

The temperature drops rapidly, light shifts from bright to dark, and the air grows heavy, as if it had gained weight. A tornado seems to be building in the exhibition spaces of Kunsthalle Basel. In her first institutional solo exhibition in Europe, *Alliance*, Shuang Li (b. 1990) turns to the search for storms not only as literal and physical natural phenomena but, more importantly, as metaphors for the highly mediated realities and digital forces that shape and permeate our everyday lives.

The exhibition centers on the premiere of Li's most ambitious video installation to date. The film follows three main characters, all portrayed by the same "actress": a sex doll. Accompanied by a film crew, they devote themselves to "storm chasing"—the deliberate pursuit of severe weather events such as tornadoes. Loosely scripted, the film unfolds through a series of unexpected encounters that emerge in real time.

This search develops through a sequence of spatial and atmospheric stages. Each of the five exhibition spaces corresponds to a progression on the journey, ranging from everyday observation and the onset of the chase, building in intensity, to the climax in the eye of the storm itself.

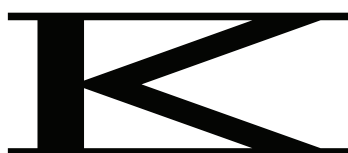
People chase storms for many reasons: a fascination with meteorology, a sense of awe at the majestic power of nature, or simply the thrill of an adrenaline rush. Much of a typical storm-chasing day involves long drives across open landscapes, guided by forecasts, yet marked by a constant sense of uncertainty. Li extends this forward-moving trajectory into the exhibition space itself. The rooms become the foundation of a road that winds through heightened, almost overexposed landscapes, passing by film stills and a meteorological map displayed like oversized roadside billboards.

Here, the search for tornadoes reflects a present characterized by constant circulation. Tornadoes, livestreams, media systems, and digital infrastructures act as forces that are simultaneously distant and menacingly close, physically palpable yet elusive, always in motion and never fully controllable.

Shuang Li

Alliance

12 June–
13 Sep. 2026



Shuang Li: *Alliance*

Entering *Alliance* means embarking a journey: a state of motion on unstable ground unfolding across the exhibition spaces. Amidst fragmented landscapes, billboards, flickering lights, and shifting weather maps, movement itself becomes the only form of orientation. Shuang Li stages the exhibition as an ongoing attempt to catch a tornado.

The image of the extreme storm functions for Li both as a concrete meteorological event and as a metaphor for contemporary media environments and their incessant circulation of information. Much like tornadoes forming over flat landscapes, today's media infrastructures operate via conditions of leveling. Everything appears equally accessible and immediate until one is suddenly drawn into a maelstrom of attention, data, and obsession. The metaphor also speaks to the circulation of information—the past constantly being stirred up; the dust of the past never settles as time passes, as if trapped in a tornado loop for an eternity. Throughout the exhibition, Li translates this oscillation between horizontal plane and vertical suction, drift and compression, into spiraling forms and immersive spatial situations.

The Middle of the Day That Starts It All (2026) marks the beginning of the expedition. Across thirteen TV screens, images unfold in relentless loops. Landscapes appear as narrow fragments glimpsed from a moving vehicle, digitally amplified to the point where they begin to dissolve before they can fully stabilize. The work functions like a sequence of B-roll footage from a road movie—comprising atmospheric shots of landscapes, the sound of conversation fragments, and passing environments. The installation is embedded in an architecture of metal structures that resemble a section of a rural roadway. Lifted up from the ground itself and gradually losing stability, the material winds through the space as though it can no longer withstand the force and velocity of the movement.

It is in the pursuit of the storm that images become increasingly unstable. The billboard-like works *Fire at Will*, *Stolen from My Eyes*, and *Interlude* (all 2026) layer video stills, private archives, and meteorological maps into shifting lenticular prints. Images no longer possess a fixed beginning or end; they circulate in a state of continual displacement. Landscapes dissolve into gestures, flickering lights into handwritten notes, weather maps into bruises on a body. *Interlude* spreads across the floor, its individual parts like detached pixels. Sculptures modeled on meteorological wind barbs have settled upon them—everyday objects preserved in resin, like condensation droplets gathering on smooth surfaces before the storm.

