. In the film, such monstrous transformations of the student body through history are given voice by unseen ‘ghosts’ whose utterances are comprehensible only through the subtitles. With each turn of the student body as a carnal signifier, the film attends to the didactic/dialectic rhythms that shape up the student to become both the embodiment of the pedagogical system that produces it and its contradiction.

About the Artist | Ho Rui An

Ho Rui An was born in 1990 in Singapore. He is an artist and writer working in the intersections of contemporary art, cinema, performance and theory. Working primarily across the mediums of lecture, essay and film, he probes into the shifting relations between image and power, focusing on the ways by which images are produced, circulate and disappear within contexts of globalism and governance. He has presented projects at the Gwangju Biennale (2018), Jakarta Biennale (2017), Sharjah Biennial (2017), Kochi-Muziris Biennale (2014), Haus de Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (2017), Jorge B. Vargas Museum and Filipiniana Research Center, Manila (2017), NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore (2017) and Para Site, Hong Kong (2015). In 2018, he was a fellow of the DAAD Berliner Künstlerprogramm. He lives and works in Singapore and Berlin.

Public Collections: Centre national des arts plastiques, France; Kadist, France and USA; Singapore Art Museum.

ZHANGBOLONG



View the video

Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/434949472>

Password: magicianspace798

Youku: https://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNDczNTQyNTkwMA==.html

Password: magician202007

Zhangbolong Liu | *Disneyland is too far, come to Shijingshan*

2016 - 2019

Single channel video, HD, colour, sound, 25'

Shijingshan Amusement Park was built in the 1980s as the outcome of the theme park boom in China. This outdated amusement park even chose 'Disneyland is too far, come to Shijingshan Amusement Park' as the campaign, after the third theme park boom in the 2000s. Although it does not have a unified symbolic system like

Disney, this did not affect the tourists' enjoyment. The festive atmosphere created by the collective effect even surpasses the value of the thing itself.

In June 2016, Shanghai Disneyland was completed and opened to the public. For Disneyland, the seamless flow of experience, realistic cartoon characters, and detailed scene design are the key factors that bridge the gap between reality and fiction, which is concealed precisely as well. However, neither the staff nor the tourists are operating in full accordance with Disney's logic. This work focuses on the comparison of Beijing's Shijingshan Amusement Park and Shanghai Disneyland, to record and analyze the local amusement parks and



the crowds under the differences between the East and West ideologies from the perspective of a bystander.

About the Artist | Zhangbolong Liu

Zhangbolong Liu was born in 1989. He graduated from Materials Science and Engineering Department at Tsinghua University, Beijing (BE) in 2012 and Photography, Video and Related Media at School of Visual Arts, New York (MFA) in 2015. He has won Ryan R. Gibbs Award for Photography (Baton Rouge, 2014) and Shiseido Prize (Three Shadows Photography Art Center, Beijing, 2014). Major group exhibitions include: *A Chemical Love Story*, Tang Contemporary Art, Beijing (2017); *40 Years of Chinese Contemporary Photography*, Three Shadows Photography Art Center, Beijing (2017); *La Gaya Scienza*, Taikang Space, Beijing (2016); *A Piece of Paper*, Fou Gallery, New York (2016); *The Absence and Presence of a Cat*, International Studio & Curatorial Program, New York (2015). His curatorial practice includes *The Imagination of a Museum, J: GALLERY*, Shanghai (2018). Currently Liu lives and works in Beijing.

MING WONG & YU CHENG-



Ming Wong and Yu Cheng-Ta | *Watermelon Love*
2017
Single channel video, HD, colour, sound



A collaboration between Taiwanese artist Yu Cheng-Ta and Berlin-based Singaporean artist Ming Wong, where they present their alter egos as the 'Watermelon Sisters', a pair of gender-fluid butch/femme ghetto queer sisters who want to help humankind to 'twerk' their way to sexual liberation. Inspired by Chinese Opera cinema from the 1960s as well as the films of Taiwanese filmmaker Tsai Ming-Liang, this project consists of a rap music video, a photographic series and a live performance and was commissioned to commemorate the first major survey of LGBTQ-themed art in a national museum in Asia, co-presented by Sunpride Foundation and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Taipei in Sept 2017.

