

WANG Jianwei: Treading in Sludge

Artist	Wang Jianwei
Opening	November 7, 2022 16:00 – 19:00
Exhibition Period	November 7 – December 30, 2022
Venue	MadeIn Gallery, No.1, -1F Sunken Garden, Lane 9 Qufu Road, Jing'an District, Shanghai

MadeIn Gallery is excited to present artist Wang Jianwei's solo exhibition "Treading in Sludge" on November 7, 2022. Curated by Lu Xinghua, the exhibition features sixteen paintings, installations, and sculptures that reflect the artist's aesthetics on the Anthropocene.

As a barrel of fine wine aged for four decades in the vineyard of Chinese contemporary art, Wang has traversed every evolutionary stage of this art world under various climate conditions and borne the brunt of its major events. He has achieved symbiosis with it on a large scale and woven an intricate network of art activists. Nevertheless, he is still placing bets, still morphing despite perils, still deterritorializing and reterritorializing, outstripping us at every turn. Like a fungus he lives, thinks, and creates, constantly cornering himself within limits, sustaining volatile reassemblies with courtly elegance, and willingly landing himself in disputes. Through art he braces us for and gives us a prior taste of what will surely be our common, insecure life, and leads us to thrive and shine in the storms of the Anthropocene.

Built on a career spanning four decades, Wang expands his scope of concern from the symbiosis of humans and non-humans to an inquiry of the deep time and the Anthropocene. The exhibition title "Treading in Sludge" works as a metaphor of seeking refuge. Cells have taken refuge in anaerobic bacteria in sludge to survive the excess of oxygen on earth. In a similar sense, we are living in sludge today, deprived of oxygen, and have no other choice but to survive and thrive in it.

Both the artist and the curator Lu Xinghua are influenced by the thinking of Graham Harman in their respective practices. Lu defines Wang's sculpture as "non-sculpture", which is an object of experiment in constant evolution within the framework of the Anthropocene, or an "unconventional" sculpture resulting from a deliberate avoidance of academic training methodology. The "non-sculptures" can even provoke and challenge the artist – in other words, they are "speculative sculptures". They are not different from viruses, whose task is to embody, in an aesthetic form, the authenticity that cannot be reached by way of knowledge.

About Wang Jianwei

Wang Jianwei (b.1958, Sichuan Province, China) lives and works in Beijing. Since the 1990s, he has

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been researching the influence of multiple sciences and interdisciplinary knowledge on contemporary art. Well-versed in philosophy, he draws from mathematics, data-collection methods, scientific experimentation, and neurology to develop a new language for art and to practice a cross-sector methodology. Such a vision illuminates his creations spanning new media, film, performance, painting, sculpture, and installation.

Wang Jianwei has participated in major film and theater festivals, exhibitions, and academic events around the world. He was the FCA (Foundation for Contemporary Art) Grant Recipient in 2008.

About Lu Xinghua

Lu Xinghua is a philosopher and scholar of contemporary art.

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