Li approaches digital technologies not as isolated tools or objects but as forces permeating everyday life. Online platforms, infrastructures, and data streams shape communication, mobility, intimacy, and social relationships. They determine how identities form in a state of endless circulation and dictate the rules under which it is still possible to forge connections. *With a Trunk of Ammunition Too* (2024) translates these conditions into an intimate register, and the dynamics of the exhibition briefly decelerate. Movement yields to a temporary suspension. Morse-code lights illuminate the space, translating a letter the artist wrote to her mother into coded intimacy. Li's voice remains audible throughout the room, as though slowly drawing the dormant vortex back into circulation.

Entering the final space, the tornado's force rises as swirling structures soar, as if the wind itself had taken on the materiality of steel. *Alliance (Heart Loop)* (2026) offers immediate immersion in the storm's power. Blending the aesthetics of a documentary, a DIY road-trip movie, and a livestream, the video work brings the search for a tornado to life. The film follows multiple figures on their individual storm-chasing journey. Roads, gas stations, industrial buildings, and open fields appear simultaneously familiar and alien. The gradual collapse of the distinction between physical and digital environments blurs the boundary between the two. The sex doll protagonists are driven by a shared desire to enter the tornado itself, hoping to emerge transformed on the other side. Once human, but having lost agency in the storms of digital and algorithmic forces—their desire to reclaim what was taken away by the wind in the first place makes this their final attempt to reclaim agency.

It is in the film that the tornado becomes legible as a symptom of a flattened media landscape in which everything is continuously available all at once. Decisions become unstable as data streams, and swirling information flows continuously organize perception. What appears to be an individual choice is already shaped within these circulating systems. The tornado stands for surrender to the storm, to its pull, and to everything it sweeps away, for the desire to lose oneself within it and perhaps, precisely through this loss, to continue to exist.

Room 4

- 5

Interlude, 2026
Lenticular print
24 pieces, each 100 × 100 × 0.7 cm
- 6

If There's a Place That I Could Be Then I'd Be Another Memory, 2026
Gadget case, glitter palette, handkerchief, plastic bones, resin, sand, sticker gems
32 × 21 × 5 cm
- 7

Ambulance, 2026
Fake lashes, plastic bones, printed handkerchief, resin, sand, sticker packet
32 × 21 × 4 cm
- 8

Heaven Help Us, 2026
Fake lashes, resin, ribbon, sand
32 × 21 × 4 cm
- 9

For Me The Only Hope Is You, 2026
Fake lashes, plastic bones, printed handkerchief, resin, sand, yarn
32 × 21 × 4 cm
- 10

Scarecrow, 2026
Handkerchief, plastic bone, resin, sand, teddy bear, watch wheels
32 × 21 × 14 cm
- 11

Bulletproof Heart, 2026
Handkerchief, plastic bones, resin, sand, Shuang's hard drive, sticker packet, yarn
32 × 21 × 7 cm
- 12

Gravity Don't Mean Much to Me, 2026
Clothing tag, handkerchief, resin, sand, sweet wrappers, wax seal
32 × 21 × 5 cm

Room 3

- 4

With a Trunk of Ammunition Too, 2024
Sound and light installation, shadow, metal, acrylic
211 × 192.1 × 178.1 cm
9 min 53 sec, looped
Sound: Jingting Sun (Hyph11E) and Shuang Li
Light Programming: Thomas Montana

Commissioned by Fondazione Prada

Room 2

- 2

Stolen from My Eyes, 2026
Lenticular print, epoxy resin, sand from Alliance, glitter, stainless-steel frame
202.5 × 115.2 cm
- 3