View the video

Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/434932804>

Password: magicianspace798



View the video

Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/434940760>

Password: magicianspace798

Ming Wong and Yu Cheng-Ta | *Watermelon Love*

2017

Single channel video, HD, colour, sound

About the Artist | Ming Wong

Ming Wong was born in Singapore in 1971, currently he lives and works in Berlin and Stockholm. His interdisciplinary practice incorporating performance, video and installation unravels ideas of 'authenticity' and the 'other' with reference to the act of human performativity. Through a re-telling of world cinema and re-readings of pop cultural artefacts, Ming's artistic research and practice look into how culture, gender and identity are constructed, reproduced and shaped by the politics of representation.

The work of Ming Wong has been shown in the Asian Art Biennale at the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung, 2019; Times Art Center Berlin, 2019; *Cosmopolis #1.5*, Chengdu, 2018; Busan Biennale, 2018; Dakar Biennale, 2018; Dhaka Art Summit, 2018; Para Site, Hong Kong 2018; SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin, 2018; Centre National de la Danse, Paris, 2018. He has had solo exhibitions at ASAKUSA (2019) in Tokyo; UCCA, Beijing (2015); REDCAT, Los Angeles (2012), etc.

He represented Singapore at the 53rd Venice Biennale in 2009 with the solo presentation *Life of Imitation*, which was awarded a special mention.

About the Artist | Yu Cheng-Ta

Yu Cheng-Ta (b. 1983, Taiwan) earned both an undergraduate and a master's degree in fine arts from the Taipei National University of the Arts. Currently lives and works in Taipei. He often involves verbal communication with the subjects and viewers in a playful manner to create the concept of 'life theatre', that is, deliberately setting up real life situations as the shooting scenes. He was a recipient of the Taipei Arts Award in 2008 and the Beacon Prize at Art Fair Tokyo in 2012. Yu participated in the 6th Taipei Biennial and was featured in the Taiwan Pavilion at the 53rd Venice Biennale. In 2009, he participated in the Biennial Cuvée 08 at OK Center for Contemporary Art in Linz, Austria. In 2012, he took part in the 5th International Biennial of Media Art at Experimenta in Melbourne, Australia, and Le Festival Made in Asia in Toulouse, France. In 2013, Yu held a solo exhibition at the Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, and took part in the Asian Art Biennial at the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, as well as Queens International at Queens Museum in New York. In 2014, he held the solo exhibition *Practicing LIVE* at Taipei Fine Arts Museum and participated in the 10th Shanghai Biennial, the 2nd CAFA Biennial in Beijing, and Asian Art Week at the Asia Society Museum in New York. In 2015, he took part in the 56th Berlin International Film Festival Forum Expanded. In 2016, he exhibited in Gwangju City Museum of Art, and in Centre Pompidou. His film project *Tell Me What You Want* (2015-2017) presented in Centre Pompidou in Paris and Kunsthall Charlottenborg in Copenhagen in 2018. In 2019, he participated Performa Biennial in New York and created the character 'FAMEME'. In 2020, he held a solo exhibition at Gyeonggi Museum of Modern Art in South Korea.



Yu Cheng-Ta explores the cultural phenomenon of “influencers” in Western social media alongside celebrity and food trends in a series of live and filmed performances that appropriate the visual and narrative language of reality television. Developed through the character of FAMEME, a crazy rich Asian farmer drawn to New York City to promote kind of fruits durian - a thorny, odorous, tropical fruit indigenous to Southeast Asia - the project depicts an outsider’s quest for fame and acceptance in American culture. FAMEME’s ambition draws him to the world of social media influencers and influencer events as he attempts to utilize the latest marketing trend and media obsession for his own capitalist needs. The project was commissioned by 2019 Performa Biennial in New York.

