



# 例外状态

# The New Normal

2017.3.19 –  
2017.7.9

中国境况与艺术考察 2017

China, Art, and 2017

UCCA

Ullens Center for  
Contemporary Art  
尤伦斯当代艺术中心

English

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The Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) is proud to present “The New Normal: China, Art, and 2017,” a large-scale exhibition running from 19 March to 9 July 2017 with new and recent works by 23 artists and groups from China and beyond. Held in the Great Hall, Central Gallery, Long Gallery, and Nave, “The New Normal” takes China’s evolving national condition vis-à-vis the rising backlash against globalization on other continents as a point of departure, interrogating the efficacy of art—as a medium for both expression and action—in responding to a fragile and unpredictable present. Continuing UCCA’s ongoing commitment to emerging artists as well as its practice of mounting a center-wide survey of recent developments once every four years, first with “Breaking Forecast: 8 Key Figures of China’s New Generation of Artists” in 2009 and followed by “ON | OFF: China’s Young Artists in Concept and Practice” in 2013, “The New Normal” explores the state of art today against the backdrop of the unprecedented social realities of 2017.

Coined by Carl Schmitt and expanded by Giorgio Agamben, a “state of exception”—the exhibition’s Chinese title—refers to a political situation in which the normal laws and regulations of a society are abruptly suspended, replaced by temporary conditions that in turn become a new status quo. States of exception have been imposed at moments of crisis throughout modern history. Crisis today is constant, as ideals of freedom, equality, and openness, once held by some as universal values, give way to mass shootings, aborted ceasefires, violated norms, and tainted elections. In 2015, the Chinese leadership introduced “the new normal,” a way of talking about economic growth rates that, while lower than during the exuberant years of the early 2000s, continue to trump those of most other major economies. China’s assertively capitalist, internationalist response to these increasingly acute dynamics—recently typified by President Xi Jinping’s address to the World Economic Forum in Davos—might also be considered a “state of exception,” one that runs parallel to the new patterns of globalization that inform artistic cosmopolitanism today.

Designed by the multidisciplinary firm Li Hu/OPEN Architecture, the exhibition’s layout gives each of the artists a discrete room to present their works. The space outside these pavilions is dimmed, echoing the (often ominous) topics explored. A linear pathway determined by the works’ narrative cues traces a temporal progression of historicized forms, present conditions, and speculative futures, with the year 2017 as the ineluctable, implicit core throughout. The underlying proposition of this format—a constellation of diverse, engaged practices presented independently, but always in dialogue—is the possibility that these various geographic and temporal nodes might converge into a single, holistic state of exception, through which audiences can consider their social, geopolitical, and ideological milieu.

As UCCA CEO May Xue observes, “‘The New Normal: China, Art, and 2017’ marks the beginning of UCCA’s tenth anniversary year. Surrounding the exhibition’s curatorial concept, and working with the Center’s social mission in mind, UCCA has developed a wide range of promotions, docent-led tours, members’ programs, public programs, children’s educational programs, merchandise, and publications in order to present this project to the widest possible public. The aim here, as in all UCCA programming, is to promote the development of contemporary culture, presenting an inclusive, cosmopolitan vision of China in the world at a time of sweeping transformation. ‘The New Normal’ has been made possible with support from across society, an affirmation of the Center’s exhibition program and operational model throughout the past decade. We would like to take this opportunity to offer deepest gratitude to founders Guy and Myriam Ullens, UCCA staff, patrons, sponsors, partners, and all who have made outstanding contributions to the realization of this exhibition.”

“The New Normal” is organized by UCCA curators Guo Xi, Yang Zi, Alvin Li, and Wenfei Wang working with UCCA Director Philip Tinari. The exhibition is accompanied by a rich slate of talks, lectures, performances, and screenings, as well as a publication.

# Floor Plan



1. Max Hooper Schneider
2. Zhu Changquan
3. Yao Qingmei
4. Sophia Al-Maria
5. Cui Jie
6. Lantian Xie
7. Liu Yefu
8. Li Jingxiang
9. Shen Xin
10. Ma Haijiao
11. Amy Lien & Enzo Camacho
12. Wu Tsang
13. Liang Ban
14. Li Qi
15. Chen Chenchen
16. Gao Lei
17. Ma Jianfeng
18. Zhang Ruyi
19. Miao Ying
20. Guo Xi
21. Wang Guangxu
22. Liao Fei
23. Lawrence Lek

Max Hooper Schneider

*Accidental Menagerie*

2015

Mixed media, acrylic trays, polymer resin,  
aluminum structure, custom hardware  
304.8 x 274.3 x 38.1 cm



Max Hooper Schneider (b. 1982, USA) is a contemporary artist living and working in Los Angeles. Schneider's practice merges sculpture, installation, and living environments to create strange ecologies that conjure what the artist has described as a "lonely encounter with something anomalous." A former biology and architectural landscape major at Harvard University, Schneider uses his practical skills in laboratory research for fiction and art instead of empirical inquiry.

## Max Hooper Schneider

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In its scale, *Accidental Menagerie* is Max Hooper Schneider's most ambitious work to date. The artist gathers over 25 trays filled with anomalous yet poignant objects—from imitation biological specimens to fragments of lived experiences such as a worn band t-shirt—and assembles them into a wall-like structure. Together, these juxtaposed specimens evoke an enigmatic, archeological sensibility—a document from a post-apocalyptic world devoid of human interests, as if some unknown entity were trying to catalog humankind, or rather create a taxonomy of the Anthropocene. An uncanny sense of foreboding unfolds, for it pertains to neither our past nor our future, but a time no longer inhabited, and therefore utterly alien.

