

CHEMICAL



Bruno Zhu *License to Live*

22 November 2024 – 2 February 2025

Opening: Thursday 21 November, 6:30–8:30pm

Influenced by fashion design, publishing and scenography, Bruno Zhu's object-led installations explore notions of agency, authorship, consumption and power. *License to Live* marks Zhu's first institutional UK solo exhibition which centres a written licence agreement as his response to the invitation to develop a new commission.

Authored by Zhu, the agreement details a step-by-step guide to exhibition design that traverses colour, display, ornamentation, and orientation. Specific tones of red, green, yellow, blue and purple have been selected by Zhu based on their histories of toxic production and relationship to applied arts. When painted across walls and doors, they create a colour code that draws attention to surface as site. Cabinets with openings shaped like playing card symbols – motifs that recur across Zhu's practice – point to the abstraction of histories of violence, and the colonial inheritances of display commonly found across museums and historic homes. The agreement's instruction to tie bows around objects, brings formal devices of desire and consumerism into contact with sites of artistic production. A reorientation of 19th century design – parquet flooring, damask style wallpaper, and ornate mouldings turned on their side – traces the reproducibility of historical styles for a mass market.

At Chisenhale Gallery, Zhu's protocols of display are applied across four interconnected rooms; a preliminary staging absent of any objects. As the agreement is entered into by subsequent institutions or individuals, artworks will be selected by Zhu and future commissioners, and introduced into a restaging of the design.

License to Live explores the visual codes and abstractions embedded across public and private spaces, while raising questions related to artistic labour, ownership and control within cultural production. Underpinning Zhu's motivation to create a licence agreement are questions of newness within artistic practice. *License to Live* can be repurposed or recontextualized to produce newness indefinitely.

Notes to the Editors:

Press images can be downloaded through this [link](#).

Bruno Zhu lives and works between Portugal and The Netherlands. Selected exhibitions include: *I believe you*, Veronica, Seattle, 2024; *Circulate: Photography Beyond Frames*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; *Everybody is Crazy*, What Pipeline, Detroit, 2023; *O Quilombismo*, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, 2023; *Chrysalis: The Butterfly Dream*, Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, Geneva, 2023; *I am not afraid*, Cordova, Barcelona, 2022; *Myth Makers: Spectrosynthesis III*, Tai Kwun Contemporary, Hong Kong, 2022; and *Domestic Drama*, HALLE FÜR KUNST Steiermark, Graz, 2021. He is a member of A Maior, a curatorial program set in a home furnishings and clothing store in Viseu, Portugal.

Chisenhale Gallery was founded by artists. The same experimental vision and spirit of possibility that changed an empty veneer factory and brewery warehouse into an art gallery guides our work today. We commission new works of art, supporting artists at every stage of project development, from concept to completion. The gallery has an award winning, 40-year history as one of London's most innovative spaces for contemporary art. As we build on this rich and varied legacy, we continue to place artists at the centre of everything we do.

Chisenhale Gallery
64 Chisenhale Road
London E3 5QZ

+44(0)20 8981 4518
mail@chisenhale.org.uk
www.chisenhale.org.uk

Wednesday to Sunday, 12–6pm

Registered charity no.1026175

Image: Bruno Zhu, Exit sign at The Albertina in Vienna, research image, 2024. Courtesy of the artist.

With special thanks to our Events Drinks Sponsor: Estrella Damm.

License to Live is commissioned and produced by Chisenhale Gallery, London. Licensed by CAM-Centro de Arte Moderna Gulbenkian, Lisbon.

Volume I of Bruno Zhu's new reader *Fiction Non Fiction* is co-published by Chisenhale Gallery, London and Mousse Publishing, Milan.

Major Supporter: Cherry Xu.

With the generous support of Frank Bowling and Rachel Scott.

Lead Supporter: Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Chisenhale Gallery's Schools' Programme 2024 is made possible through the generosity of Goodman Gallery and Frelands Foundation.

With additional support from the Chisenhale Gallery Commissions Fund.

The 2023–24 Asymmetry Curatorial Research Fellow is hosted by Chisenhale Gallery.

Chisenhale Gallery



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

A
symmetry



Kingdom of the Netherlands

M **mondriaan fund**
for visual arts & cultural heritage

