

A Call to Attention

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September 20, 2020 – January 10, 2021

Location:

UCCA Dune

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UCCA Dune presents “A Call to Attention,” a group exhibition examining concepts of attention and engagement through relational aesthetics, participatory installations, performance, and more.

From September 20, 2020, to January 10, 2021, UCCA Dune presents the group exhibition “A Call to Attention.” Spanning a variety of media, including installation, video, performance, drawing, audio, and interactive artworks, the show brings together artists Feng Chen (b. 1986 Wuhan), Lee Mingwei (b. 1964, Taichung), Nastja Säde Rönkkö (b. 1985, Helsinki), Shi Wanwan (b. 1981, Jiangsu province), Pilvi Takala (b. 1981, Helsinki), Yu Cheng-Ta (b. 1983, Tainan), and Zhu Tian (b. 1982, Zhejiang province), who engage or play with the viewer’s attention in novel ways that depart from more traditional, formal aesthetic appreciation. There are those who invite direct participation, changing the viewer’s behavior and inviting them to reflect on what brings anxiety, hope, and connection. Some draw one’s attention beyond the physical work to the things unspoken behind it—separated families, norms of privacy and openness, or the uncanny, tenuous relationship between technology and our perception of the world. Others look to film and its immersive capabilities—to pull the viewer into uncomfortable moments, or overwhelm them with fabricated narratives. Together, these works structure a different kind of exhibition, one that asks us to consider not just how we connect with art, but how we internalize the world around us. The show is curated by UCCA Director of Research Patrick Rhine.

The exhibition grows out of a fundamental premise: that we are living through a crisis of attention. Innovations in media and technology have expanded cognition dramatically, yet individual focus is splintered, co-opted, and monetized. New work and social cultures demand constant availability, 24/7. Often people are more fixated on the spectacle of experience, the image of the thing, rather than the thing itself. Socialization, leisure, and cultural forms should be a buttress against this encroachment, but even these activities are increasingly spectacularized and enervated. As sites of refuge and contemplation grow rare, impoverished by technological, political, and economic regimes that seek to maximally commodify human activity, “A Call to Attention” responds to this crisis by looking to a lineage of art-making centered on novel forms of engaging the viewer. It is an exhibition not of discrete aesthetic objects, but of attentional forms.

In the attention economy, the museum still retains its (perhaps increasingly tenuous) status as a heterotopic institution—a space sought out for its spiritual, psychological, or emotional potentials, outside of the modes of attention that characterize most of our activities. “A Call to Attention” is specifically curated in dialogue with the unique architecture and setting of UCCA Dune, designed by Li Hu and Huang Wenjing of OPEN Architecture, nestled in the sand by the Bohai Sea in the Aranya Gold Coast Community, 300 kilometers from Beijing. Organized within the buried cloisters of UCCA Dune, itself situated in the idealized beach resort community of Aranya—a zone of leisure, retreat, and cultural pursuit—“A Call to Attention” aims to create a space removed from spectacle (insofar as possible) in which visitors might find a more meaningful mode of retreat. Not a taxonomy of movements or forms, the exhibition instead raises questions related to the nature of this discourse: How do artists shift from a practice of aesthetic objects to works of aesthetic *engagement*? What strategies do they employ? Most importantly, once they have your attention, what do they do with it?

About UCCA Dune

UCCA Dune is an art museum buried under a sand dune by the Bohai Sea in Beidaihe, 300 kilometers east of Beijing. Designed by OPEN Architecture, its galleries unfold over a series of cell-like spaces that evoke caves. Some are naturally lit from above, while others open out onto the beach. As a branch of UCCA, China’s leading independent institution of contemporary art, it presents rotating exhibitions in dialogue with its particular site and space. UCCA Dune is built and supported by UCCA strategic partner Aranya, and located within the Aranya Gold Coast Community.

www.ucca.org.cn/en

About the Artists

Feng Chen

Feng Chen (b. 1986, Wuhan, lives and works in Hangzhou) creates hypnotic videos, sculptures, and installations that investigate synchronization between visuals and audio, inserting a wedge between different signals and leading us to question which of our senses we should ultimately trust. In his work, perception and reality interact with each other in labyrinthine ways, reclaiming that experience is the most essential and authentic part of existence and the ultimate nature of reality. His ongoing project *The Darker Side of Light* has been presented in multiple iterations, each time constructing

