

He Xiangyu

Soft Dilemma

January 15 – February 20, 2021
22 Cortlandt Alley

Andrew Kreps Gallery is pleased to announce *Soft Dilemma*, He Xiangyu's first exhibition with the gallery, as well as the artist's first solo show in the United States.

He Xiangyu's conceptual practice manifests in multi-year projects that span sculpture, drawing, installation, film and publications. Emerging as part of a generation of artists who experienced the post-socialist state of China, He's work looks to shift the viewer's perception of cultural signifiers through an examination and manipulation of material. The exhibition highlights the divergent strategies used by He to investigate an array of clinical, social and anthropological themes, and his response to the ongoing political and existential crises in the world.

Upon entering the space, the viewer is confronted with *Practical Opacity*, 2020, a sculpture from an ongoing series that incorporates found school chairs, with doodles, scratches, stickers, and graffiti pointing to their prior careless, somehow violent use. Referencing the history of the readymade, the chairs are gathered together to form a matrix-like geometric composition of time capsules, carrying with them a history of restless behavior, apparently juvenile and innocent, that has today either dissolved or transformed into terrifying powers. He has also placed exact replicas of each individual chair at their base, following the same pattern, forming an arrangement that appears at once absurd, uncannily anthropomorphic, and esoteric. These small replicas are disquieting in appearance, contesting with the chair they replicate as if they were grown through some bodily, yet inorganic process, leaving the viewer to decide which chair is more "real". In *Corner*, 2020, from the same series, He delicately removed one of the chair's legs with a Japanese hand saw, and positioned the replica to highlight this absence, as if it is intended to function as a prosthetic limb.

He's new sculpture *Asian Boy*, 2019-2020, recalls his earlier *Cola Project*, 2009-2011, in which the artist boiled 127 tons of Coca Cola, until it transformed into a rock-like matter. *Asian Boy* appears to the viewer timid, confused, and half naked, representing either the artist himself as a young man, or a generalized idea of someone from the East as suggested by the work's title. The "Asian boy" holds tight with his slender fingers the absent can of cola, positioned as if he is going to open it and sip the modern time elixir for the first time in his

life. At once private, and intimate, his sculpted image is tied to consumerist desires in the post-globalised, neoliberal world. Upon further examination, his position becomes eerily subversive, as his hands could also be pulling a trigger to detonate a grenade to devastating effects. This thread of self portraiture, and examination of modern societies extends to He's work *Thursday*, 2018, in which a single egg rests on an egg tray cast from pure gold, as a reference to China's controversial one-child policy, which was in effect when He was born.

In the gallery's double height space, a monumental work from He's ongoing *Palate Project*, spans two walls. He started the project in 2012, after he briefly lived in the U.S., where language barriers proved difficult to navigate. He began translating the ridges, bumps, and grooves of his palate through perceptions felt with his tongue, into various visual forms. The act of translation, always aimed at demystifying the subject, here only seems to further complicate it. The phenomenological processes responsible for constructing a sense of interior space intrinsic to vocalization, the curl of the tongue that produces "rat" as opposed to "that", become a function of He Xiangyu's body mapping, supplanting the oral, and aural, by reaffirming the centrality of visual representation. Identifiable anatomical structures dissolve and re-emerge, eventually evolving into color fields with only the slightest hints of form. Based on a seemingly obvious premise, *Palate Project* revels in a Cartesian split of mind and body, illustrating that, in spite of proximity to subject, art remains the annotation to a lost referent.

He's two channel video *Terminal 3*, 2016-2019, presented in the adjacent gallery, was filmed over several years at Wuqiao Acrobatics School in Hebei Province, primarily attended by students aged 14-20 from Ethiopia and Sierra Leone. Xiangyu documented the intermingling of Christian and Muslim students, as they share a dormitory and prayer room. Moving from physical training to prayer, despite their collective experience, these students are immersed in absolute loneliness for the year long duration of their stay. In this kind of bizarre, rootless solitude, time and space become homogeneous and infinite, with only physical activity versus spiritual activity as the only boundary. This focus on the daily meditative and ritualistic routines also informs He's practice, particularly his *Palate Project*, where the constraint of repetition proves in turn generative, producing divergent outcomes and possibilities.