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Zhu Changquan  
*Jump from the Past* (detail)  
2017  
Two-channel video, light box, found objects  
6'



Zhu Changquan (b. 1989, Shandong province) graduated from the China Academy of Art and currently lives and works in Hangzhou and Shanghai. Zhu weaves multilayered narratives often left unnoticed in everyday encounters into videos that encourage the viewers to reflect on their personal experiences and, in doing so, raise their awareness of their role in the social apparatus.

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## Zhu Changquan

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In his new work, Zhu Changquan taps into the minds of Marco Polo and Deng Xiaoping, two historical figures known for their visions of China. He injects a sense of fear and tension into his light box display—a 3D rendering of a forest. The accompanying video seems to be “interpreting” the secrets behind the symbolic objects depicted in the light box, while at the same time obscuring the relationships between feelings, events, and imagination, crafting a visual field straddling the real and the virtual.

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Yao Qingmei  
*Solar Spectrum: The Royal Ballet of the Night II*  
2017  
Video  
8'10"



Yao Qingmei (b. 1982, Zhejiang province) graduated from Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Art de la Villa Arson, Nice, in 2013 and currently lives and works in Paris. Working in performance, video, photography, and writing, Yao's art critically examines the status quo through nuanced methods of appropriation, satire, and parody. Frequently staging interventions in public spaces, she often employs metaphorical and symbolic gestures to highlight tension within the parameters of reality.

## Yao Qingmei

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*Spectrum—Royal Ballet of the Night I & II* is composed of two simultaneous videos based on Yao Qingmei's research into *Le Ballet Royal de la Nuit* (1653) from the Louis XIV era, as well as an official portrait of Louis XIV painted by Hyacinthe Rigaud in 1701. Louis XIV used the royal ballet as a means of political propaganda, and in *Le Ballet Royal de la Nuit* his status as the Sun King (an absolute monarchy best summarized by his famous quote "L'état, c'est moi"), was emphasized. In *Spectrum I*, a dancer takes a selfie video of the portrait in the Louvre while dancing ballet—a multi-layered intertextuality between different media and historical periods. In *Spectrum II*, a female opera singer belts out an iconographical analysis of the Sun King portraits. The scenes depicted on screen shift between theatrical and real spaces, creating a complex viewing experience.

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Sophia Al-Maria  
*Black Friday* (still)  
2016  
Digital video projected vertically, color sound  
16:30'



Sophia Al-Maria (b. 1983, Qatar) is a Qatari-American contemporary artist and writer living and working in London. Al-Maria studied comparative literature at the American University in Cairo, and aural and visual cultures at Goldsmiths, University of London. For nearly a decade, Al-Maria has been finding ways to describe 21st century life in the Gulf Arab nations through art, writing, and filmmaking.

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## Sophia Al-Maria

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Sophia Al-Maria is known for coining the term “Gulf Futurism” to expound the drastic urban and economic development in the Persian Gulf over the last decades, as well as the environmental damage, religious conservatism, and historical amnesia that have accompanied it. In her new video work *Black Friday*, Al-Maria continues her rumination by focusing on the Gulf’s embrace of the shopping mall: a modern architectural invention occupying every corner of the world like secular temples of capitalism that has since bred and funded an expansive web of contemporary maladies. Presented here for the first time in China, *Black Friday* asks viewers to reflect on the homogenizing force of capitalism and to speculate on an all-encompassing, techno-dystopian future.

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Cui Jie  
*Friendship Building* (rendering image)  
2017  
3D model  
31.1 x 28.5 x 50 cm



Cui Jie (b. 1983, Shanghai) graduated from the China Academy of Art in 2006 and currently lives in Beijing. Working in painting and sculpture, Cui Jie is particularly concerned with the transformation of public spaces in China, critically reflecting on the mechanisms of urbanization and their consequences.

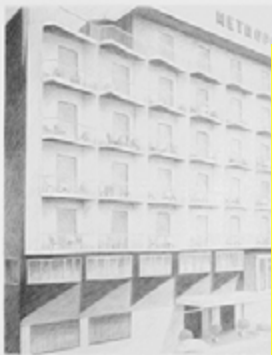
## Cui Jie

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Cui Jie's works in "The New Normal" draw upon the artist's observations of ubiquitous forms of urban architecture and public sculpture in post-reform China, as well as the artist's overlaying of the two. Now overused decorative elements from traditional Chinese architecture, such as cranes and pigeons, are here integrated into modern urban architectural forms determined by market forces. Originating from Cui Jie's earlier paintings on canvas, these sculptural figures are reproductions made with 3D modeling.

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Lantian Xie (b. 1988) is an artist from Dubai who makes images, objects, stories, and situations. Xie holds an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and is editor-at-large at Dubai-based publishing practice THE STATE.



## Lantian Xie

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Lantian Xie's *Metropolitan Hotel* series consists of fifteen color pencil drawings of various hotels named 'Metropolitan' that have existed throughout history in cities around the world, including New York, Dubai, Washington D.C., Cairo, Barcelona, Cervia, Sydney, and an unrealized hotel in London. Ostensibly tracing the permeation of modernities across the globe, Xie stages the work instead as a repeated effort to arrive upon places that are themselves always on the move.

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Lantian Xie  
*Metropolitan Hotel No. 1-15*  
2016  
Color pencils on paper  
47 x 68 cm x 15





Liu Yefu  
*Sketch I, Composition I, II, III & IV (still)*  
2016  
Multi-channel HD video, color, sound  
21'38"



Liu Yefu (b. 1986, Beijing) received his MFA in photography and electronic media from Maryland Institute College of Art in 2014 and currently lives and works in Beijing. Liu is particularly interested in the production and circulation of images in the age of cross-cultural exchange and information technology. He frequently employs narrative devices such as fiction, appropriation, and parody to reflect on the sense of vertigo one experiences in the face of contemporary reality and its underlying power dynamics and ideologies.