automated systems that dissect our perception of body and space and new reflections on the relationship between man and machine. Feng graduated from the Department of New Media Art of the China Academy of Art in 2009, and in 2014 he joined a two-year program at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam. His solo exhibitions include “Feng Chen Solo Show” and “Moment by Moment” at Capsule Shanghai. In 2018 he participated in Art Basel Hong Kong Discoveries with the solo project *The Darker Side of Light – Color*. A new iteration of this work, titled *The Darker Side of Light – Shadow*, was exhibited in 2018 at the Annex Project Space of the Fosun Art Foundation, Shanghai. Recent group shows include “The 6th Guangzhou Triennial – As We May Think: Feedforward”; “City Unbounded – Shanghai Jing’an International Sculpture Project”; and “8102 – On Reality” at OCAT Shanghai. His work was presented in 2015 at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten “OPEN 2015” in Amsterdam, and in the “Video Art | June Edition” exhibition at the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum, Mumbai. Feng’s works are featured in the White Rabbit Contemporary Art Collection (Sydney), and the collections of the China Art Museum (Shanghai) and the Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten (Amsterdam). His work has been covered in *Artforum*, *Randian*, *Art China*, and *Flash Art*.

Lee Mingwei

Lee Mingwei (b. 1964, Taichung, lives and works in New York and Paris) creates participatory installations, where strangers can explore issues of trust, intimacy, and self-awareness, and one-on-one events, in which visitors explore these issues with the artist through eating, sleeping, walking, and conversation. Lee’s projects are often open-ended scenarios for everyday interaction, and take on different forms and change over the course of an exhibition. Lee received an MFA from Yale University in 1997 and has held solo exhibitions internationally, including at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1998); Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston (2000); Museum of Modern Art, New York (2003); Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2004); Museum of Contemporary Art, Taipei (2007); Queensland Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane (2008); Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (2014); Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (2015); The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2015); Centre Pompidou, Paris (2017, 2018); and Gropius Bau, Berlin (2020), and has been featured in biennials in Venice, Lyon, Liverpool, Taipei, and Sydney, the Whitney Biennial, and the Asia Pacific Triennial.

Nastja Säde Rönkkö

Nastja Säde Rönkkö (b. 1985, Helsinki, lives and works in London and Helsinki) works

with video, performance, installation, participatory art, the Internet, and text. Her projects investigate the relationship between the digital era, power, humanity and the future of our planet. She is particularly fascinated with how concepts such as love, slowness, or affection can be silent yet radical ways to be and act in the world. Her practice dreams about the future and explores presence through the politics and poetics of emotion. She has exhibited and performed internationally in places such as Somerset House (London), Sydney Opera House, SXSW (Austin, Texas), Royal Academy of Arts (London), Glasgow International, FACT Liverpool, Museum of the Moving Image (New York), Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art (Helsinki), and Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art (Boulder, Colorado). Recent solo exhibitions include “for those yet to be” (EMMA Museum of Modern Art, Espoo, Finland, 2020); “Altered Breaths, Future Feelings” (Tampere Art Museum, Finland) and “for your charred bones and restless soul” (Aboa Vetus & Art Nova, Turku, Finland, 2019). She has been artist-in-residence in Somerset House Studios, London (2018-2019), Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge (2018) and Matadero Madrid (2016). Her work has been screened in festivals such as Helsinki International Film Festival - Love and Anarchy, and Ivy Film Festival, Brown University, Providence, USA, both in 2018. She is the 35th recipient of the Young Artist of the Year 2019 title and award, one of the most prestigious art awards in Finland. Forthcoming projects include a performance in New Performance Turku Festival in Finland and a residency at The Arctic Circle residency program.

Shi Wanwan

Shi Wanwan (b. 1981, Jiangsu province) is a conceptual artist who works through the creation of specific contexts. He graduated from the Sculpture Department of the Central Academy of Fine Arts with a master's degree, and is currently pursuing a PhD at the School of Intermedia Art of the China Academy of Art. He has held solo exhibitions at galleries and art institutions including Tang Contemporary Art (Beijing), A4 Contemporary Arts Center (Chengdu), Art Museum of Nanjing Museum of the Arts, Open Contemporary Art Center (Taipei), oMo Art Space (Berlin), and AMAC Projects (Paris), among others. His work has also been shown at Guanshanyue Art Museum (Shenzhen), Wanying Art Museum (Shijiazhuang, China), China Academy of Art Museum (Hangzhou), Jinji Lake Art Museum (Suzhou), CAFA Art Museum (Beijing), Today Art Museum (Beijing), Seoul Citizen's Hall, The 5th Jinan International Photography Biennale, UCCA Center for Contemporary Art (Beijing), Taikang Space (Beijing), Tokyo Art Expo Miyazu Daisuke Asia Image Collection Exhibition, The First

Changjiang River International Photo & Video Biennial (Chongqing), Art Sanya, The First International Contemporary Art Festival of China, Jimei (Xiamen), 798 Art Festival, Long March Space, Shanghai Zendai Museum of Modern Art, Shanghai Duolun Museum of Modern Art, and more. He currently lives and works in Suzhou and Hangzhou.

