

PRESS RELEASE

“Zhan Wang: morph”

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Long March Space, Beijing

The upcoming exhibition is Zhan Wang’s most significant presentation of new sculptural creations since his solo show in 2012 at Long March Space, Beijing. The new series of sculptures is seen to follow the same vein as the artist’s “Mao Suits” (1993), “Artificial Rock” (1995-ongoing), and “Flowers in the Mirror” (2004-2005).

By his new works, Zhan Wang focuses on concepts, forms and artistic methods, and re-examines his experiences of creation and paths of contemplation. Since 2004, the artist had spent years to accumulate and discourse until he accomplished the overall conception of these new works and finally realised them.

As one of the most established contemporary artists in China, Zhan Wang is always trying to explore his inward world from cultural, social and natural perspectives by artistic creation, and he constantly uses art to mirror the real thinking of his heart. The power of such “reality”, so to speak, runs through Zhan Wang’s artistic career of nearly three decades.

In the early 1990s, Zhan Wang, a new graduate, found his own starting point in the art history of China with a string of realistic works. People at that time were largely impressed by the emotional motives in Zhan Wang’s works, and they tended to link his works at that time to the given reality of Chinese society, thus neglecting the artist’s distinctive sentiment and exquisite personal experience born within the works. During 1993 and 1994, Zhan Wang successively created a series of works featuring Chinese tunic suits including *Man in Mao Suit*, *Mao Suit: Temptation--Ethereality/Emptiness*, etc. In these works, Zhan Wang was no longer baffled by concepts such as art, installation and sculpture; instead, he liberated his train of thought thoroughly. In 1995, Zhan Wang set about to create another reputed art series of his—Artificial Rock.

Conceptually, Zhan regards his celebrated series “*Artificial Rock*” as an attempt to “mimic” nature, while his new series has made breakthrough progresses both conceptually and sculpturally from “*Artificial Rock*”. The world reflected from the polished stainless steel surface of “*Artificial Rock*” has fascinated Zhan Wang. Ever since “*Flowers in the Mirror*”, a series of photographs based on the reflection from the surface of “*Artificial Rock*”, the artist has been contemplating on the relationship between the twisted imagery of the reflection and his sculptural practice.

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The reflective images created by stainless steel vary from angle to angle, and no regular pattern could be traced from such variation. Since the photographic series *Flowers in the Mirror*, Zhan Wang has been constantly considering the relation between the twisted and varied mirror images and his sculpting work—the artificial and the nature have congealed on the surface of artificial rocks and reached a delicate balance thereon, would there be another possibility and balance concealed behind these works? The artist's sentiment gives Zhan Wang a positive answer, but to seek the seemingly tangible yet changeful “shadow” costs quantities of time and efforts. Based on exquisite personal experience as well as individual practice of artistic creation, Zhan Wang has spent years trying to make a breakthrough in the mode of “form” in sculptural creation and managed to discover a variable path of sculptural creation between the realistic objects and mirror images.

Zhan Wang remarks that, “there is no reference that responds to social issues, neither is there any context of art history. I know I cannot preinstall a pattern of culture or form for myself and accommodate what I see with this pattern; that is tantamount to closing one's eyes of discovery and concreting one's ideas of mind. I must humbly hide myself behind the form and dance to the form, adjusting myself to the appearance of form rather than forcing the form to go along my wills. I should face the ‘God’ of all forms that I might not understand with a formless me, and capture the form that appears with the aid of photographic equipment without thinking. Since it is possibly not existing in my experiential consciousness, I have to accept the idea ‘it is nothing for the time being’, but it does exist.”

The fruits of this contemplation are the new series of sculpture. The artist brings the otherworldly reflection to life into physical sculptural form with a sculptor's imagination and instinct, filling it with volume, details and tactility.