

“The Fourth Wall”

Artist	Chen Ying
Opening	16:00 – 19:00, Mar 21, 2025
Exhibition Period	Mar 21 – May 10, 2025
Venue	MadeIn Gallery, No.1, -1F Sunken Garden, Lane 9 Qufu Road, Jing'an District, Shanghai

MadeIn Gallery is pleased to announce the opening of Chen Ying's solo exhibition, "The Fourth Wall", on March 21, 2025. This marks Chen Ying's fourth solo at the gallery.

Smooth, innocuous geometric forms dominate the exhibition. Their mission is to establish a familiar and adjustable fourth wall that invites the audience to play. Presented as extracted fragments of art, they await interpretation, piecing together, or reorganization. These shapes, precisely constructed, do not incite conflict, rather withhold clear orientation.

The chosen palette draws from ready-made color charts, leveraging the richness of industrially produced pigments to transcend the artist's personal choices, steering away from emotionality and directing attention to the design system itself. Each work is visible from all geometric perspectives, gaining greater flexibility through assembly and installation. By rejecting a singular mode of viewing, they encourage variations and manipulations that transform the wall separating the viewer from the artwork into a liberating space.

However, when meticulously crafted images are repeatedly reduced to mere forms, and art-making devolves into standardized combinations and aesthetic calculations, what does art ultimately serve? Do we still need to "create"? As painting becomes a questioning of its own medium—acting as a puppet that the viewer can manipulate—can the audience engage in “deep thinking” amid the interplay of order and emptiness: When everything is "designed" so perfectly, are we at risk of losing something that cannot be designed?

"The Fourth Wall" is an important concept in theatrical theory, referring to the invisible boundary between the fictional world on stage and the audience. Breaking through this "fourth wall" and dismantling the boundaries between roles and viewers is hardly a means but a goal: to reach the realm where creativeness dwells.

About Chen Ying

Chen Ying (b.1982, Qiqihar, Heilongjiang Province, China) graduated from the Central Academy of Drama in 2010 with a degree in Scenography, and currently lives and works in Shanghai. Beneath an abstract picture with a straightforward composition and bright palette, Chen incorporates forces of creation, destruction, and transformation into interconnected tableaux to confront classic painting techniques and cognition, thus bringing out the timeliness and playfulness in his works. In his recent practice, Chen draws references from philosophy, social media, and cultural anthropology to question the misuse of digital technology and the proliferation of digital images today. He is nevertheless more concerned with the psychological force and confrontational tension therein, rather than any direct criticism.

His solo exhibitions include: "The Fourth Wall", MadeIn Gallery, Shanghai, 2025; "CHEN YING", MadeIn Gallery, Shanghai, 2022; "Chen Ying: Solo Exhibition", KWM Art Center, Beijing, 2019; "Chen Ying: Traceable" & "Issy Wood: Wrong Side of the Blanket", Condo Shanghai, MadeIn Gallery x Carlos/Ishikawa, 2018; "Chen Ying: Reality & Regeneration", MadeIn Gallery, Shanghai, 2017.

Chen's recent group shows include: "Ode to the Unexpected", MadeIn Gallery, Shanghai, 2024; "The Power of Painting: Between Ideas and Belief", Ennova Art Museum, Langfang, 2023; "Constellation", Being Art Museum, Shanghai, 2023; "Unknown Pleasure", Soul Art Center, Beijing, 2023; "El Lissitzky's Rooms", Surplus Space, Wuhan, 2020; "The Image Is Not at Ease", MadeIn Gallery, Shanghai, 2020; "Extreme Mix", Guangzhou Airport Biennale, Guangzhou, China, 2019; "Form Consumption over Substance Reflection", MadeIn Gallery, Shanghai, 2017.