Yu Cheng-Ta | *FAMEME – Museum of Durian*
2020
Single channel video, HD, colour, sound



View the video

Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/434602061>

Password: magicianspace798

Youku: https://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNDczNjU1OTc2OA==.html

Password: magician202007

Yu Cheng-Ta | *FAMEME* – Times
Square

2020

Single channel video, HD, colour,
sound

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WUJI YE

View the video



View the video
Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/434964545>
Password: magicianspace798

Youku: https://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNDczNjY2ODY2OA==.html
Password: magician202007

Wuji Ye | *My Friend (Central Asia Journal Phase III), A Case Report*
2017 - 2018
Text, single channel video, colour, sound, 16'18"



In the video *My Friend*, artist recalls and describes one of his best friends Abliz, while dwelling on their friendship. It reveals his obsession with the ethnic, religious and regional culture of Central Asia, as well as the multiple experience of the joy, obstacle and othering that artist encounter when trying to approach these subjects. In fact, Abliz does not exist. This fictional character is the embodiment of the artist's personal interest, research and experience. The work imitates the form of YouTuber: emoji, Instagram and self-report, interweaving the truth with fiction, sincerity and deception, seriousness and entertainment.



A Case Report described 'Abliz' and its related 'reality' seems to be the illusion that 'Artist' gradually came up after researching history, collecting materials and doing field study. For most people, 'Artist' could be Marx in *Mary and Marx*, Russell Crowe in *Beautiful Mind*, Leonardo DiCaprio in *Shutter Island* or even Danny Torrance in *The Shining*. But it took 'Artist' a long time to realise this.



A Case Report is a psychological report which made up by the artist.

The video *My Friend* and the case report are part of the project *Central Asia Journal* by Wuji Ye, which makes up by three relatively independent but interrelated videos and a case report.

About the Artist | Wuji Ye

Wuji Ye was born in Wuhan in 1991. After graduated from Department of Oil Painting of Sichuan Fine Arts Institute with a BA in 2014, he went to Goldsmiths, University of London and got an MFA in 2016. Currently he lives and works in Shanghai. Wuji's practice is not bounded to any single medium and use different coping strategies to explore the situations and scenarios that have the potential to transcend and transform itself, which can be considered as a process of negotiation or a glitch that interferes with the mechanism or even trash talks. Wuji is interested in observing the pervasiveness of the myths, narratives and concept on which modern societies are built. By exploring the representation of them and seeking the politics of everyday life. Since 2015, he mainly focused on the north and south of the Tianshan Mountain, Central Asia and the vast Eurasian continent connected with.

Partly of Wuji's works have been exhibited in Yell Space, Chongqing, CN (2019); Arti et Amicitiae, Amsterdam, NL (2017); Kingsgate Project Space, London, UK (2016); National Gallery, Prague, CZE (2016); OCAT, Shenzhen, CN (2014). He received the honorary mentions of the jury, Start Point Prize in 2016.

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YU GUO



Yu Guo | *Long-focus Videographer*
2017
Single audio digital video, colour, 11'

View the video
Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/434957311>
Password: magicianspace798

Youku: : https://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNDczNjMwMDI3Ng==.html
Password: magician202007



The work was shot in Chongqing where Yu Guo lives. The artist utilises a camera with 8000mm digital zoom to capture the farthest objects that lens could reach. Because of the refraction of air and the limit of distance, the images that taken from kilometres away becomes blurred. Yu Guo continually adjusts the focal length in the process of shooting. Then, these unclear and ambiguous objects are inserted into the original or different video clips by re-editing or a collaging way. Through the misplacement of vision and the transformation of context, the original information and reference split in the images. Yu Guo attempts to interrogate the physical distance between himself and object, the relationship between subject and object in the video, and then re-examine the individual relationship and psychological distance in real life.

About the Artist | Yu Guo

Yu Guo was born in Tongjiang, Sichuan in 1983, he graduated from Department of Oil Painting of Sichuan Fine Arts Institute in 2016, currently lives and works in Chongqing. Yu Guo's art practice involves painting, video and writing. Base on the space practice, Yu Guo emphasizes the combination of body and media materials to keep the minutes of the creation process. Recently his works focused on the interweaving of images with texts, as well as the interplay between visible and invisible of social fact. He also participates in various joint projects. Yu Guo is a member of the Chongqing Work Institute.

His major group exhibitions include: *A Geography of Resistance*, Taikang Space, Beijing, CN (2019); *Cosmopolis #2*, Centre Pompidou, Paris, FR (2019); *Here We Live*, KADIST, San Francisco, US (2019); *Cosmopolis #1.5: Enlarged Intelligence*, Chengdu, CN (2018); *Hinterland Project*, Times Museum, Guangzhou, CN (2015); *Approach to Realities*, Kunstraum Landeshauptstadt Dusseldorf, Dusseldorf, GER (2014).

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