



Ullens Center for
Contemporary Art
尤伦斯当代艺术中心

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Exhibition Dates:

19 March 2017 –
9 July 2017

Exhibition Venues:

Great Hall, Central Gallery, Nave, and Long
Gallery

Press material also available for
download from the UCCA website

**The New Normal
China, Art, and 2017**

Released on 18 March 2017

The Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) is proud to present “The New Normal: China, Art, and 2017,” a large-scale exhibition running from **19 March to 9 July 2017** with **new and recent works by 23 artists and groups from China and beyond**. Held in the Great Hall, Central Gallery, Long Gallery, and Nave, “The New Normal” takes **China’s evolving national condition vis-à-vis the rising backlash against globalization** on other continents as a point of departure, interrogating the efficacy of art—as a medium for both expression and action—in **responding to a fragile and unpredictable present**. Continuing UCCA’s ongoing commitment to emerging artists as well as its practice of **mounting a center-wide survey of recent developments once every four years**, first with “Breaking Forecast: 8 Key Figures of China’s New Generation of Artists” in 2009 and followed by “ON | OFF: China’s Young Artists in Concept and Practice” in 2013, “The New Normal” explores the state of art today against the backdrop of the unprecedented social realities of 2017. The exhibition is organized by UCCA curators Guo Xi, Yang Zi, Alvin Li, and Wenfei Wang working with UCCA Director Philip Tinari.

Coined by Carl Schmitt and expanded by Giorgio Agamben, a “state of exception”—the exhibition’s Chinese title—refers to a political situation in which the normal laws and regulations of a society are abruptly suspended, replaced by temporary conditions that in turn become a new status quo. States of exception have been imposed at moments of crisis throughout modern history. Crisis today is constant, as ideals of freedom, equality, and openness, once held by some as universal values, give way to mass shootings, aborted ceasefires, violated norms, and tainted elections. In 2015, the Chinese leadership introduced “the new normal,” a way of talking about economic growth rates that, while lower than during the exuberant years of the early 2000s, continue to trump those of most other major economies. China’s assertively capitalist, internationalist response to these increasingly acute dynamics—recently typified by President Xi Jinping’s address to the World Economic Forum in Davos—might also be considered a “state of exception,” one that runs parallel to the new patterns of globalization that inform artistic cosmopolitanism today.

Designed by the multidisciplinary firm Li Hu/OPEN Architecture, the exhibition’s layout gives each artist a discrete room to present his or her works. The space outside these pavilions is dimmed, echoing the (often ominous) topics explored. A linear pathway determined by the works’ narrative cues traces a temporal progression of historicized forms, present conditions, and speculative futures, with the year 2017 as the ineluctable, implicit core throughout. The underlying proposition of this format—a constellation of diverse, engaged practices presented independently, but always in dialogue—is the possibility that these various



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geographic and temporal nodes might converge into a single, holistic state of exception, through which audiences can consider their social, geopolitical, and ideological milieux.

During the exhibition, the UCCA Nave will transform into the Pavilion of Exception, a public space and reading room with an expansive collection of books selected by the exhibition curators, participating artists, and collaborating scholars. Artists, writers, and researchers will contribute to a rich slate of public programs around themes of technology, political economy, and literature, among others. These programs take the varied forms of lecture performances, conversations, workshops, screenings, talks, music and dance performances, and theatrical stagings, giving visitors more points of access to engage the ideas that inspired the exhibition and artists.

As UCCA CEO May Xue observes, “‘The New Normal: China, Art, and 2017’ marks the beginning of UCCA’s tenth anniversary year. Surrounding the exhibition’s curatorial concept, and working with the Center’s social mission in mind, UCCA has developed a wide range of promotions, docent-led tours, members’ programs, public programs, children’s educational programs, merchandise, and publications in order to present this project to the widest possible public. The aim here, as in all UCCA programming, is to promote the development of contemporary culture, presenting an inclusive, cosmopolitan vision of China in the world at a time of sweeping transformation. ‘The New Normal’ has been made possible with support from across society, an affirmation of the Center’s exhibition program and operational model throughout the past decade. We would like to take this opportunity to offer deepest gratitude to founders Guy and Myriam Ullens, UCCA staff, patrons, sponsors, partners, and all who have made outstanding contributions to the realization of this exhibition.”

The participating artists are Chen Chenchen, Cui Jie, Gao Lei, Guo Xi, Lawrence Lek, Li Jingxiong, Li Qi, Liang Ban, Liao Fei, Amy Lien & Enzo Camacho, Liu Yefu, Ma Jianfeng, Ma Haijiao, Sophia Al-Maria, Miao Ying, Max Hooper Schneider, Shen Xin, Wu Tsang, Wang Guangxu, Lantian Xie, Yao Qingmei, Zhang Ruyi, and Zhu Changquan.

About the Exhibition

“The New Normal” is organized by UCCA curators Guo Xi, Yang Zi, Alvin Li, and Wenfei Wang working with UCCA Director Philip Tinari. Li Hu/OPEN Architecture are the exhibition architects.

The exhibition has been made possible with the lighting technology support of Hongri Lighting. Exclusive audio support is provided by GENELEC. Shanghai HeLu Culture Communication Co., Ltd. is the new media art production partner. The exhibition is generously supported by Richard and Michelle Jeschelnig, Linyao Kiki Liu, and the Zeng Fanzhi Foundation for Art and Education. Special support comes from Towering Capital



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(toweringcapital.cn) and Zhao Xu. YT CREATIVE MEDIA is the lead media partner. Exhibition-related public programs are sponsored by West Bund Art & Design. Cc Foundation is the publication sponsor. Artist project sponsorship comes from ARTCARE. Li Huina provided sponsorship for the educational programs. Exhibition-related merchandise sponsorship comes from YIYO. The exhibition is supported by United Art Consultancy, Vanguard Gallery, Madeln Gallery, Don Gallery, Magician Space, LEO XU PROJECTS, White Space Beijing, PIFO Gallery, HDM Gallery, de Sarthe Gallery, and Zhang Yuling & Tim Crowley. Insurance support comes from AXA Art Insurance. Airfare is supported by Wokee and Hi Guides. JMGO provided support for video equipment. Headphone support comes from Sudio AB. Hotel support comes from Tangram Beijing Yan Xiang Hotel. The exhibition opening events partners are Château la Commanderie Pomerol, Maison FLO Beijing & FLO Prestige, and Jing-A Brewing Co. Didi Premium is the exclusive transportation partner.