He Xiangyu lives and works in Beijing and Berlin. His work is currently included in the exhibition *100 Drawings from Now* at the Drawing Center, New York, on view through January 17. Past solo exhibitions of He's work include *New Directions: He Xiangyu*, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, 2015, and *Cola Project*, 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney, 2012, among others. In addition, He has participated in numerous group exhibitions which include: *Facing the Collector*, The Sigg Collection of Contemporary Art from China, Castello di Rivoli Museum of Contemporary Art, Turin, 2020, *Terminal 3*, Centre Pompidou, Paris, 2019, *Tales of Our Time* (Film Program), Guggenheim Museum New York, New York, 2017, *Chinese Whispers*, Paul Klee Zentrum, Kunstmuseum Bern, Bern, 2016, and *Fire and Forget: On Violence*, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, 2015, among others. He Xiangyu has additionally participated in the 5th Ural Biennale, Yekaterinburg, 2019, *Everything We Create is Not Ourselves*, the 58th Venice Biennale Chinese Pavilion, Venice, 2019, the 13th Lyon Biennale, Lyon, 2015, the 10th Shanghai

Andrew Kreps
Gallery

22 Cortlandt Alley,
New York, NY 10013

Tue–Sat, 10 am–6 pm
andrewkreps.com

Tel. (212)741-8849
Fax. (212)741-8163

Biennale, Shanghai, 2014, the 5th Yokohama Triennale, Yokohama, 2014, as well as the 8th Busan Biennale, Busan, 2014. He Xiangyu was named as a finalist for the “Future Generation Art Prize” in 2014, and won the 10th CCAA “Best Young Artist” Award in 2016. His recent interdisciplinary research publication “Yellow Book”, 2019 was awarded as one of “The Most Beautiful German Books in 2020”. His works have been collected by a number of public and private collections such as Asymmetry Art Foundation, London, Boros Collection, Berlin, Castello Di Rivoli, Turin, KADIST Art Foundation, Paris & San Francisco, Long Museum, Shanghai, M+ Sigg Collection, Hong Kong, New Century Art Foundation, Beijing, Rubell Family Collection, Miami, White Rabbit Collection, Sydney, and others.

Andrew Kreps
Gallery

22 Cortlandt Alley,
New York, NY 10013

Tue–Sat, 10 am–6 pm
andrewkreps.com

Tel. (212)741-8849
Fax. (212)741-8163



HE XIANGYU
Practical Opacity, 2020

Wood, iron, synthetic resin
varnish, acrylic paint, Edding
marker
5 large chairs: 25 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ ×
17 in (64.9 × 34.9 × 43 cm)
each; 5 small chairs: 6 × 3 $\frac{1}{8}$
× 4 $\frac{3}{8}$ in (15.1 × 7.9 × 11 cm)
each



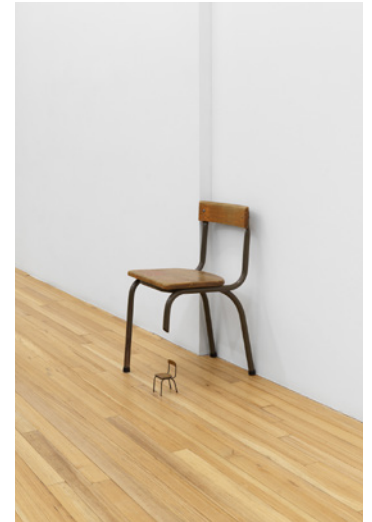
HE XIANGYU
Asian Boy, 2019-2020

Stainless steel
Approx. 54 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ in
(137.5 × 37 × 3 cm) without
base



HE XIANGYU
Thursday, 2018

Bronze, pure gold (99.9%), egg
2 × 11 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 11 $\frac{7}{8}$ in (5 × 30 ×
30 cm)



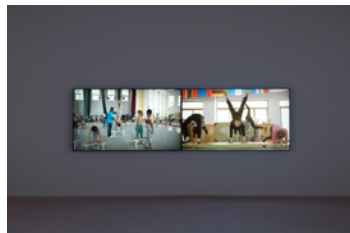
HE XIANGYU
Corner, 2020

Wood, iron, synthetic resin
varnish, acrylic paint
Chair: 28 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 14 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 18 $\frac{1}{8}$ in
(72 × 36.5 × 46 cm); Small
chair: 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ in (12 ×
6.5 × 7 cm)



