

Ding Shiwei
Faith on Tap

Duration: November 6–December 18, 2021
Opening: Saturday, November 6, 6-8 PM
Location: Gallery Vacancy, 5F, M. Sichuan Rd., Huangpu Dist., Shanghai 200002
Opening Hours: Tuesday–Saturday, 10AM–6PM (or by appointment; closed on public holidays)

Press Release

Gallery Vacancy is pleased to announce Ding Shiwei's first solo exhibition at the gallery, *Faith on Tap*, on view from November 6 to December 18, 2021. Presenting a new body of installation work, *Faith on Tap* expands on the artist's prolonged engagement with the medium of the screen to illuminate the exacerbating integration of electronic media into contemporary lives and its indelible effect, which exerts a kind of satiating violence that comes hard to discern. Through his appropriation and reconstruction of the fragmented reality, Ding's endeavor proposes a poetic yet prophetically apocalyptic alternative to interpret the technoculture where we inhabit.

The exhibition begins its narrative via the video installation piece, *Screen Belief* (2020): alerting red light emanating from the four screens, along with the structural negative space to form a cross shape, claims a subject position to command spirituality. While the screen serves as a metaphor for the fundamentally altered spiritual life, it simultaneously functions as Narcissus's water reflection, catering an excessive amount of personalized information to the gazing users. In *Left-Right Montage* (2021), the unassuming peepholes protruding from transparent acrylic invite viewers to inspect its content: two separate sets of videos playing concurrently create a montage effect to the eye. Intentionally, the videos introduce myriad mismatches of eyes, while the act of looking plausibly suggests a mirrored image of homo sapiens yet essentially the fragmented reflection of human desire. The pristine and minimal appearance of the screen often assumes a deceptive outlook: our prolonged gaze and attention are capitalized as surveillance data; the more we dedicate our time and attention to it, the more we lose the grip of its scope, transforming into a contemporary embodiment of the Nietzsche abyss. The subject position of the screen is further elucidated in *Screen Flag No.1* (2021), where Ding's experiment with the flexible display obscures the distinction between form and content, echoing McLuhan's acclaimed "the medium is the message" and examining dimension-reduced activism. In this work, the malleable screen emulates the form and structure of a flag, relentlessly swaying in a gust of invisible wind; moreover, it conforms precisely to its content: an animated video of an emoji eye blue flag. It is not coincidental that the flag assumes the same color as the blue screen. The flag and the screen in tandem constitute powerful symbolism that nevertheless reiterates the political aspect of this democratizing tool.

Faith on Tap extrapolates materials from our lived experiences in the age of the algorithm, through a playful approach to ruminate the power relations hidden beneath the numbing interaction between human beings and digital media. In Ding's work, the future inevitably falls into a predicament, where the reconciliation between reality and virtuality is deemed as strenuous. Concertedly, it responds to McLuhan's concerns over the extension of the collective human consciousness mediated by the screen and nonetheless taints a layer of Luddist sentiments over the artist's implied prophecy.

Ding Shiwei (b.1989) holds an MFA degree from the School of Intermedia Art at the China Academy of Art and now lives and works in Hangzhou, China. Extrapolating signs and symbols from history, philosophy, the Internet, and found objects, Ding constructs an enticing and poetic spectacle through videos and installations to foreground the digital representation and intervention of the material world. His works undertake a witty manner to examine and dissect multitudinal paradoxes, enriching the collective experience under a new media visual culture, meanwhile, redefining the principal-subordinate positions between body and media in the midst of virtuality and reality by permeating individual experience with fragments of data. Treating the media interface as a window towards information, his works extend as well as disrupt the physical connection between body and space; the LCD screen further captures an eternal state beyond time and space, unveiling the sense of displacement and powerlessness throughout the circulation of information. As the viewer interacts with the multimedia works through digital screens, individual emotion and ideas are scrupulously embodied in a series of contemporary, political, and aesthetic enchantment, attaining redemption and materialization in the infinite fluxes of video montage. His solo exhibitions include: *Enter The Void*, Imagokinetics Lab, Hangzhou, 2020; *What We Talk About When We Talk About Sea Horizon & Moon*, One Way Art Gallery, Beijing, 2019; *Daybreak*, Beijing Art Now Gallery, Beijing, 2016; *Meteor Sonata*, Centraal Museum, Utrecht, 2016; and *Disparate Illusion*, Mao Space, Shanghai, 2015. Selected group exhibitions include: K11 Art Foundation, Shanghai, 2020; MOCA Yinchuan, Yinchuan, 2019; China Academy of Art, Hangzhou, 2018; Musée-Château, Annecy, 2017; Castello Di Rivara Center for Contemporary Art, Turin, 2016; CAFA Art Museum, Beijing, 2015. Ding was the recipient of a special award for the Prix Videformes in Clermont-Ferrand, France in 2015 and a silver medalist of the Chinese Film Festival in Washington D.C., US in 2014. His animated short films had screenings at various international film festivals, including Festival International du Film d'Animation d'Annecy, Holland International Animation Film Festival, International Film Festival Rotterdam, and Tampere Film Festival.

For further inquiries, please contact +86 21 6241 1239 Tuesday to Saturday, 10am to 6pm, or email press@galleryvacancy.com