## Liu Yefu

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*Sketch I, Composition I, II, III & IV*, Liu Yefu's latest four-channel video work, sees the artist employ screens as "canvases" to explore the artistic presumptions of two-dimensional composition by parodying and making collages of classic movie scenes. The work centers on real interviews conducted with the German director Rainer Werner Fassbinder, and ruminates on the link between video narratives and draft sketches. On the main screen, an actor plays Fassbinder in a fictional interview and discusses hiring Chinese actors in his remake of David Lynch's *Blue Velvet*; on top of this screen is an actual interview with Fassbinder from 1980 shown upside-down. The first screen displays parodies of *Blue Velvet* made by the fictional Fassbinder as well as scenes from the production site. The second screen projects a collage of the painting works of this fictional Fassbinder, demonstrating a sense of violence and speed highly indicative of the times. The third screen is made up of three colors: black, white, and red, an abstract visual configuration that aims to disrupt the viewing of the other screens. These three components together form an intertextual relationship whose affected "falsity" indicates the aggression inherent to the act of viewing as well as questions of authorship rights. The work further explores the critical role of "form" in viewing—a longstanding concern in the tradition of painting.

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Li Jingxiong

*Untitled (Painting)*

2016

Styrofoam, metal boards, paint, metal steel frames,

sponge pads

150 x 220 cm x 7; 200 x 100 x 120 cm x 4;

100 x 200 x 49 cm x 4



Li Jingxiong (b. 1987, Anhui province) graduated from Nanjing University of the Arts in 2013 and currently lives and works in Shanghai. After graduation, Li co-founded the Department of Experimental Art at Nanjing University of the Arts, where he taught as a lecturer until 2014. Spanning painting, installation, writing, and photography, Li's work investigates the commonalities between the lavish consumerist landscape and lowbrow aesthetics to reflect "a uniquely Chinese and mesmerizing anxiety."

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## Li Jingxiong

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Li Jingxiong's *Untitled (Painting)* is a group of painting installations approximately 7.5 meters long and 2.2 meters tall, atop old steel frames and cushion pads of washed-out textures. The work depicts an uncanny scene: the moment immediately after a horrific fire. The artist was inspired by a notorious serial murder case that took place in Baiyin, Gansu province, in the 1980s. Notably, Li imbues the sense of violence with a dazzling, bright visuality, subtly alluding to the cruelty of mass media as well as the psychological mechanisms that underlie the audiences' desire for such information.

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Shen Xin  
*Provocation of the Nightingale (still)*  
2016-2017  
Four-channel video installation  
22'; 23'; 10'; 21'



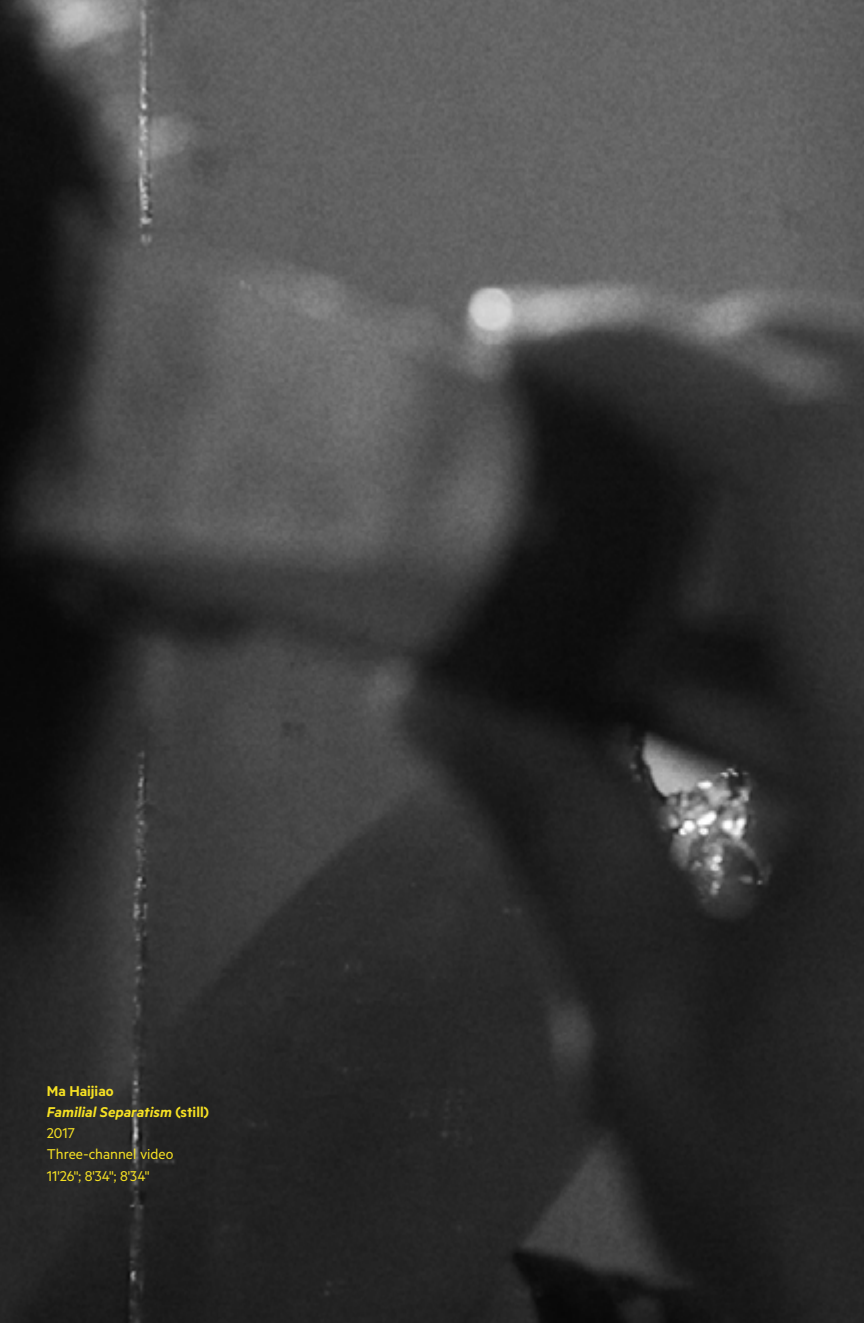
Shen Xin (b. 1990, Chengdu) received her MFA from the Slade School of Fine Art in 2014 and currently lives and works in London. Shen Xin's practice is based on her investigation into films and real events. In her work, the time of production and the time of viewing together raise to multiple interpretative possibilities. Drawing links between ostensibly unrelated events and concepts, her work reflects the circulation of feelings, value judgments, and ethics within individuals and communities.