HE XIANGYU
Hard Palate 20-2, 2020

Pencil, Japanese ink, colored
pencil, oil colored pencil, oil
stick, crayon on paper
236 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 205 $\frac{1}{2}$ in (600 × 522
cm) installed; 59 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 41 $\frac{1}{8}$ in
(150 × 104.5 cm) each panel



HE XIANGYU
Terminal 3, 2016-2019

2-channel HD Video, color, 5.1
surround sound, mixed media
35 minutes 35 seconds

Andrew Kreps
Gallery

22 Cortlandt Alley,
New York, NY 10013

Tue–Sat, 10 am–6 pm
andrewkreps.com

Tel. (212)741-8849
Fax. (212)741-8163

He Xiangyu

BORN 1986, KUANDIAN COUNTY, LIAONING PROVINCE, CHINA
LIVES AND WORKS IN BEIJING AND BERLIN

EDUCATION

2008 Shenyang Normal University, China

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2021 *Soft Dilemma*, Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York (upcoming)
2020 *Hard Palate*, WHITE SPACE BEIJING, Beijing
2019 *Who Are Interested in Us*, SCAI THE BATHHOUSE, Tokyo
 ROOT, A4 Art Museum, Chengdu, China
 Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art, Manchester
2018 *Evidence*, White Cube, London
2017 *Turtle, Lion and Bear*, Qiao Collection Space, Shanghai
 WHITE SPACE BEIJING, Beijing
2016 *Save the Date*, Kaikaikiki Gallery, Tokyo
 Save the Date, SCAI The Bathhouse, Tokyo
2015 *Dotted Line II*, White Space Beijing
 New Directions, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing
 Bischoff Projects, Frankfurt, Germany
2014 *Dotted Line I*, WHITE SPACE BEIJING, Beijing
 White Cube, London
2013 *Crossed Beliefs*, SCAI The Bathhouse, Tokyo
2012 White Space Beijing
 A4 Young Artist Experimental Season 2nd Round Exhibition, A4
 Contemporary Arts Center, Chengdu, China
 Cola Project, 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney
2011 *The Death of Marat*, Künstlerhaus Schloss Balmoral, Bad Ems,
 Germany
 Man on the Chairs, White Space Beijing
2010 *Cola Project*, Wall Art Museum, Beijing

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2020
- On Everyone's Lips, From Pieter Bruegel to Cindy Sherman*,
Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Germany
100 Drawings From Now, The Drawing Center, New York, NY
As Times Goes By, New Story from Garden, Cang Lang Ting The
Surging Wave & Ke Yuan, Suzhou, China
Studio Berlin, Cooperation between Boros and Berghain,
Berghain, Berlin
From Treatise on Superfluous Things, Jinji Lake Art Museum,
Suzhou, China
Pavilion of the P. R. China At The 58th International Art
Exhibition La Biennale Di Venezia, Chengdu, China
Eastern Suburb-International Art Exhibition Center, Chengdu,
China
The C, TANK Shanghai, Shanghai, China
Étude, Aranya Art Center, Beidaihe, China
Egg /, Nassauischer Kunstverein Wiesbaden, Wiesbaden,
Germany
Facing the Collector, The Sigg Collection of Contemporary Art
from China, Castello di Rivoli Museum of Contemporary Art,
Turin, Italy
The Allure of Matter: Material Art from China, Smart Museum of
Art and Wrightwood 659, Chicago
Seattle Art Museum, Seattle
Peabody Essex Museum, Salem
SCAI 30th Anniversary Exhibition, SCAI The Bathhouse, Tokyo,
Japan
- 2019
- Pavilion of the P. R. China At The 58th International Art
Exhibition La Biennale Di Venezia, Guardian Art
Center, Beijing, China
The Swim: a prophecy of the past, Theatre Image Forum, Tokyo,
Japan
Cosmopolis #2: Repenser l' humain, Centre Pompidou, Paris,
France
The Long Term You Cannot Afford, SAVVY, Berlin, Germany
Encounter: 2019 Shanghai Urban Space Art Season, Shanghai,
China
The 5th Ural Industrial Biennial of Contemporary Art,
Yekaterinburg, Russia
Inbetween: The 2nd Sculpture Projects Pingyao, Pingyao, China
Berlin Peking Visual Exchange, Museum für Fotografie, Berlin,
Germany
The Allure of Matter: Material Art from China, LACMA, Los
Angeles, CA
The Infinite Mix, 2019 Airport Biennale, Guangzhou, China
A White Space Odyssey, WHITE SPACE BEIJING, Beijing, China
After Colors, Aranya Art Center, Beidaihe, China
*Transcending Dimension: Sculpting Space- 2019 Shenzhen Pingshan
International Sculpture Exhibition*, Shenzhen, China
The 58th La Biennale di Venezia, China Pavilion,
Venice, Italy