About OPEN Architecture

OPEN Architecture is an international team of architects, designers, and collaborators from a range of different disciplines. Their practice includes urban design, architecture, interior design, and the production of strategies in the context of the new challenges of our time. Founded by Li Hu and Huang Wenjing in New York, OPEN established a Beijing office in 2008. Completed and ongoing projects include the Garden School/Beijing No. 4 High School, Fangshan Campus; Gehua Youth and Cultural Center; Pingshan Performing Arts Center, Shenzhen; and West Bund Oil Tank Art Park, Shanghai. OPEN has been widely recognized for their innovative works. Recent accolades include *Interior Design's* Best of the Year Award, 2016, winner; London Design Museum's Design of the Year, 2015, nomination; World Architecture Awards for Chinese Architecture, 2014, winner; China Architecture Media Awards, 2012, winner; as well as invitations to participate in international exhibitions such as the inaugural Chicago Architecture Biennial, 2015; and the Venice Biennale, 2014.

About the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art

Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) is the international institution at the heart of Beijing's 798 Art District. Each year it presents a wide range of exhibitions and educational programs, highlighting artists from China and beyond, and encouraging the public to engage with contemporary art and culture. Opened in 2007, UCCA is a non-profit, non-collecting, non-governmental museum sustained by the generosity of numerous patrons, sponsors, members, and visitors, beginning with founders Guy and Myriam Ullens. In everything it does, UCCA aims to elaborate an inclusive, cosmopolitan vision of China in the world.

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Notes to Editors

The following texts introduce the participating artists and their work, as well as the five curators.

Chen Chenchen

Chen Chenchen (b. 1987, Zhejiang province) received a bachelor's degree from the China Academy of Art in 2010 and an MFA from the Academy's Total Art Studio in 2013. Spanning video, theater, painting, installation, performance, and music, Chen's practice is grounded in the artist's conceptual framework of "poor sci-fi" and "successology." His solo exhibitions include "Teaching and Learning" (Art Museum of Nanjing University of the Arts, and Sanshang Art, Hangzhou, 2014) and "Zoology" (Inna Contemporary Art Space, Hangzhou, 2013). Group exhibitions include "Sub-freedom #1 Sage Times" (Power Station of Art, Shanghai, 2015-2016). He was selected to participate in the "2015 Emerging Curators Program" at the Power Station of Art, Shanghai. His work *Wish You Were Here* (2013) was collected by the Beijing Minsheng Art Museum.

In an enclosed, immersive space, Chen Chenchen presents *The Mercy of Not Killing*, a site-specific video installation that evokes a state of horror that exists between the real and the virtual. Subject to the regulations of civilization, people suppress the urge to kill and form a connection that temporarily suspends the dog-eat-dog state of nature described by Hobbes. Yet with the rapid development of information technologies, infinitely diminishing distances of communication engender increasingly tense and subtle interpersonal relations—a new state of nature in which everyone connects to everyone. *The Mercy of Not Killing* alludes to this critical state. Inspired by classic survival movie scenes, Chen Chenchen's video, shoots on location, uses a drone to record construction workers suspended from the top of a 34-meter-tall tower. This spectacle of survival is here re-enacted on one wall of the exhibition space—when viewers "climb" the tower, they see figures hanging by the cliff at their feet, as if they have power over their fate. The other walls in the gallery are covered by images in a panoramic, bird's-eye view of the city. Filling the space is the eponymous theme song for *The Mercy of Not Killing*. Protective iron chains and chandeliers made of silicon dolls serve as a reminder that how the important issues invariably are those that exist between people. The viewers are forced by their proximity to confront a crisis of "others," calling attention to the symbolic power relations between spectator and spectated. Also presented in the space is a documentary on the shooting of *The Mercy of Not Killing*.

Cui Jie

Cui Jie (b. 1983, Shanghai) graduated from the China Academy of Art in 2006 and currently lives in Beijing. Working in painting and sculpture, Cui Jie is particularly concerned with the transformation of public spaces in China, critically reflecting on the mechanisms of urbanization and their consequences. Her recent solo exhibitions include "Cui Jie: The



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Proposals for Old and New Urbanism” (Leo Xu Projects, Shanghai, 2014), and “Cui Jie” (Leo Xu Projects, Shanghai, 2012). Major group exhibitions include “A Beautiful Disorder” (Cass Sculpture Foundation, Chichester, UK, 2016); “The World in 2015” (UCCA, Beijing); “My Generation: Young Chinese Artists” (Tampa Museum of Art and Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, Florida, 2014); “The First ‘CAFAM-Future’ Exhibition: Sub-Phenomena Report on the State of Chinese Young Art” (CAFA Art Museum, Beijing, 2012); “Face” (Shanghai Minsheng Art Museum, 2012); “The 4th Prague Biennale” (2009); “Poetic Realism: A Reinterpretation of Jiangnan-Contemporary Art from South China” (Centro de Arte Tomás y Valiente, Madrid, 2008); and “Notes of Conception” (Iberia Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, 2008).

Cui Jie’s works in “The New Normal” draws upon the artist’s observations of ubiquitous forms of urban architecture and public sculpture in post-reform China, as well as the artist’s overlaying of the two. Now overused decorative elements from traditional Chinese architecture, such cranes and pigeons, are here integrated into modern urban architectural forms determined by market forces. Originating from Cui Jie’s earlier paintings on canvas, these sculptural figures are reproductions made with 3D modeling.

Gao Lei

Gao Lei (b. 1980, Hunan province) graduated from the Central Academy of Fine Arts in 2006 and currently lives in Beijing. Working in painting, installation, photography, and sculpture, Gao Lei strips everyday objects of their original functions and, through formal translation and assemblage, imbues his art objects with a sense of the unknown and the uncanny. His solo exhibitions include “Wilderness” (White Space Beijing, 2016); “Window-sky” (Museum of Contemporary Art, Taipei, 2014); and “Projections” (Arario Gallery, Seoul, 2012). Group exhibitions include “Turning Point: Contemporary Art in China Since 2000” (Minsheng Art Museum, Shanghai, 2016); “After Utopia: Revisiting the Ideal in Asian Contemporary Art” (Singapore Art Museum, 2015); and “Chinetik” (Museum Tinguely, Basel, and Institut Valencià d’Art Modern, 2009).

