

PRESS RELEASE

"Marching in Circles"

Asian Dope Boys, Closing Ceremony, COME INSIDE (Mak Ying-tung & Wong Ka-ying), Gao Ludi, John Gerrard, Liu Wei, Maria Taniguchi, Matt Hope, Mountain River Jump! (Huang Shan & Huang He), Yu Honglei, Zhang Xinjun, Zhao Gang

Curated by Robin Peckham

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Long March Space, Beijing

Long March Space is pleased to announce its first exhibition of 2017 in the Year of the Rooster, "Marching in Circles", curated by Robin Peckham. Featuring new work by Asian Dope Boys, COME INSIDE (Mak Ying-tung & Wong Ka-ying), Gao Ludi, John Gerrard, Liu Wei, Maria Taniguchi, Matt Hope, Mountain River Jump! (Huang Shan & Huang He), Yu Honglei, Zhang Xinjun, Zhao Gang, with a curated book stand by Closing Ceremony, the exhibition looks to offer an imagined alternative to the rapidly increasing consumerist culture that exists in the (art) world where the members of the global (art) economy, in one way or another, can be seen as culprits.

by Robin Peckham

The agenda of an art world professional working in contemporary art is packed with back-to-back gallery and museum exhibition openings, art fairs, and biennials in all corners of the world. Art-fair-fatigue turns into biennial-fatigue, biennial-fatigue turns into art-circuit-fatigue, and before one knows it everything begins to feel like an endless cycle of repetition and malaise; it is a premonition of collapse that never arrives. Some choose to disengage while others fantasize about disruption or destruction of the current order in order to make way for transformation before the act of looking at art turns into a nine-to-five slog like data entry, telemarketing or dental hygiene. Art world professionals endure the traumas of global displacement by finding refuge in international art fairs that look and feel like shopping malls, while artists are exiled to suburban wastelands. The fabrication of art is, like everything else, an endless series of oil spills over the landscape. There is an ecology of production and consumption that cannot be avoided in the spirit of contemporary art. This is the status quo.

One must recognize and engage with the current state of reality in order to move forward. There remains a sense of texture in repetition; it is not yet a smooth and frictionless circulation of capital. We are in search of a pleasure, or at least a productive friction, that might be derived from this endless movement without movement. Within this professionalized career path, we ask ourselves what functions unexpectedly, and what might offer fertile ground on which to grow ideas that will propel us forward.

Generously, we might suppose that our peers and allies have not yet rejected any of the options that we might come across. Ahead of us, we see the possibility of an embracing alienation, or a new path that intersects both nostalgic escape and acceleration. The shouts of those who retreat back to an imagined time capsule where art is always pure and politics is always real confront us with the realization that something does not quite fit in the reality that we know. Refusing to accept a shift is not the same as disagreeing with it. We drown under the cool, slippery surface of ironic acceptance of the things we cannot change or quite find a foothold to locate the self while our surroundings melt into the air.

This project offers hope for something else. In Beijing, where neither irony nor nostalgia is a valid option, we turn to more immediate formations—ecological, climatic, architectural, experienced. We respond to these pressures on all fronts simultaneously: psychological, economic, ideological. We do not dismiss the affirmation of capitalism, nor do we believe that the deconstruction of power carried out to its logical end is the only solution. It is relatively easy to say what we don't do and much harder to agree on something that we might do together. Potential strategies are manifold, from a mass exodus from reality to a disclaiming of art as a meaningful activity to begin with. If the past can never be repeated and the future never arrives, the allocation of moments within the present becomes a political act. This march never ends.

In the new art world and the new world, we have new questions to answer. Would you call yourself a cuck? Is it bad to be good? Chaos and repetition can be additive or they can be opposed. There are artists who, rather than resisting or colluding, would turn chaos into a looping, closed system. There are artists who might choose neither to affirm nor deny, but rather to raise overall levels of systemic chaos just to fight the inclination of surrender. But does this kind of chaos lead to collapse, or even a heightened awareness of the way the world works? Or does it result in a purely personal, subjective bubble in its own parallel world? When chaos is a strategy, the rules can only be suggestions.