## Shen Xin

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*Provocation of the Nightingale*, Shen Xin's latest four-channel video installation, takes its name from a bird frequently seen in titles of international charities and public service organizations—a sign of empathy, kindness, and purity that often symbolizes the salvation of oppressed communities. With this imagery, she explores the establishment of religious systems and their structures, the influence of Buddhism on the socio-political environment, and the subtlety of interpersonal relationships. The footage for this piece was shot in a theater at the Asia Culture Center (ACC) in Gwangju, a speculative site onto which the artist projected various scenarios—both fictive and documentary—to generate a certain alienating effect. The first video follows the dialogue between a female Buddhist teacher and her student, who is the manager of a DNA testing company. They engage in arguments about religion, work, and emotional wounds, and, with much difficulty, they express their love for each other. In the second film, the artist employs motion capture technology to convert the faces of people who share their DNA testing results on YouTube into animation, projecting them into the theater to intermittently share their experiences. The third scene depicts two dancers gradually losing energy and their observation of each other as they cease moving, a metaphor for interpersonal communication. In the fourth and final video, Shen Xin cuts together a variety of clips that have been uploaded onto the internet since 2000. At once provocative and realistic, this selection includes such extremes as a woman being beaten to death for burning a copy of the Quran.

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Ma Haijiao  
*Familial Separatism* (still)  
2017  
Three-channel video  
11'26", 8'34", 8'34"



Ma Haijiao (b. 1990, Hebei province) received his MFA from the China Academy of Art in 2016. He currently lives and works in Beijing. Concerned with everyday imageries, Ma's highly stylized filmic language weaves fictional narratives into a documentary format to capture the poetic excesses of the depicted characters and scenarios.

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## Ma Haijiao

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The three-channel video installation *Familial Separatism* originated in a letter Ma Haijiao accidentally received. The content of this missive subtly reflected the estrangement and confusion between different generations within a single family. Ma re-enacts the situations described in the letter, creating three characters and depicting their lives as a pseudo-documentary. They include a young soldier serving in the army, a middle-aged businessman with an eye disease, and an old, Christian intellectual, each belonging to a different generation. Ma traces the evolution of this family drama, even to its collapse, to reflect the social conditions of contemporary Chinese society. Filmed in a documentary style more broadly conceived, the work also incorporates staged re-enactments, voice-overs, and other devices to create a poetic, emotive atmosphere.

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Amy Lien & Enzo Camacho  
*LEAK LIGHT DEATH TIME HEAT*  
2017  
Five-channel video, mixed-media installation  
Dimensions variable



Amy Lien (b. 1987, USA) and Enzo Camacho (b. 1985, Philippines) are an artist duo who investigate the capital of financial and artistic exchange by living through contemporary art's global convolutions. They generate questions via an image-oriented production, creating affective material and a data-frantic cartography of places connected and disconnected to each other against theoretical rubrics of "economics" and "contemporary art."

## Amy Lien & Enzo Camacho

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Departing from a 2014 project at 47 Canal Gallery in New York, the artists here reconfigure their existing imagery into a new work that encapsulates the contemporary moment. That imagery consists of night footage shot on the streets of Metro Manila near call center offices. The recent proliferation of these buildings has altered the urban nightscape in many Philippine cities, as most of these companies operate on the working hours of their predominantly American and European clientele. The resulting sequences of one-second shots underscore the enthusiasms and anxieties that globalized outsourcing brings to an emerging economy. In the last several months, these same Metro Manila streets have been rapidly re-signified by thousands of nightly police and vigilante killings in the name of a drug war initiated by populist President Rodrigo Duterte. Using images of these killings as projection screens for the repurposed footage of nocturnal labor, *LEAK LIGHT DEATH TIME HEAT* is a stark re-evaluation of the desires and drives of speculative economies within globally networked capitalism.

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Wu Tsang  
*Shape of a Right Statement* (still)  
2008  
HD video  
5'



Wu Tsang (b. 1982, USA) is an artist and writer who lives and works in Los Angeles. Tsang's films, installations, performances, and sculptures move fluidly between documentary, activism, and fiction.

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## Wu Tsang

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Wu Tsang presents three video works produced over eight years that reflect her longstanding engagement with language and performance. In *Shape of a Right Statement*, one of her earliest works, Tsang stares directly at the camera and re-performs one section of "In My Language" (2008), a powerful manifesto by autistic rights activist Amanda Baggs. Shot at the Silver Platter, a queer club in Los Angeles where the artist previously performed the Baggs text at her then regular club night, Tsang draws connections between the autism community and queer experience, inviting the audience to contemplate the power of language in defining norms and precluding intimacy. *Miss Communication and Mr:RE* shows Tsang and African-American scholar Fred Moten in two portrait-like videos, accompanied by two speakers playing a series of voicemail messages that are part intimate self-reflection, part meta-commentary on the nature of and impediments to comprehension and communion. On the opposite side of the room, Moten, adorned with makeup and wearing a velvet shawl, whirls to an cappella rendition of the song "Girl Talk," in slow motion. The artwork is a poetic rumination on the figure of the drag queen and the mother.