Gao Lei presents a series of recent works that, while independent of each other, are interrelated. In *J*, the artist gives an broken model of an ox heart-shaped steel glass model he scavenged from a sculpture factory an “umbrella implant surgery,” a common cardiac operation. *Z-772* combines a deluge gun, a glass syringe, and an aluminum washbasin often seen in China in the 1980s into a single sculptural body, ordered according to the pressure of the liquid within. Simulating a systemic critical point between stability and collapse, the work traces the gradual elevation from the bottom to the top strata of a social structure, a hybrid form of attack and defense, spear and shield, that implies varied energies and crises contained within. The wall installation *5* is composed of metal filing cabinets often seen in companies, steel wire fences, and other everyday objects overlaid. The work adopts the form of a



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monumental sculpture to pay tribute to the five-day work week, first implemented in China on 1 May 1995 in an effort to maximize productivity—the now standard eight-hour work day, forty-hour work week. In this exhibition, the artist uses a hemp tug-of-war rope to delineate a pathway and a Chinese garden gate in the exhibition space. These three works form a holistic scene that reflects a state of mortal tension, between desire and danger, stability and collapse.

Guo Xi

Guo Xi (b. 1988, Jiangsu province) graduated from New York University with an MFA in 2015. He currently lives and works in Shanghai. In his recent projects, the artist uses fictional characters, scenarios, and stories to stage interventions in reality, testing the degree to which reality can tolerate the intrusion of imagination. His recent exhibitions include “The Reenactor” (Vanguard Gallery, Shanghai, 2016); “Annals of Floating Island” (Hanart TZ Gallery, Hong Kong, 2016); “Tell Me a Story: Locality and Narrative” (Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai, 2016); “Hack Space” (K11 Art Foundation, Hong Kong, 2016); “WeChat: A Dialogue in Contemporary Chinese Art” (Ezra and Cecile Zilkha Gallery at Wesleyan University, Connecticut, and Asia Society Texas Center, Houston, 2016); “The Ballad of Generation Y” (OCAT Shanghai, 2015); “Preview: The Grand Voyage” (ShanghART Gallery, Shanghai, 2015); “Forklore of the Cyber World: Journal from the Grand Voyage” (Chronus Art Center, Shanghai, 2015); “Gas Station: The Rubber Trumpet” (Vanguard Gallery, Shanghai, 2015); “COSMOS” (Shanghai Minsheng Art Museum, 2014); “Prophecy Release: The Grand Voyage” (80WSE Gallery, New York, 2014); “Memorandum for Gaia” (Power Station of Art, Shanghai, 2014); and “Tales from the Taiping Era” (Red Brick Museum, Beijing, 2014).

Since the Middle Ages, “seeking shelter in sanctuary” has been an extralegal moral action rooted in the urgency of times of terror. The contemporary Sanctuary Movement to protect undocumented immigrants began in the 1980s. During the Latin American civil wars of the time, religious communities in the US provided shelter for large numbers of refugees from these countries. Today, new immigration policies have reignited the movement, as Catholic churches, synagogues, mosques, and other religious sites have all become safe spaces for undocumented immigrants. In this work, Guo Xi attempts to give form to extralegal sites, depicting the various elements that shape those zones where the law is suspended or transcended—the divine authority claimed by religious groups; the inexorable force of natural disasters; the conflict between law and divine right; the site where criminals, fugitives, slaves, and undocumented immigrants may gather—and examining how these spaces alter or intervene into the course of society. Guo Xi presents various architectural details from sanctuaries together with ordinary objects that symbolize this extrajudicial mercy. He invites the viewer into a community founded on faith, considering notions of intervention, conflict, ambiguity, and concealed force.



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Lawrence Lek

Lawrence Lek (b. 1982, Germany) is a contemporary artist living and working in London. He is a graduate of the Cooper Union, the Architectural Association, and Trinity College, Cambridge. Lek creates speculative worlds and site-specific simulations using gaming software, video, installation, and performance. Often based on real places, his digital environments reflect the impact of the virtual on our perception of reality. Contrasts between utopia and ruins, desire and loss, and fantasy and history appear throughout his work to symbolize this exchange. Lek's recent exhibitions include "All Channels Open" (Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge, 2017); "SeMA Mediacity Seoul Biennial" (Seoul Museum of Art, 2016); "Secret Surface" (KW Institut, Berlin, 2016); "Software, Hard Problem" (Cubitt Gallery, London, 2015); and "The Uncanny Valley" (Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge, 2015). He is recipient of the Jerwood/FVU Awards 2016, the Tenderflix/Tenderpixel Artist Video Award, and the 2015 Dazed Emerging Artist Award.

Lek presents for the first time an immersive screening room titled "Simultaneous Futurisms." In this screening room, *Sinofuturism (1839 - 2046 AD)*, a provocative video essay that speculates on China's technological development as a form of Artificial Intelligence, is projected simultaneously with *Berlin Mirror (2042 Retrospective)* and *Shiva's Way (Seoul 2072)*, both speculative documentaries taken from the point of view of fictional artists about the future state of globalized politics, technology, and the role of the individual.

Li Jingxiong

Li Jingxiong (b. 1987, Anhui province) graduated from Nanjing University of the Arts in 2013 and currently lives and works in Shanghai. After graduation, Li co-founded the Department of Experimental Art at Nanjing University of the Arts, where he taught as a lecturer until 2014. Spanning painting, installation, writing, and photography, Li's work investigates the commonalities between the lavish consumerist landscape and lowbrow aesthetics to reflect "a uniquely Chinese and mesmerizing anxiety." Li's previous solo exhibitions include "BAIYIN" (HDM Gallery, Hangzhou, 2016); "BEAST 54" (White Space Beijing, 2016); "The Longest Yard" (Goethe-Institut, Shanghai, 2015); "LeJX" (White Space Beijing, 2014); and "Southland Ballroom" (Art Museum of Nanjing University of the Arts, 2013). Recent group exhibitions include "Up-Youth" (Times Art Museum, Beijing, 2016); "WE" (K11 Art Foundation, Shanghai, 2016); "Absolute Collection Guideline" (Sifang Art Museum, Nanjing, 2015); "The Invisible Hand: Curating as Gesture-The 2nd CAFAM Biennale" (CAFAM, Beijing, 2014); "The Garden of Diversion" (Sifang Art Museum, Nanjing, 2013); and "Among Us" (AIKE-DELLARCO, Shanghai, 2013). His work has been collected by the Sifang Art Museum, Goethe-Institut, and AMNUA.