- Now Is the Time: 2019 Wuzhen Contemporary Art Exhibition*,
Wuzhen, China
- Under Construction*, Tank Shanghai, Shanghai, China
- Remapping Reality: Selected Video Collection from Wang Bing*,
OCAT Shanghai, Shanghai, China
- Body Search I*, Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst Leipzig, Leipzig,
Germany
- The 11th Yebisu International Festival for Art and Alternative
Visions, Tokyo, Japan
- Chinese Whispers: Recent Art from the Sigg Collection*,
Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, Austria
- 2018 *Replay*, WHITE SPACE BEIJING, Beijing, China
- New Networks: Contemporary Chinese Art*, Dunedin Public Art
Gallery, New Zealand
- Our Actions are Our Future*, The Enjoy Museum of Art, Beijing,
China
- The Swim: a prophecy of the past*, Meyer Auditorium, presented by
Freer and Sackler Galleries, Washington, DC
- Trans-kulturale*, Konfuzius-Institut, Nuremberg, Germany
- The Swim: a prophecy of the past*, Billy Wilder Theater, presented by
UCLA Film & Television Archive, Los Angeles, CA
- The Way Things Run (Der Lauf der Dinge) Part III: Wage*, PS120,
Berlin, Germany
- River Separates Water*, Wood Street Galleries, Pittsburgh,
Pennsylvania
- Unlimited, Art Basel, Basel, Switzerland
- The Exhibition of Annual of Contemporary Art of China 2017*,
Beijing Minsheng Art Museum, Beijing, China
- Assembling*, chi K11 Art Space, Shenyang, China
- NGORONGORO II*, LEHDERSTRASSE 34, Berlin, Germany
- Art Patrons*, Qiao Space, Shanghai, China
- Frontier: Re-assessment of Post-Globalisational Politics*, OCAT
Institute, Beijing, China
- The God of Small Thing*, Leo Gallery, Shanghai, China
- Cosmopolis #1.5: Enlarged Intelligence*, Mao Jihong Arts
Foundation in collaboration with Centre Pompidou, Chengdu,
China
- 4th China Onscreen Biennial*, Los Angeles, CA
- A Chinese Journey: The Sigg Collection*, Het Noordbrabants
Museum, 's Hertogenbosch, Netherlands
- Remembering Tomorrow: Artworks and Archives*, White Cube, Hong
Kong
- Memory Palace*, White Cube, London
- 2017 *The Swim (premiere)*, Guggenheim Museum, New York; *The Swim*
(screening), Stadtkino Basel; 4A Centre for Contemporary
Chinese Art, Sydney
- Bunker #3*, Boros Collection, Berlin
- Frontier: Re-assessment of Post-Globalisational Politics*, OCAT
Shanghai
- Culture City of East Asia 2017 Kyoto Asia Corridor Contemporary
Art Exhibition*, Kyoto
- Soil and Stones, Souls and Songs*, Para Site, Hong Kong, China

