

BEI YU

2018-2025

[YUTING CAI]

Biography of Yuting Cai (artist name: Bei Yu)

Bei Yu is a film essayist and multimedia artist whose work delves into the poetic and political dimensions of the moving image. His artistic journey focuses on exploring urban communities and the enduring effects of historical traumas on contemporary daily life. Bei Yu intertwines elements of fiction and documentary to create multi-layered narratives that reflect urban legends, societal rumours, and gossip. He often employs an essayistic structure to redefine reality and provide his personal perspectives on societal issues.

Born and raised in China, Bei Yu began his artistic education at Nanjing University of the Arts, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Fine Art & Painting in 2016. Seeking to expand his artistic horizons, he pursued further studies at the Royal College of Art in London, obtaining a Master of Arts in Fine Art & Print in 2018, followed by a Master of Research in Fine Art & Humanities in 2019. He completed his Doctor of Philosophy in Fine Art (Practice-led) at the University of Leeds in 2024, where his thesis, "Montage in Motion: Exploring Chineseness and Transgenerational Trauma through Filmmaking Practice," showcases his engagement with complex cultural and historical themes.

Bei Yu's moving image practice is characterised by two primary routines. The first focuses on mainland Chinese society, exploring themes of Chineseness, montage, and transgenerational trauma through both documentary and fictional narratives set in historical urban architecture. His second routine transcends regional boundaries, addressing universal human experiences by depicting love stories in urban settings, often deconstructed through non-linear timelines to evoke emotional responses from the audience. Montage plays a crucial role in Bei Yu's work, not only as a filmmaking technique but also as a research method to dissect and reconstruct concepts of time and space. His expertise extends beyond moving images to multimedia works, including large prints and installations, informed by his comprehensive background in painting, printmaking, and filmmaking.

Bei Yu's films have been showcased at various international film festivals and have received numerous awards. Notable works include "Rain, Tear, and Sweat" (2022), which was selected to screen at the Architecture Film Festival Rotterdam, Odyssey 2023: A Chinese Cinema Season in London, and the International Art Film Festival in Birmingham. "Microdistrict" (2022) was selected to screen at the 12th Video Art and Experimental Film Festival in New York. "A Tale of Duo Cranes" (2021) was selected to screen at the 7th Urban Film Festival in Miami. "Secret Archives: Red Carpet House" (2021) won the International Audience Award at the Sixth Art Visuals & Poetry Film Festival in Vienna, Austria.

In December 2024, Bei Yu will present his film practice and research at the "Memory and Trauma" international conference, organised by the London Centre for Interdisciplinary Research, at Birkbeck, University of London. In 2025, Bei Yu will be a visiting artist and researcher at the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum in Japan, where he will continue to expand his artistic research and practice. Between 2024 and 2025, he is a postdoctoral fellow at the LAHRI Institute at the University of Leeds, and he also serves as a visiting assistant professor teaching fine art, film, and AI at Tongji University in Shanghai, China.

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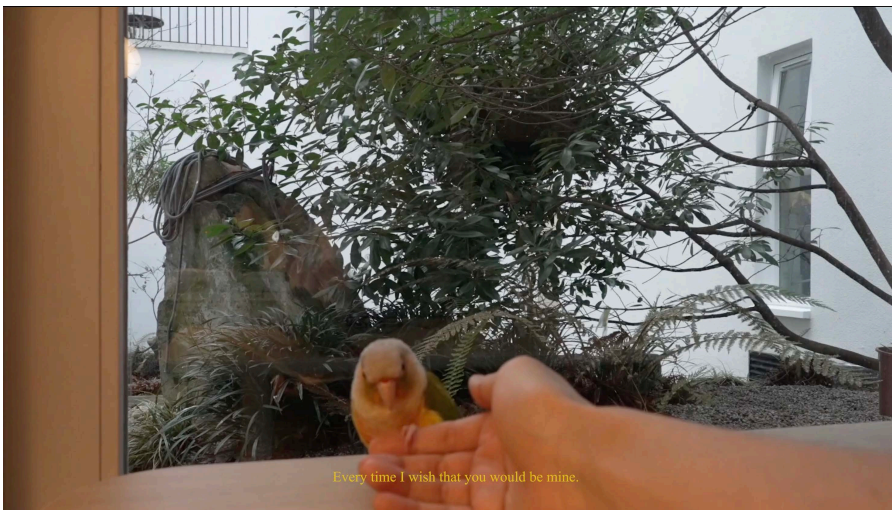
VAEFF

NEW YORK CITY

November 18 - 19

Tribeca Film Center | Producers Club Theaters

Videoart.net



Every time I wish that you would be mine.



Parrot Non-Fiction (2025)

The essay film "Parrot Non-Fiction" explores the concept of sensory montage, drawing inspiration from the work of anthropologist and practitioner Andrew Irving. His creative work, "Into the Gloaming: A Montage of the Senses," featured in "Transcultural Montage," is central to "Parrot Non-Fiction's" narrative. Irving's idea that our daily experiences form a "living montage" of sensory inputs—such as sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches—serves as a canvas for interpreting dynamic and context-specific realities.