Li Jingxiong's *Untitled (Painting)* is a group of painting installations approximately 7.5 meters long and 2.2 meters tall, atop old steel frames and cushion pads of washed-out textures. The work depicts an uncanny scene: the moment immediately after a horrific fire. The artist was



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inspired by a notorious serial murder case that took place in Baiyin, Gansu province, in the 1980s. Notably, Li imbues the sense of violence with a dazzling, bright visuality, subtly alluding to the cruelty of mass media as well as the psychological mechanisms that underlie the audience's desire for such information.

Li Qi

Li Qi (b. 1984, Qinghai province) graduated from the Sichuan Fine Arts Institute in 2009 and currently lives in Beijing and Chengdu. Working in photography, installation, and film, Li Qi taps into the unease of being an artist by unravelling and examining this identity anxiety against a broader social context. His recent exhibitions include "La Chair" (A+ Contemporary, Shanghai, 2016); "How Do We Become a Part of This World" (Blue Roof Museum, Chengdu, 2014); "I Am Not Involved in Aesthetic Progress - A Rethinking of Performance" (Star Gallery, Beijing, 2013); and "Lecture" (Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, 2012).

Li Qi's project *Jungle* originated in a residency in a factory in Dongguan, Guangdong. Here he observed the recent decline in the manufacturing industry, witnessing mass layoffs across several enterprises. During this time he came across a local company whose managers were organizing the remaining workers to plant vegetables in the company's garden. The effect was not only to put the talents of these workers from the countryside to good use and alleviate day-to-day living pressures, but also to reactivate these vacant factories. Based on this peculiar phenomenon, Li Qi parodies scenes from Hong Kong films of the 1990s—the pop cultural zeitgeist of the time—by restaging gun fight scenes in these factory workshops, juxtaposing them with footage of the laborers working and farming.

Liang Ban

Liang Ban (b. 1985, Guangxi province) graduated from Guangxi Arts Institute in 2009 and currently lives and works in Beijing. Using everyday found objects as his primary medium, Liang Ban is adept at weaving poetic twists on historical, political, and personal events into his videos, installations, and paintings. Liang's recent solo exhibitions include "Slightly Confused" (Taikang Space, Beijing, 2016) and "Landscape Browser" (de Sarthe Gallery, Beijing, 2016). Recent group shows include "Turning Point: Contemporary Art in China Since 2000" (Shanghai Minsheng Art Museum, 2016); "The Image Expression in the Art Practice of the New Generation" (Xi'an Museum, 2016); and "Game" (A4 Contemporary Art Center, Chengdu, 2014).

In composing the sound installation *A Poet Who Never Saw the Ocean Wrote a Novel about the Ocean*, Liang Ban invited friends to record the sound of waves at various beaches across Greece, Italy, Spain, and the Balkan Peninsula. The beaches were those where a massive influx of refugees landed most frequently since 2015, including Kos, Greece, and Sardinia,



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Italy, among others. At the time of the recordings the refugee incidents had already long since ended; the waves have washed away the traces of their landing. But as the audience walks through the long corridor that houses his work, they are surrounded by the sounds of waves amplified and blended together, therefore becoming inscrutable, subtly allowing some vague, indelible feeling to permeate the nebulous space. Removed from the historical event itself, the sound of the waves collides with the reality of our moment.

Liao Fei

Liao Fei (b. 1981, Jiangxi province) graduated from Shanghai Normal University in 2006 and currently lives and works in Shanghai. Liao Fei explores material relationships and tensions in his practice. Closely observing the operation of cognitive systems and how disciplinary powers are perpetuated through spatial planning, Liao Fei reveals the absurdity of the seemingly reasonable facades in his installation and video works. His recent solo exhibitions include “Plain” (Shanghai Museum of Glass, 2016); “Perspective” (Yve Yang Gallery, Boston, 2016); “The Equator” (Vanguard Gallery, Shanghai, 2016); and “This Sentence Is False” (PIFO Gallery, Beijing, 2015). Recent group exhibitions include “Why Not Ask Again: The 11th Shanghai Biennale” (Power Station of Art, Shanghai, 2016).

Liao Fei’s work, *A Sculpture of the Earth*, comprises of two computer screens displaying real-time typhoon monitoring information from the southern and northern hemispheres. Taken from official monitoring systems streamed online, this data generates synchronized surveillance videos that compress spatiotemporal conditions into fragmented data of remote interactions, reducing specific planetary landscapes to names, icons, and code. Here, “monitoring” not only constitutes a way of seeing, but also a means of understanding and programming space, alluding to a present moment that can be infinitely segmented. Liao Fei’s other work, *Infinitely Approaching Flatness*, explores the theoretical concept of infinity. The artist takes a log of wood floating in water and cuts off the part of wood exposed to the air. He then returns it to the water and repeats this process the action until it is technically impossible to cut any more slices off. The number of pieces cut and their shapes are determined by buoyancy and the water level. In theory, a piece of wood can be divided infinitely, but due to physical constraints, the final number of wood pieces presented is finite. The piece highlights a tension between “reality and potential,” “precision and chaos,” forming an artwork that can never be “finished.”

