

In an era defined by rapid acceleration, it is often the most foundational systems that disappear from view. Seemingly neutral and ubiquitous forms carry layered histories of adaptation, circulation, and exchange, yet through habitual use they become almost invisible.

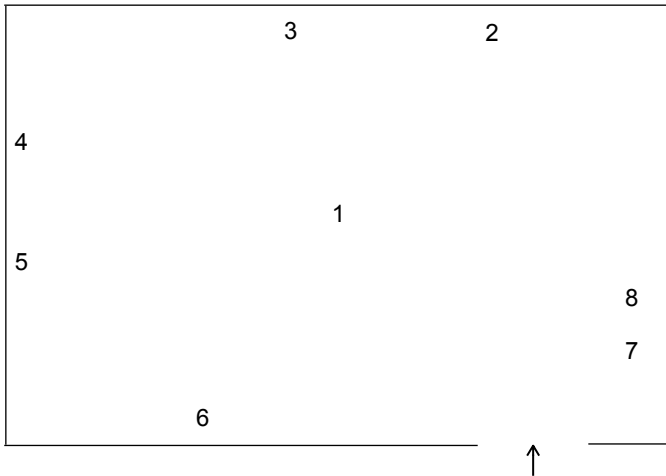
Liu's work emerges within a landscape in which digital and material production are no longer easily identifiable, but instead operate as ambient conditions of everyday life. Distributed across environments and interfaces that have become habitual, language, image, and identity circulate through discrete invisible units that simultaneously produce and contain the subject. It is within this expanded field that the practice of Liu Shiyuan can be situated: having grown up in China during a phase of unprecedented technological advances, global commercialization and popular culture assimilation, her practice explores the re-editing and re-contextualization of images in the digital age, as well as the ideologies, emotional structures, and cultural biases behind them.

The exhibition unfolds through two interrelated works: a series of paintings (*Punished You and Me*, 2024-2025) composed of hand-painted pixel-like squares, and a large floor installation (*Nobody, Labour*, 2026) made of bricks of varying hues. Spread across the gallery floor, the bricks form an expansive surface that visitors are invited to walk across. From above, the installation recalls the logic of a low-resolution, blurry digital image, while at ground level each individual brick asserts its own weight, texture, and chromatic variation. Though materially distinct, both bodies of work operate through the logic of modular units that aggregate into larger visual and spatial compositions, using the grid as a basic layout. The pixel and the brick function as parallel foundational elements: one tied to digital image production, the other to physical infrastructure and construction.

Through repetition, accumulation, and variation, each square dissolves into abstraction before re-forming within larger visual structures, producing a continuous shift in perception between micro and macro scales. Liu's meticulous, quasi-mechanical method evokes the convergence of industrial and digital paradigms. While the grid suggests regularity, no two surfaces or colors are entirely identical, revealing subtle deviations within systems that otherwise aspire toward uniformity and anonymity. The grid also recalls the predictive logic of algorithmic systems designed to organize and anticipate human behavior, yet the minute variations between each square resist homogenization.

What initially appears objective and mechanically ordered gradually reveals a space for affect and individual difference within a structured whole. Liu's work inhabits such slippages that emerge from the promise of uniformity mediated by translation, assimilation, and technology. If contemporary existence unfolds across vast, often imperceptible infrastructures - data networks, global systems, informational flows - then perception requires constant recalibration. For Liu, to zoom-in is not simply an optical act but a methodological, defiant one: a way of reclaiming legibility within abstraction.

Liu Shiyuan
Nobody, Labour
21.05 — 11.07.26



1.
Nobody, Labour, 2026
Bricks (clay, sand, iron peroxide), acrylic paint
Dimensions variable

2.
Punished You and Me (No. 18), 2024
Acrylic marker, permanent colored pencil, UV spray on wood,
106.0 x 76.0 cm

3.
Punished You and Me (No. 19), 2024
Acrylic marker, permanent colored pencil, UV spray on wood,
106.0 x 76.0 cm

4.
Punished You and Me (No. 23), 2025
Acrylic marker, permanent colored pencil, UV spray on wood,
106.0 x 76.0 cm

5.
Punished You and Me (No. 24), 2025
Acrylic marker, permanent colored pencil, UV spray on wood,
106.0 x 76.0 cm

6.
Punished You and Me (No. 21), 2024
Acrylic marker, permanent colored pencil, UV spray on wood,
106.0 x 76.0 cm

7.
Someone Says No, 2026
Watercolour on paper
37.0 x 50.0 x 2.0 cm (dimensions framed)

8.
Someone Wants to Live Like This, 2026
Watercolour on paper
37.0 x 50.0 x 2.0 cm (dimensions framed)

Liu Shiyuan (b. 1985, China) lives and works in Copenhagen. Liu holds an MFA from the Photography Department of the School of Visual Arts, New York, USA and holds a BFA from the Digital Media Art Department of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, China.

Recent solo exhibitions include Fotografiska, Shanghai, China (2024); UCCA Dune, Beidaihe, Hebei, China (duo) (2023); WHITE SPACE, Beijing, CN (2022); palace enterprise, Copenhagen, DK (2022), Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, Los Angeles, USA (2020); Frost Art Museum, Fort Lauderdale, USA (2020); Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York, USA (2018); Yuz Museum, Shanghai, CN (2015).

Group exhibitions include Guggenheim Museum (New York, USA), NGV Triennial, National Gallery of Victoria (Melbourne, AUS); K11 Art Museum (Shanghai, CN); UCCA (Beijing, CN); Front international – Cleveland Triennial for Contemporary Art (USA); Kunsthalle Dusseldorf (DE); Yinchuan Biennale MOCA (CN); Fondation Louis Vuitton (Paris, FR); The 7th Shenzhen Sculpture Biennale, among others.

The exhibition is kindly supported by S.C. Van Fonden.

Matteo Cantarella, Rådmandsgade 45, 2200 Copenhagen
info@matteocantarella.net | www.matteocantarella.net

Thursday - Friday, 12-4pm
Saturday, 12-3pm