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Liang Ban

*A Poet Who Never Saw the Ocean Wrote a Novel about the Ocean*

2017

Sound installation

Dimensions variable

21'



Liang Ban (b. 1985, Guangxi province) graduated from Guangxi Arts Institute in 2009 and currently lives and works in Beijing. Using everyday found objects as his primary medium, Liang Ban is adept at weaving poetic twists on historical, political, and personal events into his videos, installations, and paintings.

## Liang Ban

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In composing the sound installation *A Poet Who Never Saw the Ocean Wrote a Novel about the Ocean*, Liang Ban invited friends to record the sound of waves at various beaches across Greece, Italy, Spain, and the Balkan Peninsula. The beaches were those where a massive influx of refugees landed most frequently since 2015, including Kos, Greece, and Sardinia, Italy, among others. At the time of the recordings the refugee incidents had already long since ended; the waves have washed away the traces of their landing. But as the audience walks through the long corridor that houses his work, they are surrounded by the sounds of waves amplified and blended together, seemingly allowing some therefore become inscrutable, subtly allowing some vague, indelible feeling to permeate the nebulous space. Removed from the historical event itself, the sound of the waves collides with the reality of our moment.

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Li Qi  
*Jungle* (still)  
2017  
Single-channel digital video, color, sound  
8'29"



Li Qi (b. 1984, Qinghai province) graduated from the Sichuan Fine Arts Institute in 2009 and currently lives in Beijing and Chengdu. Working in photography, installation, and film, Li Qi taps into the unease of being an artist by unravelling and examining this identity anxiety against a broader social context.

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## Li Qi

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Li Qi's project *Jungle* originated in a residency in a factory in Dongguan, Guangdong. Here he observed the recent decline in the manufacturing industry, witnessing mass layoffs across several enterprises. During this time he came across a local company whose managers were organizing the remaining workers to plant vegetables in the company's garden. The effect was not only to put the talents of these workers from the countryside to good use and alleviate day-to-day living pressures, but also to reactivate these vacant factories. Based on this peculiar phenomenon, Li Qi parodies scenes from Hong Kong films of the 1990s—the pop cultural zeitgeist of the time—by restaging kung fu fight scenes in these factory workshops, juxtaposing them with footage of the laborers working and farming.

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Chen Chenchen  
*The Mercy of Not Killing* (still)  
2017  
Site-specific installation, mixed media  
Dimensions variable



Chen Chenchen (b. 1987, Zhejiang province) received a bachelor's degree from the China Academy of Art in 2010 and an MFA from the Academy's Total Art Studio in 2013. Spanning video, theater, painting, installation, performance, and music, Chen's practice is grounded in the artist's conceptual framework of "poor sci-fi" and "successology."

## Chen Chenchen

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In an enclosed, immersive space, Chen Chenchen presents *The Mercy of Not Killing*, a site-specific video installation that evokes a state of horror that exists between the real and the virtual. Subject to the regulations of civilization, people suppress the urge to kill and form a connection that temporarily suspends the dog-eat-dog state of nature described by Hobbes. Yet with the rapid development of information technologies, infinitely diminishing distances of communication engender increasingly tense and subtle interpersonal relations—a new state of nature in which everyone connects to everyone. *The Mercy of Not Killing* alludes to this critical state. Inspired by classic survival movie scenes, Chen Chenchen's video, shoots on location, uses a drone to record construction workers suspended from the top of a 34-meter-tall tower. This spectacle of survival is here re-enacted on one wall of the exhibition space—when viewers "climb" the tower, they see figures hanging by the cliff at their feet, as if they have power over their fate. The other walls in the gallery are covered by images in a panoramic, bird's-eye view of the city. Filling the space is the eponymous theme song for *The Mercy of Not Killing*. The viewers are forced by their proximity to confront a crisis of "others," calling attention to the symbolic power relations between spectator and spectated. Presented outside the space is a documentary on the shooting of *The Mercy of Not Killing*.

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Gao Lei

*Messiah - Fusion Dream of < J > < Z-772 > < 5 > (detail)*

2017

Aluminum basin, turbo water gun, syringe, bronze, wooden umbrella handle, stainless steel, hemp rope, disposable carpet, wooden staircase, rolling gate, hanger, belt  
Dimensions variable



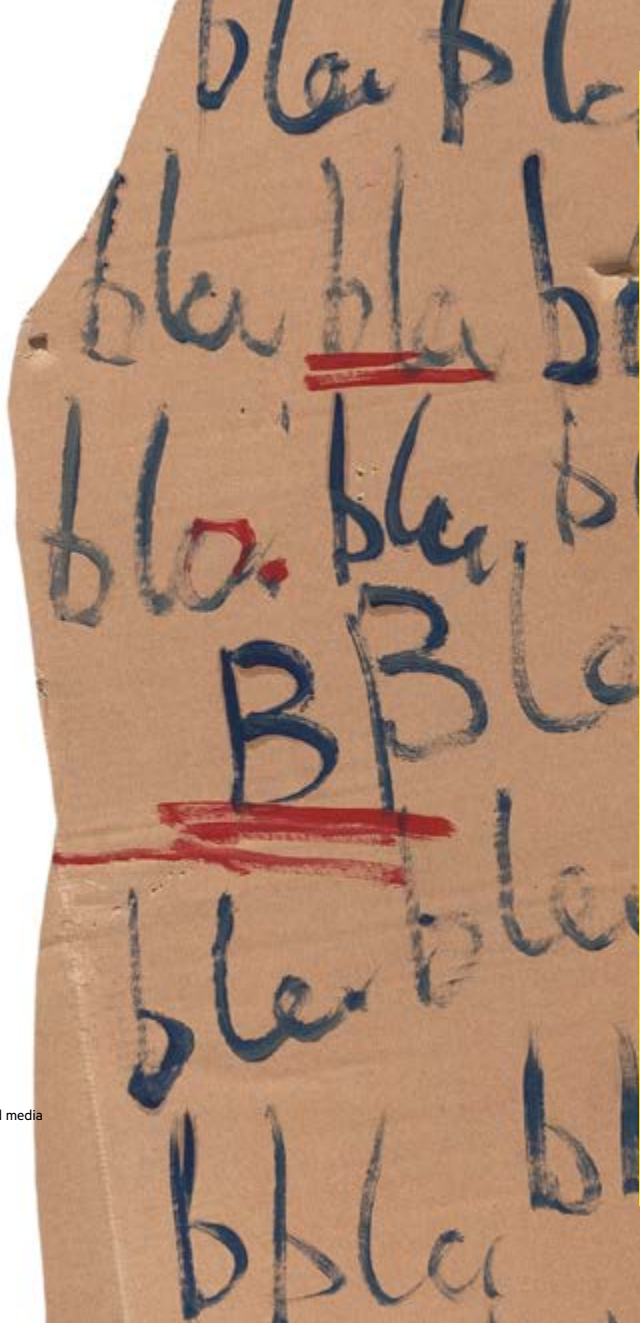
Gao Lei (b. 1980, Hunan province) graduated from the Central Academy of Fine Arts in 2006 and currently lives in Beijing. Working in painting, installation, photography, and sculpture, Gao Lei strips everyday objects of their original functions and, through formal translation and assemblage, imbues his art objects with a sense of the unknown and the uncanny.