Amy Lien & Enzo Camacho

Amy Lien (b. 1987, USA) and Enzo Camacho (b. 1985, Philippines) are an artist duo who investigate the capital of financial and artistic exchange by living through contemporary art’s global convolutions. They generate questions via an image-oriented production, creating affective material and a data-frantic cartography of places connected and disconnected to



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each other against theoretical rubrics of “economics” and “contemporary art.” In 2015 they were artists-in-residence at Gluck50 in Milan, where they curated a group exhibition including artists based in New York, Taipei, and Cairo. Their recent solo exhibitions include “Manananggal has appeared in Berlin” (Mathew Gallery, Berlin, 2016); “LEAK LIGHT TIME HEAT” (47 Canal, New York, 2014); “Café by the Ruins” (Republika Art Gallery, Quezon City, 2011); and “Teleology, Happy Ending” (Green Papaya Art Projects, Quezon City, 2009). They have participated in residencies at CCA Singapore, am Art Space in Shanghai, and most recently SaSa Bassac in Phnom Penh. A regular contributor to art publications including *Texte zur Kunst* and *Flash Art*, they recently published an artist e-book with Badlands Unlimited titled *Ilan Na Ako Agayon? How Many Am I Now?*.

Departing from a 2014 project at 47 Canal Gallery in New York titled *LEAK LIGHT TIME HEAT*, the artists here reconfigure their existing imagery into a new work that encapsulates the contemporary moment. That imagery consists of night footage shot on the streets of Metro Manila near call center offices. The recent proliferation of these buildings has altered the urban nightscape in many Philippine cities, as most of these companies operate on the working hours of their predominantly American and European clientele. The resulting sequences of one-second shots underscore the enthusiasms and anxieties that globalized outsourcing brings to an emerging economy. In the last several months, these same Metro Manila streets have been rapidly re-signified by thousands of nightly police and vigilante killings in the name of a drug war initiated by populist President Rodrigo Duterte. Using images of these killings as projection screens for the repurposed footage of nocturnal labor, *LEAK LIGHT DEATH TIME HEAT* is a stark re-evaluation of the desires and drives of speculative economies within globally networked capitalism.

Liu Yefu

Liu Yefu (b. 1986, Beijing) received his MFA in photography and electronic media from Marylar Institute College of Art in 2014 and currently lives and works in Beijing. Liu is particularly interested in the production and circulation of images in the age of cross-cultural exchange and information technology. He frequently employs narrative devices such as fiction, appropriation and parody to reflect on the sense of vertigo one experiences in the face of contemporary real and its underlying power dynamics and ideologies. His solo exhibitions include “Episode 1” (Magician Space, Beijing, 2016). Group exhibitions include “OVERPOP” (Yuz Museum, Shanghai 2016) and “No Dice (I)” (Kimberly-Klark Gallery, New York, 2015).

Sketch I, Composition I, II, III & IV, Liu Yefu’s latest four-channel video work, sees the artist employ screens as “canvases” to explore on the artistic presumptions of two-dimensional composition by parodying and collaging classic movie scenes. The work centers on real interviews conducted with the German director Rainer Werner Fassbinder, and ruminates on the link between video narratives and draft sketches. On the main screen, an actor plays



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Fassbinder in a fictional interview and discusses hiring Chinese actors in his remake of David Lynch's *Blue Velvet*; on top of this screen is an actual interview with Fassbinder from 1980 shown upside-down. The first screen displays parodies of *Blue Velvet* made by the fictional Fassbinder as well as scenes from the production site. The second screen projects a collage of the painting works of this fictional Fassbinder, demonstrating a sense of violence and speed highly indicative of the times. The third screen is made up of three colors: black, white, and red, an abstract visual configuration that aims to disrupt the viewing of the other screens. These three components together form an intertextual relationship whose affected "falsity" indicates the aggression inherent to the act of viewing as well as questions of authorship rights. The work further explores the critical role of "form" on viewing—a longstanding concern in the tradition of painting.

Ma Jianfeng

Ma Jianfeng (b. 1983, Zhejiang province) graduated from China Academy of Art in 2007 before earning his MFA from Berlin University of the Arts in 2012. He currently lives and works in Beijing. Ma incorporates abandoned materials and objects from everyday encounters into his work and disrupts their inherent order. Through reconstruction, assemblage, and reconfiguration, he creates painting installations that are theatrical sites of chaos and ambiguity to interrogate the politics of space. Recent solo exhibitions include "MA" (Ying Space, Beijing, 2016); "Shanghai Lady" (Swatch Art Peace Hotel, Shanghai, 2014); "The Wall" (Dong Gallery, Shanghai, 2013). Group exhibitions include "Never Arriving: OCAT Xi'an 2014 Summer Projects" (OCAT Xi'an, 2014).

Ma Jianfeng here constructs a stage-like space in which he places installations made of cardboard, wood, and other media and graphic elements. One can read these materials as "actors," putting on a mesmerizing play. Viewers can freely draw links among the visual and textual elements to formulate multilayered meanings. The overall feeling of the space is of an elaborate chaos, as if secretly following the vicissitudes of some unknown plot into its dramatic climax. The work's dark humor evokes a sense of anxiety and disquiet, as if heralding an imminent storm.

Ma Haijiao

Ma Haijiao (b. 1990, Hebei province) received his MFA from the China Academy of Art in 2016. He currently lives and works in Beijing. Concerned with everyday imageries, Ma's highly stylized filmic language weaves fictional narratives into a documentary format to capture the poetic excesses of the depicted characters and scenarios. His recent exhibitions include "Why Not Ask Again: The 11th Shanghai Biennale" (Power Station of Art, Shanghai, 2016); "Illusion of Reality (L-Art Gallery, Chengdu, 2016); and "Fly Without Wings" (V ART Center, Shanghai, 2015).



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The three-channel video installation *Familial Separatism* originated in a letter Ma Haijiao accidentally received. The content of this missive subtly reflected the estrangement and confusion between different generations within a single family. Ma re-enacts the situations described in the letter, creating three characters and depicting their lives as a pseudo-documentary. They include a young soldier serving in the army, a middle-aged businessman with an eye disease, and an old, Christian intellectual, each belonging to a different generation. Ma traces the evolution of this family drama, even to its collapse, to reflect the social conditions of contemporary Chinese society. A documentary style more broadly conceived, the work also incorporates staged re-enactments, voice-overs, and other devices to create a poetic, emotive atmosphere.

