

Press Release

Wang Jianwei: Always being, but not the whole

Opening: March 20, 2021

Long March Space, Beijing

On March 20, 2021, Long March Space will present *Always being, but not the whole*, a new solo exhibition by Wang Jianwei, showcasing an installation of paintings and sculptures in the gallery space. Based on the artist's vision, the space will be turned into connecting passages and open spaces separated by walls of the same thickness with varying heights. The audience will be invited to enter this labyrinth, along the way encountering different artworks while also experiencing the relationships between the different works and between the works and the spaces that surround them.

This new series of works showcase the artist's contemplations and artistic practice since he began to focus on Speculative Realism and Object-Oriented Ontology in the recent years. This philosophical and ideological turn shatters the worldview — often seen in realism — that sees human as subject and subverts one's understanding of human-object and object-object relations, and challenges one's point of view by positioning objects on an equal plane. Through his works, Wang has undoubtedly revealed a new expression of how objects and the world may be portrayed.

Through his sculptures and paintings, Wang makes objects as he understands them, at an object-oriented horizon arising from a different cognitive and perceptual standpoint. These objects have unknown origins, unknown functions, unknown purposes, and unknown properties. The objects in what we call sculptures display the fluid forms and the shifting relations between the whole and the parts — and between the different parts themselves — as well as the amorphous relationship between objects and their surrounding spaces. The objects in the paintings, on the other hand, declare the unclear materials, structures, and unclear relations as revealed in the sculptures. All these unknown objects seem to follow the biological theory of "symbiotic evolution," manifesting what's been concealed (or withdrawn) within the cognitive framework of "correlationism" in the realism, through the apparent ambiguity of the obvious.

The artist's work at this stage, however, is not so much to "unveil," but rather to see the reorganization of withdrawal as a point of departure. In reality, Object-Oriented Ontology calls for the intrinsic value of an object, not the relations between objects or their symbolic meanings. It means that a thing is no longer defined by a single meaning, instead, it is filled with all kinds of potentials. This leads to *Always being, but not the whole*.

Wang Jianwei is known for continuously integrating his philosophical studies and reflections into his creative practice. His artistic career has been an ongoing process of self-invention through self-

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negation: from making realistic oil paintings in the early 1980s, to studying cybernetics and social spaces in the 1990s, to experimenting with a large quantity of video and theatrical productions. This fruitful and ceaseless journey of change and growth demonstrates how the artist, by erasing existing boundaries through his rigorous intellectual labor, obtains freedom. This space of freedom is not so much what he has earned, but rather what he has created — because it never before existed.

Also on view in the Long March Space's Artist Room will be *The Microphone is Broken Again*, a group portrait Wang Jianwei painted in the first half of 2020.

About the Artist

Wang Jianwei, born in Sichuan province, China, now is living and working in Beijing.

Since the 1990s, Wang Jianwei has continuously explored how comprehensive knowledge and multi-disciplinary studies can inform contemporary art, thus creating a new vocabulary for himself through different methodologies from multiple fields. Based on this comprehensive knowledge, his philosophical inquiries invoke an interdisciplinary way of seeing. For this reason, his artworks include a wide variety of forms, spanning video, theatre, multimedia work, installation, painting and text.

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