## Gao Lei

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Gao Lei presents a series of recent works that, while independent of each other, are interrelated. In *J*, the artist gives an “umbrella implant surgery,” a common cardiac operation, to a broken model of an ox heart scavenged from a foundry. *Z-772* combines a deluge gun, a glass syringe, and an aluminum washbasin often seen in China in the 1980s into a single sculptural body, ordered according to the pressure of the liquid within. Simulating a systemic critical point between stability and collapse, the work traces the gradual elevation from the bottom to the top strata of a social structure, a hybrid form of attack and defense, spear and shield, that implies varied energies and crises contained within. The wall installation *5* is composed of metal filing cabinets often seen in companies, steel wire fences, and other everyday objects overlaid. The work adopts the form of a monumental sculpture to pay tribute to the five-day work week, first implemented in China on 1 May 1995 in an effort to maximize productivity—the now standard eight-hour work day, forty-hour work week. In this exhibition, the artist uses a hemp tug-of-war rope to delineate a pathway and a Chinese garden gate in the exhibition space. These three works form a holistic scene that reflects a state of mortal tension, between desire and danger, stability and collapse.

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**Ma Jianfeng**  
**X (detail)**  
2017  
Site-specific installation, mixed media  
Dimensions variable



Ma Jianfeng (b. 1983, Zhejiang province) graduated from China Academy of Art in 2007 before earning his MFA from Berlin University of the Arts in 2012. He currently lives and works in Beijing. Ma incorporates abandoned materials and objects from everyday encounters into his work and disrupts their inherent order. Through reconstruction, assemblage, and reconfiguration, he creates painting installations that are theatrical sites of chaos and ambiguity to interrogate the politics of space.

## Ma Jianfeng

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Ma Jianfeng here constructs a stage-like space in which he playfully arranges installations made of cardboard, wood, and other media and graphic elements. One can read these materials as “actors,” putting on a mesmerizing play. Viewers can freely draw links among the visual and textual elements to formulate multilayered meanings. The overall feeling of the space is of an elaborate chaos, as if secretly following the vicissitudes of some unknown plot into its dramatic climax. The work’s dark humor evokes a sense of anxiety and disquiet, as if heralding an imminent storm.

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**Zhang Ruyi**  
*Density*  
2017  
Site-specific installation, mixed media  
Dimensions variable



Zhang Ruyi (b. 1985, Shanghai) received her MFA from the Fine Art College of Shanghai University in 2012 and currently lives and works in Shanghai. Unfolding across a variety of media, Zhang's practice is steeped in her observations of the urban environment and her interest in the relationship between the individual, the external world, and physical space.

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## Zhang Ruyi

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Zhang Ruyi presents a series of works in which she uses materials such as wood, concrete, and nails as artistic media. The artist salvages these objects from sites of construction and demolition, staging them together into a "room that is not a room." In this way, private space and public space, the industrial and the natural, as well as the individual and the social are placed within a certain shifting relationship, creating a gesture of "construction" far removed from the standard definition.

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# Cultivating an I

Miao Ying  
*Chinternet Plus* (still)  
 2016  
 Multi-channel video, wallpaper  
 Dimensions variable