Sophia Al-Maria

Sophia Al-Maria (b. 1983, Qatar) is a Qatari-American contemporary artist and writer living and working in London. Al-Maria studied comparative literature at the American University in Cairo, and aural and visual cultures at Goldsmiths, University of London. For nearly a decade, Al-Maria has been finding ways to describe 21st century life in the Gulf Arab nations through art, writing, and filmmaking. Her recent solo exhibitions include “Everything Must Go” (The Third Line, Dubai, 2017); “Black Friday” (Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2016); and “Virgin with a Memory” (Cornerhouse, Manchester, 2014). Recent group exhibitions include Répétition (Boghossian Foundation, Brussels, 2016); “89plus: Filter Bubble” (LUMA Westbau, Zurich, 2015); “2015 Triennial: Surround Audience” (New Museum, New York, 2015); “The 9th Gwangju Biennale: Roundtable” (2012). Al-Maria is a root researcher in the Shanghai Project (Shanghai Himalayas Museum, 2016-17). In 2015 she guest-edited issue eight of *The Happy Hypocrite*, entitled “Fresh Hell.” Her memoir, *The Girl Who Fell to Earth* (2012), was published by Harper Perennial. Her writing has also appeared in *Harper’s*, *Five Dials*, *Triple Canopy*, and *Bidoun*.

Sophia Al-Maria is known for coining the term “Gulf Futurism” to expound the drastic urban and economic development in the Persian Gulf over the last decades, as well as the environmental damage, religious conservatism, and historical amnesia that have accompanied it. In her new video work *Black Friday* (2016), Al-Maria continues her rumination by focusing on the Gulf’s embrace of the shopping mall: a modern architectural invention occupying every corner of the world like secular temples of capitalism that has since bred and funded an expansive web of contemporary maladies. Presented here for the first time in China, *Black Friday* asks viewers to reflect on the homogenizing force of capitalism and to speculate on an all-encompassing, techno-dystopian future.

Miao Ying

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Miao Ying (b. 1985, Shanghai) graduated from Alfred State College-SUNY with an MFA in electronic integrated arts in 2009. She currently splits her time between Shanghai and New York. In her work, Miao explores the potentials of mainstream media—including the internet, LAN, and smart phones—and technology to generate new forms of politics, aesthetics, and cultural awareness in representing reality. Her recent solo exhibitions include “Miao Ying: Chinternet Plus” (New Museum, New York, 2016); “Content Aware” (MadeIn Gallery, Shanghai, 2016); “Holding a Kitchen Knife to Cut the Kitchen Cable-Folklore of the Cyber World: An Online Exhibition for the Chinese Pavilion” (Venice Biennale, 2015). Group exhibitions include “Secret Surface” (KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, 2016); “Turning Point: Contemporary Art in China Since 2000” (Shanghai Minsheng Art Museum, 2016); “Why the Performance” (Mingyuan Art Museum, Shanghai, 2016); “Ghost in Flash: After Photography” (Taikang Space, Beijing, 2016); “On Drawing: Apperceive of Liberation” (Wuhan Art Museum, 2016); “The Ballad of Generation Y” (OCAT Shanghai, 2015); “The 2nd ‘CAFAM-Future’ Exhibition” (CAFAM, Beijing, 2015); “Wandering Eyes: Video Art from Shanghai” (State Gallery Linz, Austria, 2012); “The Halo Effect” (V Art Center, Shanghai, 2012); and “Infantization” (Shanghai Art Museum, 2007).

Miao Ying’s work here is inspired by “Internet +,” a concept first proposed at the World Internet Conference in Wuzhen, China. The video installation espouses a knock-off ideological brand parodying the sort of geopolitical marketing strategies featured in the Wuzhen conference: Her “strategic proposal” for Chinternet+ incorporates a series of corporate goals, strategies, and brand stories, skewering the collusive relationship between new media and political marketing industries. First exhibited online by the New Museum in New York, *Chinternet+* here is presented in a new installation format.

Max Hooper Schneider

Max Hooper Schneider (b. 1982, USA) is a contemporary artist living and working in Los Angeles. Schneider’s practice merges sculpture, installation, and living environments to create strange ecologies that conjure what the artist has described as a “lonely encounter with something anomalous.” A former biology and architectural landscape major at Harvard, Schneider uses his practical skills in laboratory research for fiction and art instead of empirical inquiry. Schneider’s recent solo exhibitions include “Nature Theatre of Violent Succession” (High Art, Paris, 2015) and “Accidental Menagerie” (Kayne Griffin Corcoran, Los Angeles, 2014). Recent group exhibitions include “Streams of Warm Impermanence” (David Roberts Art Foundation, London, 2016); “Dolores” (Team Gallery, New York, 2016); and “Theories on Forgetting” (Gagosian Gallery, Beverly Hills, 2015). Schneider recently won the fifth BMW Art Journey prize.

In its scale, *Accidental Menagerie* is Max Hooper Schneider’s most ambitious work to date. The artist gathers over 25 trays filled with anomalous yet poignant objects—



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imitation biological specimens to fragments of lived experiences such as a worn band t-shirt—and assembles them into a wall-like structure. Together, these juxtaposed specimens evoke an enigmatic, archeological sensibility—a document from a post-apocalyptic world devoid of human interests, as if some unknown entity were trying to catalog humankind, or rather create a taxonomy of the Anthropocene. An uncanny sense of foreboding unfolds, for it pertains to neither our past nor our future, but a time no longer inhabited, and therefore utterly alien.

Shen Xin

Shen Xin (b. 1990, Chengdu) received her MFA from the Slade School of Fine Art in 2014 and currently lives and works in London. Shen Xin's practice is based on her investigation into films and real events. In her work, the time of production and the time of viewing together raise to multiple interpretative possibilities. Drawing links between ostensibly unrelated events and concepts, her work reflects the circulation of feelings, value judgments, and ethics within individuals and communities. Her recent solo shows include "Strongholds" (Lychee One, London, 2017); "Originally Inclusive" (CFCCA, Manchester, 2016); "At Home" (Surplus Space, Wuhan, 2016); "Forms Escape: Prologue" (Chisenhale Gallery, London, 2016); and "Shoulders of Giants" (Senate House, London, 2015). Recent group shows include "Three Rooms" (CAC, Shanghai, 2017); "Dragon Liver Phoenix Brain" (OCAT Shanghai, 2016); and "You Won't Be Young Forever" (235 Guangfu Road, Shanghai, 2016). Shen is recently awarded the BALTIC Artists' Award, with a forthcoming exhibition in June at the BALTIC Center for Contemporary Art, Gateshead (2017).

