

VACANCY

Yiyao Tang

Faulting

January 27–March 2, 2024

Gallery Vacancy, Shanghai

Gallery Vacancy is pleased to announce Yiyao Tang's first solo exhibition in Shanghai, *Faulting*, on view from January 27 to March 2, 2024. Tang's conceptual-based, immersive installations move between material, linguistic and corporeal registers, questioning the multifaceted nature of information, as well as the disarmingly simple yet pervasive nature of its distribution and consumption in contemporary society. The exhibition title is a geology term that describes a fracture in the Earth's crust caused by tensional forces from nature. Here, it serves as both an observation of the fissures in material and a metaphor for the fundamental paradox of information subjected to the alchemy of political, social, and moral structures that contained them.

A site-specific work, *Faulting* (2024) consists of one thousand eight hundred and ninety coir bricks imported from five countries, arranged in groups of six and nine across the gallery floor. Tang's choice of material—the coir brick—is both an organic medium that facilitates the cycle of ecological life, and a metaphoric connotation to the ground that upholds institutions, states and nations. While they are collectively presented in schematic grids that echo some form of structural order and stability, the inherent fragility of its material strata, which fissures upon contact with water, serves as a cautionary reminder of the precarious uncertainties that dwell beneath its apparent surface.

The work traces through her earlier investigation into the visibility and presentation of information, with familiar focus on news coverage—a principal element of study from her practice—featured on various brick sets. To create them, Tang begins with an archive of front-page news sourced from mainstream newspaper publishers of five United Nations permanent member countries. Chosen for their prompt reportage of major world events in 2023, Tang produces these news content into two versions, one comprising the original newspaper layout, and the latter edited without images, before printing them onto the surface of selected brick formations. Each version is allocated to a respective area of the gallery and chronologically aligned to the publication date, thereby offering a nuanced inspection of how the choice of imagery and words shapes the public perceptions of information.

Alongside the ground presentation, Tang strategically installs four surveillance cameras on the walls and disperses the corresponding TV monitors across the venue as a mode of monitoring ground activities. Serving as a secondary observation in lieu of visitor's first-hand experience of the work, both underfoot and on the walls, Tang exploits the competence of machine intelligence in its mode of recording and transmitting information as an attempt to further inspect the malleability of truth. Visitors are invited to wander in the installation to discover the apparatus while submitting themselves to surveillance. These footages are collected as the 'substance' of information for the artist's archiving. Conceived as part of the installation, they contribute to Tang's ongoing investigation to the construction of evidence and specific 'truths', ultimately testifying to her principal enquiry into how systems of governance influence the politics of truth and history.

Throughout the exhibiting period, grass will begin to sprout from the brick formation in response to the surrounding conditions, eventually encompassing the work's landscape. As an ultimate symbol of resilience and growth, the plant crowd proposes that despite all unrest and uncertainties, the potential for new possibilities shall emerge from the ruins we grapple with.

Yiyao Tang, born in Wenzhou, China, now lives and works in New York. She received her BFA from Pratt Institute in 2018 and her MA from Harvard University, Graduate School of Design in 2022. Tang's practice coalesces mediums of intervention, projection, and installation to explore how social and political systems are embedded within images and objects. Using personal devices and inventive setups, she constructs and contests ideas on freedom, trauma, justice, otherness and memory. Her setups behave twofold: both object and subject of her ideas, often leading to unpredictable outcomes themselves. More than just an archival account, Tang's approach approximates archaeology in her ongoing process of uncovering evidence of our own contemporary artefacts, collective memories, and climactic traumas. Her solo exhibitions include: *Mattering*, theBlanc Gallery, New York, 2023; *Precairious*, Kirkland Gallery, Cambridge, 2022. She is currently the recipient of the Swatch Art Peace Hotel Artist Residency, Shanghai, 2023; and will be participating in the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts Residency Program, Omaha, in 2024.