



Steph Huang

I will see you when the week ends

April 27 — May 20, 2023

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A lone fox sits on top of a pile of rotting mattresses, staring at the viewer like a spirit animal: some guardian of the fantasies and histories housed in these discarded objects. Elsewhere dried out pine needles from old Christmas trees have been photographed or collected. Then there are the strawberries cast in metal, burnished like gold, preserved before they rot. Such fleeting, abandoned or wasted pleasures and the commodities that house them, are at the heart of *I will see you when the week ends*, artist Steph Huang's first solo exhibition at Public Gallery.

This exhibition continues Huang's investigations into economic, physical and environmental precarity. Previously her exhibitions have centred on food production and distribution, talking of local markets, fishing as a leisure activity or harmful industry, and cuisine as a vehicle for cultural identity. As politicised as these were, they also drew upon Huang's personal experience, memories of fishing in her native Taiwan or experiences of her adoptive homes in London and Paris. But now she turns her attention away from producing to consuming, and the ideologies that surround appetite.

In Huang's work meaning is often occasioned by form or shape. The work might even be called gestural – several works show gestures taken from Renaissance paintings. A structure resembling a Japanese screen door, stripped of its paper, might recall the now thoroughly commercialised idea of wabi-sabi, meaning to find enjoyment in imperfection and impermanence. But it also carries a more complicated association with the Japanese occupation of Taiwan - two kinds of appropriation, colonial and commercial, sit side by side. References to wabi-sabi are just one part of a chain of associations in the work on pleasure and imperfection. These include Christian belief in sin and the fleeting nature of worldly desires, austere modernist ideas of pure utility vs decadent ornament, as well as concerns over consumerism and waste.

Gleaning through garbage, reimagining found objects or previous works, beach combing and the Situationist 'dérive' are all parts of her method. But for all her worries about waste and over production, Huang manages to mix judgement of capitalism's excesses, with a nostalgic or tender feeling for the way objects can house memories. Hints that capital might be related to earlier systems of self-denial and self-discipline (from sin to what Max Weber called the Protestant work ethic) get mixed in with nostalgia, biography and a passion for collecting, from tins to furniture. Pleasures can be guilty or not, obedient or subversive, material and metaphysical, but always personal and political in Huang's work.

Steph Huang (b.1990, Taiwan) lives and works in London. She received her MA in sculpture from the Royal College of Art, 2021. Huang has presented recent solo exhibitions at Taipei Fine Arts Museum (2022); Volt, Eastbourne (2022); Goldsmiths CCA, London (2022); and mother's tankstation, London (2022). Her work has been featured in recent group exhibitions at Galerie du Monde, Hong Kong (2023); Bloomberg New Contemporaries, Humber Street Gallery, Hull and South London Gallery, London (2022); Staffordshire St, London (2022); AplusA Gallery, Venice (2022); Belmacz, London (2021); San Mei Gallery, London (2021, 2020); Bloc Projects, Sheffield (2021); South London Gallery (2021); and Cromwell Place, London (2021). Huang was recently awarded the Grand Prize in the Taipei Art Awards 2022 for her presentation at Taipei Fine Arts Museum, where she will hold a solo exhibition in 2024.



Steph Huang, *Between Sunrises and Sunsets*, 2023 (detail)



Steph Huang

Between Sunrises and Sunsets, 2023

UV printed smoked glass, mild steel, tin

140 × 203.5 × 12.5 cm

55 1/8 × 80 1/8 × 4 7/8 in



Steph Huang, *I'll see you when the week ends*, 2023 (detail)



Steph Huang

I'll see you when the week ends, 2023

Plywood, hand-blown glass, mild steel tube, bronze

43 × 140 × 14 cm

16 7/8 × 55 1/8 × 5 1/2 in



Steph Huang, *Full Moon*, 2023 (detail)



Steph Huang

Full Moon, 2023

Mild steel, UV printed aluminium, stone

52 × 27.5 × 10 cm

20 1/2 × 10 7/8 × 4 in



Steph Huang, *January's solitude*, 2023 (detail)



Steph Huang

January's solitude, 2023

Plywood, MDF, screen-printed perspex, Christmas tree pine needle, paint

72.6 × 42 × 36 cm

28 5/8 × 16 1/2 × 14 1/8 in



Steph Huang, *The King of Wasteland*, 2023 (detail)



Steph Huang

The King of Wasteland, 2023

Plywood, paint, UV printed perspex, light tube, cable, plug

71.5 × 53.3 × 9 cm

28 1/8 × 21 × 3 1/2 in



Steph Huang, *Hot Dog Stand*, 2023 (detail)



Steph Huang

Hot Dog Stand, 2023

Mild steel, fibreglass, hand-blown glass, string

58 × 87 × 21 cm

22 7/8 × 34 1/4 × 8 1/4 in



Steph Huang, *Petit Four*, 2023 (detail)



Steph Huang
Petit Four, 2023

Plywood, mild steel, bronze

95 × 93.5 × 5.5 cm

37 3/8 × 36 3/4 × 2 1/8 in



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Steph Huang, Out of Order, 2023 (detail)



Steph Huang

Out of Order, 2023

Mild steel, tin, UV printed mild steel sheet, paper

64 × 192.5 × 17 cm

25 1/4 × 75 3/4 × 6 3/4 in



Steph Huang, *Liaison*, 2023 (detail)



Steph Huang

Liaison, 2023

Plywood, MDF, UV printed copper, paint

41.5 × 41.7 × 7 cm

16 3/8 × 16 3/8 × 2 3/4 in



Steph Huang, *Breeze*, 2023 (detail)



Steph Huang

Breeze, 2023

Plywood, MDF, UV printed copper, paint

41.5 × 41.7 × 7 cm

16 3/8 × 16 3/8 × 2 3/4 in



Steph Huang, *Bitterness*, 2023 (detail)



Steph Huang

Bitterness, 2023

Plywood, MDF, UV printed copper, paint

41.5 × 41.7 × 7 cm

16 3/8 × 16 3/8 × 2 3/4 in