Provocation of the Nightingale, Shen Xin's latest four-channel video installation, takes its name from a bird frequently seen in titles of international charities and public service organizations—a sign of empathy, kindness, and purity that often symbolizes the salvation of oppressed communities. With this imagery, she explores the establishment of religious systems and their structures, the influence of Buddhism on the socio-political environment, and the subtlety of interpersonal relationships. The footage for this piece was shot in the theater of the Gwangju Asian Culture Center, a speculative site onto which the artist projected various scenarios—both fictive and documentary—to generate a certain alienating effect. The first video follows the dialogue between a female Buddhist teacher and her student, who is the manager of a DNA testing company. They engage in arguments about religion, work, and emotional wounds, and, with much difficulty, they express their love for each other. In the second film, the artist employs motion capture technology to convert the faces of people who share their DNA testing results on Youtube into animation, projecting them into the theater to intermittently share their experiences. The third scene depicts two dancers gradually losing energy and their observation of each other as they cease moving, a metaphor for interpersonal communication. In the fourth and final video, Shen Xin cuts together a variety of clips that have been uploaded onto the internet since 2000. At once



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provocative and realistic, this selection includes such extremes as a woman being beaten to death for burning a copy of the Quran.

Wu Tsang

Wu Tsang (b. 1982, USA) is an artist and writer who lives and works in Los Angeles. Tsang's films, installations, performances, and sculptures move fluidly between documentary, activism, and fiction. Tsang's recent solo exhibitions include "Duilian" (Spring Workshop, Hong Kong, 2016); "A Day in the Life of Bliss" (Julia Stoschek Collection, Duesseldorf, 2015); and "Not in My Language" (Migros Museum, Zurich, 2014). Group exhibitions include "Bergen Assembly Triennial" (Bergen, 2016); "11. Forum Expanded" (Akademie der Künste, Berlin, 2016); "Co-Workers: Beyond Disaster" (Bétonsalon Center for Art and Research, Paris, 2015); and "Double Life" (Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 2014).

Wu Tsang presents three video works produced over eight years that reflect her longstanding engagement with language and performance. In *Shape of a Right Statement*, one of her earliest works, Tsang stares directly at the camera and re-performs one section of "In My Language" (2008), a powerful manifesto by autistic rights activist Amanda Baggs. Shot at the Silver Platter, a queer club in Los Angeles where the artist previously performed the Baggs text at her then regular club night, Tsang draws connections between the autism community and queer experience, inviting the audience to contemplate the power of language in defining norms and precluding intimacy. *Miss:Communication and Mr:RE* shows Tsang and African-American scholar Fred Moten in two portrait-like videos, accompanied by two speakers playing a series of voicemail messages that are part intimate self-reflection, part meta-commentary on the nature of and impediments to comprehension and communion. On the opposite side of the room, Moten, adorned with makeup and wearing a velvet shawl, whirls to an a capella rendition of the song "Girl Talk," in slow motion. *Girl Talk* is a poetic rumination on the figure of the drag queen and the mother.

Wang Guangxu

Wang Guangxu (b.1978, Fujian province) currently lives and works in Beijing. His practice subtly interrogates notions of order, control, and social relations. His recent group exhibitions include "24/7" (Black Sesame Space, Beijing, 2016); "The Aliens of Courtyard 23" (BAITASI Remade, Beijing, 2015); "The Generosity in Joyful Limitations: Three Dimensions Only" (Blackbridge Offspace, Beijing, 2014); "Finding Friends: Discover Young Sculpture Artists" (Today Art Museum, Beijing, 2014); "Sunset Vacuum Plug" (Taikang Space, Beijing, 2014); "To Labor Day: The Fruits of Unconventional Labor" (Star Gallery, Beijing, 2012); "New Interface Art: A Super Lost-and-Cool Generation" (Red Bridge Gallery, Shanghai, 2006); and "Naughty Kids" (Star Gallery, Beijing, 2005).



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Part of an ongoing series of similar works, *Imminent Force* is composed of magnet filaments pointing in various directions and held together by an iron board hidden within the walls. The other work, *Untitled*, is comprised of two “doors” made of thin bamboo stalks located at opposing ends of the space. The audience can only enter from one side of the door but cannot return, while the other is only for exiting but not entering, thus creating a spatial order and coercion .

Lantian Xie

Lantian Xie (b. 1988) is an artist from Dubai who makes images, objects, stories, and situations. Xie holds an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and is editor-at-large at Dubai-based publishing practice THE STATE. Xie has recently exhibited at “Why Not Ask Again: The 11th Shanghai Biennale” (Power Station of Art, Shanghai, 2016); the 3rd Kochi-Muziris Biennale (2016); “Summer Triangle” (OCAT Shenzhen, 2016); and “Accented” (Maraya Art Centre, Sharjah, 2015).

Lantian Xie’s “Metropolitan Hotel” series consists of fifteen color pencil drawings of various hotels named ‘Metropolitan’ that have existed throughout history in cities around the world, including New York, Dubai, Washington D.C., Cairo, Barcelona, Cervia, Sydney, and an unrealized hotel in London. Ostensibly tracing the permeation of modernities across the globe, Xie stages the work instead as a repeated effort to arrive upon places that are themselves always on the move.

Yao Qingmei

Yao Qingmei (b. 1982, Zhejiang province) graduated from Ecole Nationale Supérieure d’Art de la Villa Arson, Nice, in 2013 and currently lives and works in Paris. Working in performance, video, photography, and writing, Yao’s art critically examines the status quo through nuanced methods of appropriation, satire, and parody. Frequently staging interventions in public spaces, she often employs metaphorical and symbolic gestures to highlight tension within the parameters of reality. Her recent solo exhibitions include “Sanzu Ding and its Motif” (OCAT Xi’an, 2016); “Yao Qingmei: Professor Yao” (Magician Space, Beijing, 2015); and “Qingmei Yao” (Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2014). Recent group exhibitions include “Jeune Création Européenne” (Kunstbygningen i Vrå, Denmark, 2015-2017).