Tianzhuo Chen's (b.1985, Beijing, China) club-night-cum-record-label **Asian Dope Boys** (established by Tianzhuo Chen and China Yu in 2015) provides access to its visual archive by plastering a portion of the exhibition space with posters and photos of nightlife and other events as a testament to what artists can do outside the gallery proper.

Shanghai artist bookstore **Closing Ceremony** (established by Same Paper in 2015) curates a selection of its published and distributed print materials in a pop-up bookshelf that echoes themes of malaise, tactics, and collapse across fashion, image-making, and the creative industries.

Hong Kong collective **COME INSIDE** (formed by Mak Ying-tung and Wong Ka-ying in 2016) invites visitors to download an app with two important core functions: transferring money to the starving artists behind the project, and receiving push notifications that alternate between life-coach cheerleading and the onset of depression.

Gao Ludi's (b.1990, Henan, China) suite of paintings orbit an abstract object, a conceptual sphere that appears as a sacrificial cypher through which meaning can be filtered, agglomerated, and apprehended. Ranging over the past several years and multiple cycles' of the artist's work, it appears at times in vivid color and at times in black and white, by turns exposed and dissected.

John Gerrard's (b.1974, Dublin, Ireland) "Flags" are hyper-realistic digital simulations of oil slicks on the surfaces of the Hudson and Thames rivers which run through the heart of two of the world's largest global financial centers. Interested in moments of resonance between art and energy in popular discourse, Gerrard presents these post-nationalist marks as symbolic emblems of the contemporary condition.

Liu Wei's (b.1972, Beijing, China) practice is often described as emerging from the axis between his home and studio, a strip of land that functions as a core sample of the changing terrain of Beijing. For this exhibition, he peels off the very deepest tip of that core sample: a structural fragment of his working environment as metonymic reference to the broader environment of art in the city.

Maria Taniguchi (b.1981, Dumaguete City, Philippines) contributes auxiliary textual material surrounding a new installation series borrowing from vernacular irrigation systems to create sometimes functioning, sometimes failing bodies of cast bamboo and transparent frames, a meditation on togetherness, collapse, and labor. This work takes the form of a personal essay on these ideas.

Matt Hope (b.1976, London, UK) makes up the backbone of the exhibition with a steel I-beam punctured with hundreds of holes that render it structurally inadequate, sagging at the middle and failing to support even its own mass. Based in Beijing for a decade, Hope works through the material layer of the ideological ties between regions and economic systems.

Mountain River Jump! (formed by twin sisters Huang Shan and Huang He in 2016) welcomes visitors into a tent for fortune telling, where their tarot readings combine European myth, Chinese fengshui, and other more personal forms of astrology. Working outside of the art world proper, the Huangs offer a study in alternatives.

Yu Honglei's (b.1984, Inner Mongolia, China) short film *En Route* (2016) appropriates footage from various genre-driven road movies, intercuts them with primitivist rituals, and overlays it all with cryptic messages stylized in the manner of Lawrence Weiner. It's an epic search for form that revels in coincidences, and recognizes the structure that binds it all together.

Zhang Xinjun (b.1983, Henan, China) spent his singles' day holiday working as a motorbike courier around the northeast of Beijing, delivering packages, experiencing one particular lifestyle, and acquiring the tacit permission to open doors into many others. Thinking through the carrying capacities of the body and its extensions, he has erected a provisional tent or nest that defines the topography of the space while acting as a parasite on its structure.

Zhao Gang (b.1961, Beijing, China), fed up with a recent wave of conceptual painting that seemed to abandon painting for the sake of criticism, turns his attention to "dumb paintings" that depict, plainly and literally, objects around his studio: a wood stove, a chair, potted plants. Zhao indicates that sometimes the way forward is to remain precisely wherever one stands.

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