

The exhibition will present works created by Huang from 1983 to 2004, with the aim of conveying an impression of the consistent nature of his work. It will make clear how Huang creates art out of the insights he gains through observing and reflecting on the world around him; the works refer to political structures, supposedly fixed cultural meanings, and the contradictions and similarities of various systems. In tension-filled, multi-layered, and yet visually striking works, he manages to subtly engage with complex histories, with current political and societal developments, and with what the future might hold.

A good example of this is the newly acquired 2004 work *Mémorandum: Bat Project I, II, III, 2001–2003*, in which he opens up his archive. Planned in situ for exhibitions of contemporary sculpture or art in China—in 2001 for *Transplantation in Situ* in Shenzhen, in 2002 for the first Guangzhou Triennial, and in 2003 for the exhibition *Left Wing* in Beijing—the point of departure for all of the Bat projects was the collision on April 1, 2001, of an American EP-3 spy plane (also called the “Bat”) with a Chinese fighter jet over the South China Sea. The Chinese plane was destroyed, and the American plane landed on Hainan Island; after months of negotiations between China and the United States, it was dismantled and flown back to the United States in other airplanes. Huang Yong Ping was preoccupied with the incident when he was invited in 2001 to participate in *Transplantation in Situ* as part of the French contingent. For his project, he had a full-scale replica of part of the EP-3 spy plane built, divided into three equal parts. Though approved at the beginning by all parties involved, *Bat Project I* ended up being censored by both France and China. A similar fate befell both *Bat Project II* and *Bat Project III*: for the first, after long talks between the French consulate and the cultural department of Guangdong Province, under American observation, “unnamed higher powers” demanded the dismantling of *Bat Project II* (2002, see Huang Yong Ping’s chronology in the catalogue); for the second, the Beijing Wanliu Land Development Company, which sponsored the exhibition, canceled at the last minute, citing concerns over insufficient security (2003). Shortly afterward, in 2004, Huang created the work *Mémorandum*, which consists of his sketches, drafts, and notes, in addition to protest letters and newspaper clippings about the projects. Designed as a kind of gigantic wooden fanfold, it is both a sculpture that can be unfolded and a closed archive, an “artistic decision to make a representation—a literal traffic collision as well as a civilizational clash,” writes Doryun Chong in his catalogue essay. Seen either as a closed box or, as now at the Museum Ludwig, unfolded in its full expanse, *Mémorandum* reveals the history of these monumental projects and creates a permanent memory for them. “By painstakingly, artistically, and informatively processing the events around the spy plane and especially what befell his engagement with the topic in *Mémorandum: Bat Project I, II, III, 2001–2003*, Huang Yong Ping not only reacts, he also intervenes in the incidents and shapes them himself,” maintains Yilmaz Dziewior in his catalogue essay.

Other works in the exhibition engage with such themes as our mediatized society (including the 1994 work *Kiosk*, already in the Museum Ludwig's collection), the blessing and curse of scientific and military inventions, and punishment and surveillance—such as the 2004 work *Huit Chevaux de Léonard de Vinci déchirant un porte-avions*. The 1983 work *Haymakers (Les Foins)* by Jules-Bastien Lepage *Was Exhibited in Shanghai in April 1978* shows Huang's turn away from painting and toward conceptual and sculptural works; and the 1997 work *Palanquin*, a palanquin made of bamboo canes covered in snakeskin and decorated with a pith helmet, which hangs light as a feather in the exhibition, subtly reminds the viewer of the dialectic between master and servant.

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