

CONTENTS | Shang Tun Solo Exhibition

Duration: 20 May 2016 - 10 July 2016

Address: Don Gallery, Unit 26, 1331 Middle Fuxing Road, Shanghai

Opening: Friday, 20 May 2016, 5-7 pm

Don Gallery is delighted to announce that the first solo exhibition of artist Shang Tun will open on May 20th, 2016. Entitled *Contents*, this show attempts to provide a full display of Shang Tun's practice through tracing the origins of his art. The featured works include iconic Shang Tun paintings, videos and installations, in addition to archival material such as the artist's manuscripts. At the opening, a performance made especially for this show will lead the audience, prior to entering the exhibition space.

Shang Tun's work forms a complicated system with rich metaphors and unconstrained imaginations. Basic commodities, such as lifebuoys, tissues and plastic stools, are recurring motifs of his work. These materials and their derived symbols have been translated into an artistic language with great expressiveness. All of Shang Tun's art is drawn from his deep interest in the social and cultural entanglements of ordinary people and the stark reality of consumerized society in China. Since the early 90s China has become the world's factory and exported a vast amount of cheap commodities to the world, but what lies behind this booming trade are the toiling workers and their sorry predicament. Living in such a contrasting reality, Shang Tun reveals the value orientation and troubles of Chinese society today through an art that is either metaphorical or straightforward.

When it comes to his attitude to life and himself, Shang Tun says, "Although suffering from a complicated, heartrending and anxious life, I face it in a mood of joyful, jovial carelessness." From the Central Academy of Fine Arts to the highly competitive business world, Shang Tun has experienced a twist-filled and inspirational life. Returning now to the contemporary art scene, he is to become the first contemporary artist to paraglide independently. He shuttles between the world of the real and the virtual space, weaving sky and data together through artistic expression, and using his own body and other mediums sourced from Google Earth to GPS to bring his pieces to life. Indeed, Shang Tun is currently the only contemporary artist to use an unmanned aerial vehicle for the creation of art.

For this exhibition, Shang Tun sets up the gallery space within the historical building, Blackstone apartment, in a brand new way. In the main room, there is the work *Periscope forms a Part of the Respiratory System*, a special installation tailored for the gallery space that connects the viewer to the landscape constructed by the artist. Through the refraction of sight in the space, it extends the exhibition into a virtual blue cloud-speckled sky. The middle room of the gallery has been transformed into a mini artist studio, full of stuff that is relevant to the artist's work, including drawing tools and materials, photographs, small installations, models, and electrical equipment, inviting the audience to enter and explore the artist's "temple of mind".

A separate gallery space will be turned into a video room to display several video works that Shang Tun has made recently, which offer a gateway into the artist's world.

CONTENTS | Shang Tun Solo Exhibition consists series as below:

Could I help you: contemplating the uselessness and impotence of rescue through a lifesaver.

Shitizen: rethinking class relations between ordinary people and international exportation through the cheapest plastic-molded furniture.

U DNA: looking for traces of order, joy and sorrow from used pale tissue-balls.

Hold it gently: investigating the level of injury exorted through the transformation of industrial ready-mades.

Embolism: depicting the elusive nature of freedom and release through the lens of oppression and discomfort.

Invisible: interpreting the optimism and confidence through body art.

Shang Tun was born in 1968. Like other people of his generation, his life is full of twists, closely bound to China's contemporary political and economic history. In the last summer of the 80s, graduating from the Central Academy of Fine Arts, he chose not to stay in Beijing, a city under extreme tension, returning instead to Guangzhou. Over the next 20 years he started his own business and began a life of "making money" instead of "making art". However, coincidentally Warhol's "good business is the best art" has become a popular maxim in China from the 90s on, after it fully embraced the market economy. For those who are passionate about culture, art is like a seed that will blossom sooner or later in their hearts. And to Shang Tun, art is the blossom of dawn that he finally plucks at dusk.

Shang Tun lives and works in Shanghai, Guangzhou and Hong Kong. His recent exhibitions include: *TONGXI • The 3rd China International Art Forum & Exhibition on Installation Art*, Today Art Museum, Beijing, 2016; *WE: A Community of Chinese Contemporary Artist*, chi K11 art museum, Shanghai, 2016; *Jimei X Arles: Encounters the East & West, International Photo Festival*, Yuanbo Garden, Xiamen, 2015; *Life after Stepping out of Xiaowei*, CAFA Art Museum, Beijing, 2015.