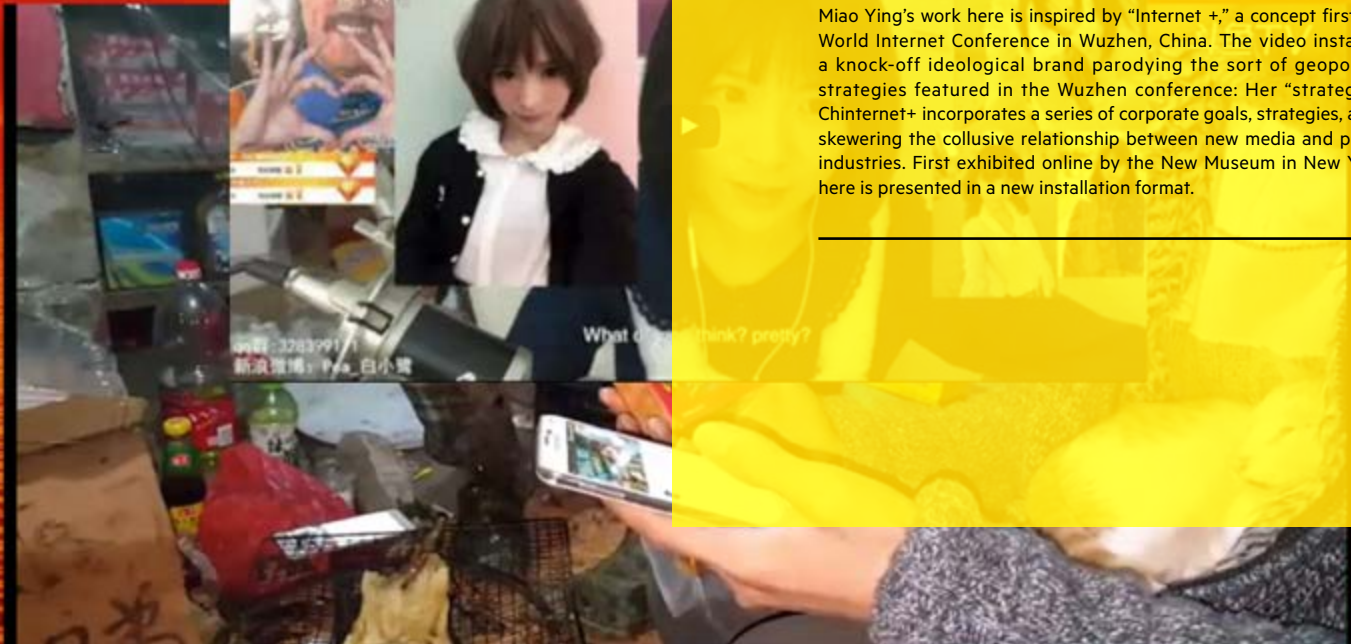
The most creative aspect of Chinternet Plus is its  
 counterpart. In this reality comes from the internet,  
 here reality serves comments and



Miao Ying (b. 1985, Shanghai) graduated from Alfred State College-SUNY with an MFA in electronic integrated arts in 2009. She currently splits her time between Shanghai and New York. In her work, Miao explores the potentials of mainstream media—including the internet, LAN, and smart phones—and technology to generate new forms of politics, aesthetics, and cultural awareness in representing reality.

## Miao Ying

Miao Ying's work here is inspired by "Internet +," a concept first proposed at the World Internet Conference in Wuzhen, China. The video installation espouses a knock-off ideological brand parodying the sort of geopolitical marketing strategies featured in the Wuzhen conference: Her "strategic proposal" for Chinternet+ incorporates a series of corporate goals, strategies, and brand stories, skewering the collusive relationship between new media and political marketing industries. First exhibited online by the New Museum in New York, *Chinternet+* here is presented in a new installation format.





Guo Xi  
Sanctuary Shop (detail)  
2017  
Aluminum, spray paint, video, found objects  
Dimensions variable



Guo Xi (b. 1988, Jiangsu province) graduated from New York University with an MFA in 2015. He currently lives and works in Shanghai. In his recent projects, the artist uses fictional characters, scenarios, and stories to stage interventions in reality, testing the degree to which reality can tolerate the intrusion of imagination.

## Guo Xi

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Since the Middle Ages, “seeking shelter in sanctuary” has been an extralegal moral action rooted in the urgency of times of terror. The contemporary Sanctuary Movement to protect undocumented immigrants began in the 1980s. During the Latin American civil wars of the time, religious communities in the US provided shelter for large numbers of refugees from these countries. Today, new immigration policies have reignited the movement, as Catholic churches, synagogues, mosques, and other religious sites have all become safe spaces for undocumented immigrants. In this work, Guo Xi attempts to give form to extralegal sites, depicting the various elements that shape those zones where the law is suspended or transcended—the divine authority claimed by religious groups; the inexorable force of natural disasters; the conflict between law and divine right; the site where criminals, fugitives, slaves, and undocumented immigrants may gather—and examining how these spaces alter or intervene into the course of society. Guo Xi presents various architectural details from sanctuaries together with ordinary objects that symbolize this extrajudicial mercy. He invites the viewer into a community founded on faith, considering notions of intervention, conflict, ambiguity, and concealed force.

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Wang Guangxu  
*Untitled (detail)*  
2017  
Wood, bamboo  
217 x 85 cm



Wang Guangxu (b.1978, Fujian province) currently lives and works in Beijing. His practice subtly interrogates notions of order, control, and social relations.

## Wang Guangxu

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Part of an ongoing series of similar works, *Immanent Force* is composed of magnet filaments pointing in various directions and held together by an iron board hidden within the walls. The other work, *Untitled*, is comprised of two “doors” made of thin bamboo stalks located at opposing ends of the space. The audience can only enter from one side of the door but cannot return, while the other is only for exiting but not entering, thus creating a spatial order and coercion.

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**Liao Fei**  
***A Sculpture of the Earth***  
2015  
Computers, monitors, steel frames  
250 x 38.5 x 31.5 cm



## Liao Fei

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Liao Fei (b. 1981, Jiangxi province) graduated from Shanghai Normal University in 2006 and currently lives and works in Shanghai. Liao Fei explores material relationships and tensions in his practice. Closely observing the operation of cognitive systems and how disciplinary powers are perpetuated through spatial planning, Liao Fei reveals the absurdity of the seemingly reasonable facades in his installation and video works.

Liao Fei's work, *A Sculpture of the Earth*, comprises of two computer screens displaying real-time typhoon monitoring information from the southern and northern hemispheres. Taken from official monitoring systems streamed online, this data generates synchronized surveillance videos that compress spatiotemporal conditions into fragmented data of remote interactions, reducing specific planetary landscapes to names, icons, and code. Here, "monitoring" not only constitutes a way of seeing, but also a means of understanding and programming space, alluding to a present moment that can be infinitely segmented. Liao Fei's other work, *Infinitely Approaching Flatness*, explores the theoretical concept of infinity. The artist takes a log of wood floating in water and cuts off the part of wood exposed to the air. He then returns it to the water and repeats this process the action until it is technically impossible to cut any more slices off. The number of pieces cut and their shapes are determined by buoyancy and the water level. In theory, a piece of wood can be divided infinitely, but due to physical constraints, the final number of wood pieces presented is finite. The piece highlights a tension between reality and potential, precision and chaos, forming an artwork that can never be finished.