Spectrum—Royal Ballet of the Night I & II is composed of two simultaneous videos based on Yao Qingmei’s research into *Le Ballet Royal de la Nuit* (1653) from the Louis XIV era, as well as an official portrait of Louis XIV painted by Hyacinthe Rigaud in 1701. Louis XIV used the royal ballet as a means of political propaganda, and in *Le Ballet Royal de la Nuit* his status as the Sun King (an absolute monarchy best summarized by his famous quote “L’état, c’est moi”), was emphasized. In *Spectrum I*, a dancer takes a selfie video of the portrait in the



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Louvre while dancing ballet—a multi-layered intertextuality between different media and historical periods. In *Spectrum II*, a female opera singer belts out an iconographical analysis of the Sun King portraits. The scenes depicted on screen shift between theatrical and real spaces, creating a complex viewing experience.

Zhang Ruyi

Zhang Ruyi (b. 1985, Shanghai) received her MFA from the Fine Art College of Shanghai University in 2012 and currently lives and works in Shanghai. Unfolding across a variety of media, Zhang's practice is steeped in her observations of the urban environment and her interest in the relationship between the individual, the external world, and physical space. Her recent solo exhibitions include "Building Opposite Building" (Dong Gallery, Shanghai, 2016) and "Pause" (White Space Beijing, 2016). Recent group shows include "Vivienne Westwood: Get a Life" (chi K11 Art Space, Shanghai, 2016); "A Beautiful Disorder" (Cass Sculpture Foundation, Chichester, UK, 2016); "Mountain Sites: Views of Laoshan" (Sifang Art Museum, Nanjing, 2016); and "No Figurative" (Shanghai Minsheng Art Museum, 2015).

Zhang Ruyi presents a series of works in which she uses materials such as wood, concrete, and nails as artistic media. The artist salvages these objects from sites of construction and demolition, staging them together into a "room that is not a room." In this way, private space and public space, the industrial and the natural, as well as the individual and the social are placed within a certain shifting relationship, creating a gesture of "construction" far removed from the standard definition.

Zhu Changquan

Zhu Changquan (b. 1989, Shandong province) graduated from the China Academy of Art and currently lives and works in Hangzhou and Shanghai. Zhu weaves multilayered narratives often left unnoticed in everyday encounters into videos that encourage the viewers to reflect on their personal experiences and, in doing so, raise their awareness of their role in the social apparatus. His recent solo exhibitions include "Head Without Brain" (Vanguard Gallery, Shanghai, 2016). Group exhibitions featuring his work include "Trembling Surfaces" (Long March Space, Beijing, 2016); "The Liver" (CAFAM, Beijing, 2016); "Internationale Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen" (Oberhausen, 2015); and "Memorandum for Gaia" (Power Station of Art, Shanghai, 2014). His work has also been shown at the Beijing Independent Film Festival (Li Xianting Film Foundation, Beijing, 2013).

In his new work, Zhu Changquan taps into the minds of Marco Polo and Deng Xiaoping, two historical figures known for their visions of China. He injects a sense of fear and tension into his light box display, which features photographic depictions of symbolic objects. The accompanying video seems to be "interpreting" the secrets behind these objects, while at the



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same time obscuring the relationships between feelings, events, and imagination, crafting a visual field straddling the real and the virtual.

About the Curators

Philip Tinari has served as director of UCCA since late 2011. In his five-year tenure, he has mounted more than sixty exhibitions and organized a wide range of public programs and development activities. Prior to joining UCCA, he was founding editor of *LEAP*, the internationally distributed, bilingual art magazine published by the Modern Media Group. He is a contributing editor of *Artforum*, having previously served as founding editor of that magazine's online Chinese edition, artforum.com.cn. Tinari was named a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum in 2015 and to the Public Intellectuals Program of the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations in 2016. He holds degrees from Duke and Harvard is currently a D.Phil. candidate in art history at Oxford. He is co-curator, with Alexandra Munroe, of the exhibition "Art and China after 1989: Theater of the World," which opens at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in October 2017.

Guo Xi joined UCCA in 2014 and is currently the center's curator. A member of UCCA's Exhibition Department, Guo Xi has rich experience in curation, management, and coordination. She graduated from the Central Academy of Fine Arts with a master's degree in art museum studies in 2014. She served as assistant curator for a diverse range of exhibitions, including "Zeng Fanzhi: Parcours," "New Directions: Nadim Abbas," and "John Gerrard: Power.Play" in 2016; "Liu Wei: Colors" in 2015; and "Polit-Sheer-Form: Fitness for All" in 2014.

Yang Zi received his bachelor's degree in philosophy and religious studies from Nanjing University and is currently a publications and exhibitions coordinator for UCCA. Yang Zi has worked in art criticism and curation for nearly ten years, starting with his participation in the YCCA project at UCCA in 2008, which introduced him to art criticism and writing. Prior to joining UCCA, Yang Zi was an editor of *LEAP*, and he has written extensively for a range of publications, including *LEAP*, *Artforum China*, *Art Bank*, and *Art Time*, among others. He acted as executive editor on a series of UCCA catalogues, including *Wang Yin: The Gift*, *Liu Wei: Colors*, *Xu Zhen: A Mad In Company Production*, and *Zeng Fanzhi: Parcours*. His curatorial projects include "La Chair" (A+ Contemporary, Shanghai, 2016) and "Secret Chamber" (am Art Space, Shanghai, 2016).

Alvin Li is the English editor of UCCA. He studied philosophy at Connecticut College and has been working as a writer and translator since 2013. Particularly interested in gender variance and queerness, as well as their implications for community practices and social relations, Li has been organizing queer film festivals, monthly screenings, and community-oriented events



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in Shanghai for three years. Prior to joining UCCA, he worked as an editor of *LEAP*. He is a contributor to a range of publications, including *Frieze*, *ArtReview Asia*, *Ocula*, *Randian*, *Artforum China*, and others.

Wenfei Wang received her bachelor's and master's degrees from Nanjing University. She specializes in visual theory and is particularly dedicated to interdisciplinary research methods. She is a regular contributor to *Artforum China*, *LEAP*, *China Art Weekly*, *Art Monthly*, *Ray Sight*, and *Southern Weekend*, among others. Wang is also a prolific translator who has worked on titles such as *Démocratie, dans quel état?* (SASS Press, 2015), and *The Virtual Window* (forthcoming). She is the co-author of *World Film Locations: Shanghai* (Intellect, 2014).

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