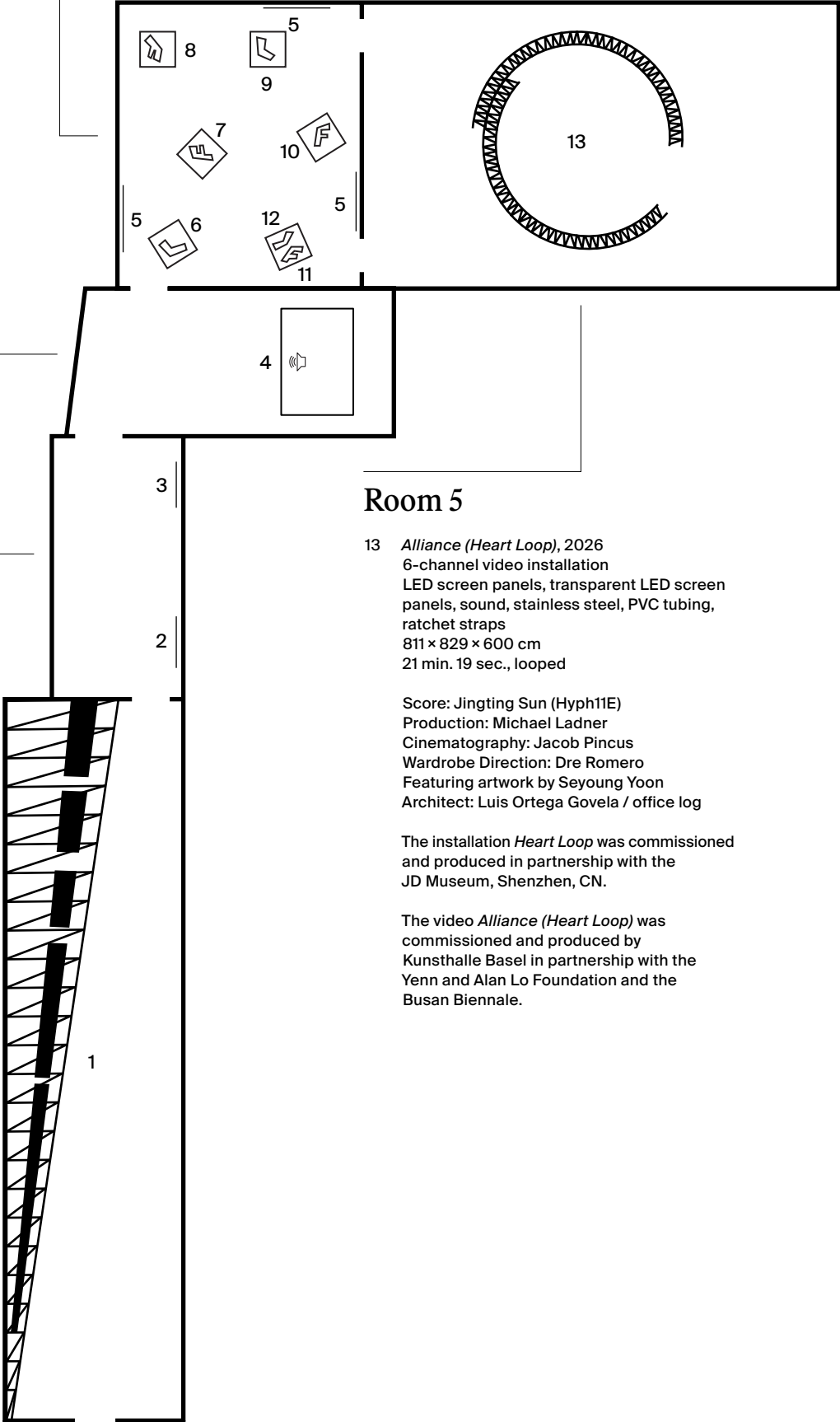
Fire at Will, 2026
Lenticular print, epoxy resin, sand from Alliance, luggage tag, found objects, glitter, stainless-steel frame
202.5 × 115.2 cm

Room 1

- 1

The Middle of the Day That Starts It All, 2026
13-channel video installation
drywall profiles, guardrails, monitors, video, sound
2,782 × 310 × 469 cm
11 min 56 sec, looped
Sound: Jingting Sun (Hyph11E)
Architect: Luis Ortega Govea / office log

Commissioned in partnership with CHERUBY, Shanghai, CN.