- Partial Archive*, Yell Space, Shanghai, China
Institute of Fine Arts Presents 'chin(A)frica', The Duke House, New York University
Asia Corridor Contemporary Art Exhibition, Culture City of East Asia 2017, Kyoto
Copy / Paste, KAAF non-profit Institute and Taragan Azad Gallery, Tehran, Iran
Recent Acquisitions, Recent Developments, Si Shang Art Museum, Beijing
2016 *Create Spaces*, A4 Contemporary Arts Center, Chengdu, China
Hedge House Wijlre: Family Tree, Contemporary Chinese Art from the Sigg Collection, Bonnefanten Museum, Maastricht, Netherlands
Juxtapoz x Superflat, Vancouver Art Gallery, British Columbia, Canada
Our Paintings, Yang Museum, Beijing
Chinese Whispers, Paul Klee Zentrum and Kunstmuseum, Bern
Turning Point: Contemporary Art in China Since 2000, Minsheng Art Museum, Shanghai
Soil and Stones, Souls and Songs, Museum of Contemporary Art and Design (MCAD), Manila, Philippines
2nd Hangzhou Triennial of Fiber Art: Weaving & We, Zhejiang Art Museum, China
Soil and Stones, Souls and Songs, Museum of Contemporary Art and Design, Manila, Philippines; Para Site, Hong Kong, 2017
Heavy Artillery, White Rabbit Collection, Chippendale, Australia
The 3rd Nanjing International Art Festival: HISTORICODE: Scarcity and Supply, Baijia Lake Museum, Nanjing, China
Yinchuan Biennale: For An Image, Faster Than Light, Museum of Contemporary Art Yinchuan, China
Total War or Nothing at all - hot, J:Gallery, Shanghai
New Capital, Museum of Contemporary Art Chengdu, China
On Drawing: Apperceive of Liberation, Wuhan Art Museum, China
Exotic Stranger, Galerie Paris-Beijing, Beijing, China
Everyday Legend, Shanghai Minsheng Art Museum, Shanghai, China
2015 *13th Biennale de Lyon*, France
Glamour Can Melt Gold, Edouard Malingue Gallery, Hong Kong
Jing Shen: The Act of Painting in Contemporary China, Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, Milan, Italy
Ink Remix: Contemporary Art from Mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong, Canberra Museum and Gallery, Australia
Fire and Forget: On Violence, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin
28 Chinese, Asian Art Museum, San Francisco; San Antonio Museum of Art, Texas
2nd CAFAM-Future Exhibition: Observer-Creator, K11 Art Center, Hong Kong, China
Void: There's Nothing More Left, But A Little Trace from Human Being, Ginkgo Space, Beijing
2nd CAFAM-Future Exhibition: Observer-Creator, CAFA Art Museum, Beijing; K11 Art Center, Hong Kong
The System of Objects, Minsheng Art Museum, Shanghai

- 2014 *Mass Group Incident*, 4A Center for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney
10th Shanghai Biennale, Power Station of Art
Future Generation Art Prize: Exhibition of Shortlisted Artists, Pinchuk Art Centre, Kiev, Ukraine
The 8th Busan Biennale, Busan Museum of Art, Busan, Korea
The 5th Yokohama Triennale, Yokohama, Japan
Inhabiting the World, Busan Biennale, Busan Museum of Art, South Korea
Yokohama Triennale, Yokohama, Japan
The 8 of Paths, Uferhallen, Berlin
Vision of Proximity, SCAI The Bathhouse, Tokyo
Through All Ages, Long Museum West Bund, Shanghai
Memo II, White Space Beijing
- 2013 *Criss-Cross*, Long Museum Pudong, Shanghai
28 Chinese, Rubell Family Collection, Miami

SELECTED AWARDS

- 2014 Future Generation Art Prize Nomination

SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

A4 Art Museum, Chengdu, China
Art Vintage, Israel
Artron Art Museum, Shenzhen, China
Asymmetry Art Foundation, London, UK
Boros Collection, Berlin, Germany
Castello Di Rivoli, Turin, Italy
Domus Collection, USA
Fatima and Eskander Maleki Foundation, London, UK
Frank Yang Collection, Shenzhen, China
JNBY, Hangzhou, China
Long Museum, Shanghai, China
M WOODS, Beijing, China
M+ Sigg Collection, Hong Kong
Mercator Foundation, Essen, Germany
New Century Art Foundation, Beijing, China
Rubell Family Collection, Miami, USA
Sishang Museum, Beijing, China
TANK, Shanghai, China
Tokyo Photographic Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan
White Rabbit Collection, Sydney, Australia
Yinchuan Art Museum, Yinchuan, China