Pilvi Takala

Pilvi Takala (b. 1981, Helsinki) is an artist living and working between Berlin and Helsinki. Her video works are based on performative interventions in which she researches specific communities in order to process social structures and question the normative rules and truths of our behavior in different contexts. Her works show that it is often possible to learn about the implicit rules of a social situation only through its disruption. Her work has been shown at MoMA PS1 (New York), the New Museum (New York), Palais de Tokyo (Paris), Kiasma (Helsinki), Kunsthalle Basel, Temple Bar Gallery + Studios (Dublin), Manifesta 11, Careof (Milan), CCA Glasgow, International Film Festival Rotterdam, HotDocs (Toronto), Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art (Rotterdam), and the 9th Istanbul Biennial. Takala won the Dutch Prix de Rome in 2011 and the Emdash Award and Finnish State Prize for Visual Arts in 2013. Takala will represent Finland at the Venice Biennale, 2022.

Yu Cheng-Ta

Yu Cheng-Ta (b. 1983, Tainan) often carries out playful verbal communication with his subjects and viewers to create the concept of “life theater”—that is, deliberately setting up real life situations as scenes for filming. Yu earned both an undergraduate and a master’s degree in fine arts from the Taipei National University of the Arts. He was a recipient of the Taipei Arts Award in 2008 and the Beacon Prize at Art Fair Tokyo in 2012. Yu participated in the 6th Taipei Biennial and was featured in the Taiwan Pavilion at the 53rd Venice Biennale. In 2009, he participated in the Biennial Cuvée 08 at OK Center for Contemporary Art in Linz, Austria. In 2012, he took part in the 5th International Biennial of Media Art at Experimenta (Melbourne), and Le Festival Made in Asia (Toulouse). In 2013, Yu held a solo exhibition at the Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, and took part in the Asian Art Biennial at the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts (Taichung), as well as Queens International at Queens Museum (New York). In 2014, he held the solo exhibition “Practicing LIVE” at Taipei Fine Arts Museum, and participated in the 10th Shanghai Biennial, the 2nd CAFA Biennial (Beijing), and Asian Art Week at the Asia Society Museum (New York). In 2015, he took

part in the 56th Berlin International Film Festival Forum Expanded. In 2016, he exhibited at the Gwangju City Museum of Art and Centre Pompidou (Paris). His film project *Tell Me What You Want* (2015-2017) was presented at Centre Pompidou and Kunsthal Charlottenborg (Copenhagen) in 2018. In 2019, he participated in Performa Biennial in New York and created the character "FAMEME." In 2020, he held a solo exhibition at Gyeonggi Museum of Modern Art (Ansan, South Korea).

Zhu Tian

Zhu Tian (b. 1982, Zhejiang province, lives and works in London and Edinburgh) graduated from Royal College of Art with an MA in Sculpture in 2014; Bournemouth University with an MA in Sound Design in 2007; and the University of Nottingham with a BA in Economics in 2006. She won the Catlin Art Prize in 2015, the Broomhill National Sculpture Prize in 2014, and was selected as an Emerging Sound Artist in the UK in 2009. Solo exhibitions include: "The Best Of Everything" (Galerie Huit, Hong Kong, 2017); "She Wished He Would Haul Her Up to the Bedroom and Fuck Her" (MoCube, Beijing, 2017); "Throat" (Lychee One Gallery, London, 2016); "Dear Boss" (Cabin Gallery, London, 2015); "00:04:19" (AKP Space, Xiamen, 2015). Selected group exhibitions include the RSA Annual Exhibition (Scottish National Gallery, Edinburgh, 2020); "Sleeping Upwards, Rupturing the Surface" (Art Gallery of Mississauga, Mississauga, Canada, 2018); "I Do (Not) Want To Be Part Of Your Celebration" (Tank Shanghai, Shanghai, 2017); "Do Disturb" (Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2016); "Hair!" (Centraal Museum, Utrecht, Netherlands, 2016); "Nord Art" (Kunstwerk Carlshütte, Büdelsdorf, Germany, 2015); "Young Gods" (Charlie Smith London, 2015); "Nocturnal Friendships" (Lehmann Maupin, Hong Kong, 2015); "Vienna Calling" (Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Austria, 2014); and "China Design Now" (V&A Museum, London, 2008).