Room 5

- 13

Alliance (Heart Loop), 2026
6-channel video installation
LED screen panels, transparent LED screen panels, sound, stainless steel, PVC tubing, ratchet straps
811 × 829 × 600 cm
21 min. 19 sec., looped

Score: Jingting Sun (Hyph11E)
Production: Michael Ladner
Cinematography: Jacob Pincus
Wardrobe Direction: Dre Romero
Featuring artwork by Seyoung Yoon
Architect: Luis Ortega Govea / office log

The installation *Heart Loop* was commissioned and produced in partnership with the JD Museum, Shenzhen, CN.

The video *Alliance (Heart Loop)* was commissioned and produced by Kunsthalle Basel in partnership with the Yenn and Alan Lo Foundation and the Busan Biennale.

The exhibition is generously supported by the Cc Foundation, Octone Foundation, and Simian Foundation, with additional support from Esther Maria Heer-Zacek.



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Curated by Mohamed Almusibli

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Kanton Basel-Stadt
Kultur

Filming was made possible by Dr. Robin Tanamachi and her meteorology students at Purdue University, who kindly allowed Shuang Li to accompany her and her team on their field research into extreme weather events across the Great Plains over the course of eight days.

Shuang Li studio
Project manager: Ara Yun Qiu
Studio Assistants: Siting Ye, Minsuh Kang

Graphic design by PORTO ROCHA; Studio SMS (Alix Stria & Katharina Shafiei-Nasab)
Copy-edited by Amanda Gomez

The Kunsthalle Basel bookshop stocks publications on Shuang Li alongside its broader selection of art books. You will find a selection of publications related to the artist in the library of the Basler Kunstverein.

More information at kunsthallebasel.ch

Public Programs

Mittwoch-Matinee, in German

29.07.2026, Wednesday, 10 a.m.–noon

Explore the current exhibitions at lunchtime, followed by a lively dialogue on the terrace of Kunsthalle Basel over refreshments. Admission: 10 CHF

Kunsttage Basel

29.08.2026, Saturday, 3 p.m.

Curatorial Tour, with Lena Katharina Reuter (Head of Exhibitions), in German

30.08.2026, Sunday, 3 p.m.

Tandem Tour, with SAM Swiss Architecture Museum, in German

Mal•Mal, in German and English

09.09.2026, Wednesday, 6–8 p.m.

Life drawing in the current exhibition; drawing materials provided.

Theaterplatz-Fest, in German and English

12.09.2026, Saturday, noon–5 p.m.

Thursdays at Kunsthalle Basel

Director's Tour, with Mohamed Almusibli, in English

★ 06.08.2026, Thursday, 6:30 p.m.

Espresso Tour, in German

20.08.2026, Thursday, 6:30 p.m.

The exhibition's key points are presented in twenty minutes, accompanied by an espresso.

Sundays at Kunsthalle Basel

Espresso Tour, in German

21.06.2026, Sunday, 3 p.m.

The exhibition's key points are presented in twenty minutes, accompanied by an espresso.

Public guided tour, in German

05.07.2026, Sunday, 4:30 p.m.

Espresso Tour, in German

19.07.2026, Sunday, 4:30 p.m.

Public guided tour, in German

02.08.2026, Sunday, 4:30 p.m.

06.09.2026, Sunday, 3 p.m.

Werkstatt Sessions

Powered by Kraft E.L.S.

The workshop transforms into a stage: Join us for casual summer evenings in the Kunsthalle Basel yard as part of the *Werkstatt Sessions*, featuring incredible sound performances.

14.07.2026, Tuesday, 7:30–10 p.m.

6:30 p.m. *Curatorial Tour* of Janiva Ellis's exhibition

23.07.2026, Thursday, 7:30–10 p.m.

06.08.2026, Thursday, 7:30–10 p.m.

6:30 p.m. *Director's Tour* of Shuang Li's exhibition

20.08.2026, Thursday, 7:30–10 p.m.

★ Registration at kunstvermittlung@kunsthallebasel.ch

More information at kunsthallebasel.ch