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Lawrence Lek  
*Berlin Mirror (2042 Retrospective)* (still)  
2016  
Full HD video, stereo sound  
11' 41"



Lawrence Lek (b. 1982, Germany) is a contemporary artist living and working in London. He is a graduate of the Cooper Union, the Architectural Association, and Trinity College, Cambridge. Lek creates speculative worlds and site-specific simulations using gaming software, video, installation, and performance. Often based on real places, his digital environments reflect the impact of the virtual on our perception of reality. Contrasts between utopia and ruins, desire and loss, and fantasy and history appear throughout his work to symbolize this exchange.

## Lawrence Lek

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Lek presents for the first time an immersive screening room titled "Simultaneous Futurisms." In this screening room, *Sinofuturism (1839 - 2046 AD)*, a provocative video essay that speculates on China's technological development as a form of Artificial Intelligence, is projected simultaneously with *Berlin Mirror (2042 Retrospective)* and *Shiva's Way (Seoul 2072)*, both speculative documentaries taken from the point of view of fictional artists about the future state of globalized politics, technology, and the role of the individual.

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I was born in 1942 in Berlin, across the street from KW

# About the Curators



## 1. Guo Xi

Guo Xi joined UCCA in 2014 and is currently the Center's curator. A member of UCCA's Exhibition Department, Guo Xi has rich experience in curation, management, and coordination. She graduated from the Central Academy of Fine Arts with a master's degree in art museum studies in 2014. She served as assistant curator for a diverse range of exhibitions, including "Zeng Fanzhi: Parcours," "New Directions: Nadim Abbas," and "John Gerrard: Power.Play" in 2016; "Liu Wei: Colors" in 2015; and "Polit-Sheer-Form: Fitness for All" in 2014.

## 2. Yang Zi

Yang Zi received his bachelor's degree in philosophy and religious studies from Nanjing University and is currently a publications and exhibitions coordinator for UCCA. Yang Zi has worked in art criticism and curation for nearly ten years, starting with his participation in the YCCA project at UCCA in 2008, which introduced him to art criticism and writing. Prior to joining UCCA, Yang Zi was an editor of LEAP, and he has written extensively for a range of publications, including LEAP, the online Chinese edition of *Artforum* (artforum.com.cn), *Art Bank*, and *Art Time*, among others. He acted as executive editor on a series of UCCA catalogues, including Wang Yin: The Gift, Liu Wei: Colors, Xu Zhen: A Madeln Company Production, and Zeng Fanzhi: Parcours. His curatorial projects include "La Chair" (A+ Contemporary, Shanghai, 2016) and "Secret Chamber" (am Art Space, Shanghai, 2016).

## 3. Alvin Li

Alvin Li is the English editor of UCCA. He studied philosophy at Connecticut College and has been working as a writer and translator since 2013. Particularly interested in gender variance and queerness, as well as their implications for community practices and social relations, Li has been organizing queer film festivals, monthly screenings, and community-oriented events in Shanghai for three years. Prior to joining UCCA, he worked as an editor of LEAP. He is a regular contributor to a range of publications, including *Frieze*, *ArtReview Asia*, *Ocula*, *Randian*, and others.

## 4. Wenfei Wang

Wenfei Wang received her bachelor's and master's degrees from Nanjing University. She specializes in visual theory and is particularly dedicated to interdisciplinary research methods. She is a regular contributor to artforum.com.cn, *LEAP*, *China Art Weekly*, *Art Monthly*, *Ray Sight*, and *Southern Weekend*, among others. Wang is also a prolific translator who has worked on titles such as *Démocratie, dans quel état?* (SASS Press, 2015), and *The Virtual Window* (forthcoming). She is the co-author of *World Film Locations: Shanghai* (Intellect, 2014).

## 5. Philip Tinari

Philip Tinari has served as director of UCCA since late 2011. In his five-year tenure, he has mounted more than sixty exhibitions and organized a wide range of public programs and development activities. Prior to joining UCCA, he was founding editor of LEAP, the internationally distributed, bilingual art magazine published by the Modern Media Group. He is a contributing editor of *Artforum*, having previously served as founding editor of that magazine's online Chinese edition, artforum.com.cn. Tinari was named a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum in 2015 and to the Public Intellectuals Program of the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations in 2016. He holds degrees from Duke and Harvard is currently a D.Phil. candidate in art history at Oxford. He is co-curator, with Alexandra Munroe, of the exhibition "Art and China after 1989: Theater of the World," which opens at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in October 2017.

## About the Pavilion of Exception

During the exhibition, the UCCA Nave will transform into the “Pavilion of Exception,” a public space and reading room with an expansive collection of books selected by the exhibition curators, participating artists, and collaborating scholars. Artists, writers, and researchers will contribute to a rich slate of public programs around themes of technology, political economy, and literature, among others. These programs take the varied forms of lecture performances, conversations, workshops, screenings, talks, music and dance performances, and theatrical stagings, giving visitors more points of access to engage the ideas that inspired the exhibition and artists.

## Exhibition Catalogue and Related Design Products

The exhibition is accompanied by an eponymous publication which discusses the works included in the exhibition and presents newly commissioned writings on the contexts of its origin as well as the curatorial theses in the varied forms of essays, interviews, and more. UCCASTORE has released a line of exhibition-related limited edition design products. For more information, please follow the UCCASTORE official WeChat subscription account.



## Sponsorship

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**Hours**

Tuesday – Sunday, 10:00-19:00

Closed on Mondays

Last entry at 18:30

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