In "Parrot Non-Fiction," the protagonist's journey through a city, encountering historic buildings and recording remnants, reflects Irving's concept. The essay uses montage scenes to combine sensory elements, demonstrating how a place can evoke the presence and absence of a person through conflicting sensory experiences. This sensory dissonance highlights the complexity of human perception and the active role we play in understanding our surroundings.

These montage scenes are more than narrative techniques; they are anthropological explorations of our experiences and interpretations of the world, capturing everyday sensory montages and echoing Irving's insights that our reality is shaped by a blend of senses.

The essay blends documentary and animation, partly about the protagonist's pet parrot's daily life and partly creatively imagining everyday sensory experiences. This approach metaphorically explores the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction, juxtaposing real-life footage with animated sequences that interpret and reimagine daily experiences through a sensory montage. The interplay of these forms embodies reflexivity and reflection in anthropology, as the protagonist's subjective experience and interpretation of sensory montages are reimaged, engaging in a reflective dialogue between perceived reality and creative expression.

Expected to finish in February 2025

Director/Script Writing/Filming: Bei Yu

Animator: Yiwei Chen

Voice-over: Joseph Samuel King Milne

About Length: 10-15 minutes

Night Non-Fiction (2025)

This essay film explores the intertwining narratives of night stories from a deeply personal perspective. Set in an urban cityscape, the essay captures the essence of everyday detailed moments through both indoor and outdoor experiences. For example, the momentary sweep of headlights from turning cars affects the surrounding light sources between streets and houses, blending objects in shadows and ambiance.

The essay constructs its narrative through five different scenes, each an individual short moment, yet interconnected—much like starters, main courses, and desserts in a dinner menu. It begins with animation, transitions to documentary footage in the third scene to underscore the relationship between reality and fiction, then returns to animation, and finally concludes with documentary footage of a pink balloon flying in the night city, emphasizing the interplay between the real and the imaginary.

Length: 10 minutes

Expected to finish: March 2025

Director/ Screen writer/ Filming: Bei Yu



Rain, Tear and Sweat (2022)

In recent years, Shanghai has proposed building 'five new cities' to provide high-quality medical and educational resources to new immigrants. These cities feature extensive facilities, creating a complex urban structure with diverse emotional responses from residents.

The narrative's first half (1-7 minutes) follows the protagonist hailing a taxi from the suburbs to downtown Shanghai. The viaducts connecting the old and new parts of the city symbolize the link between past and future.

In the second half of the narrative (7-15 minutes), the story shifts to explore urban legends and rumors in Shanghai. The Denis Apartments, built in 1930, had four standing statues that were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution in 1966. The protagonist encounters a butterfly, which is a city ghost that takes them into a room to imagine and invent stories about "her." Through the protagonist's relationship with the butterfly, the narrative aims to draw a parallel between transgenerational traumas from historical events and urban legends and rumors in contemporary China.

The viaducts serve as a symbolic link between the protagonist's journey and the exploration of urban legends, representing the connection between different parts of the city and the link between past and present.

Link:

<https://vimeo.com/739569861>

Director/Script Wring: Bei Yu

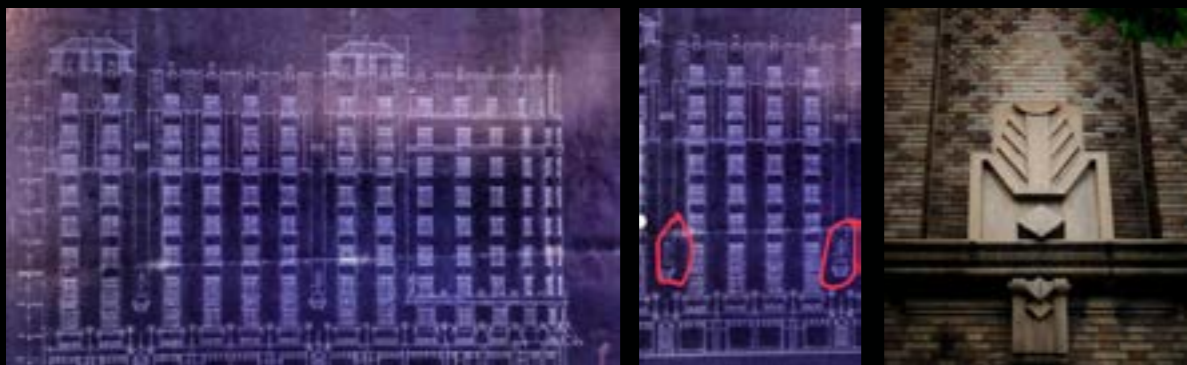
Animator: Lopnix

Voice-over: Joseph Samuel King Milne

Editing: Alejandro Subia

15 minutes





These displays show the design draft of the Denis Apartments, including a close-up of the base of the statues, which are marked in red and clearly visible in the drawing. These statues were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. In 2019, the government began restoring the Denis Apartments, but the restoration of the statues proved to be quite difficult. Now, every night around 6:00 p.m., the 'resurrected' statues stand on the building like city ghosts.



RAIN, TEAR AND SWEAT

BEI YU | CHINA 2022 | 14 MIN. | ENGLISH | ANIMATION, EXPERIMENTAL, SHORT FILM



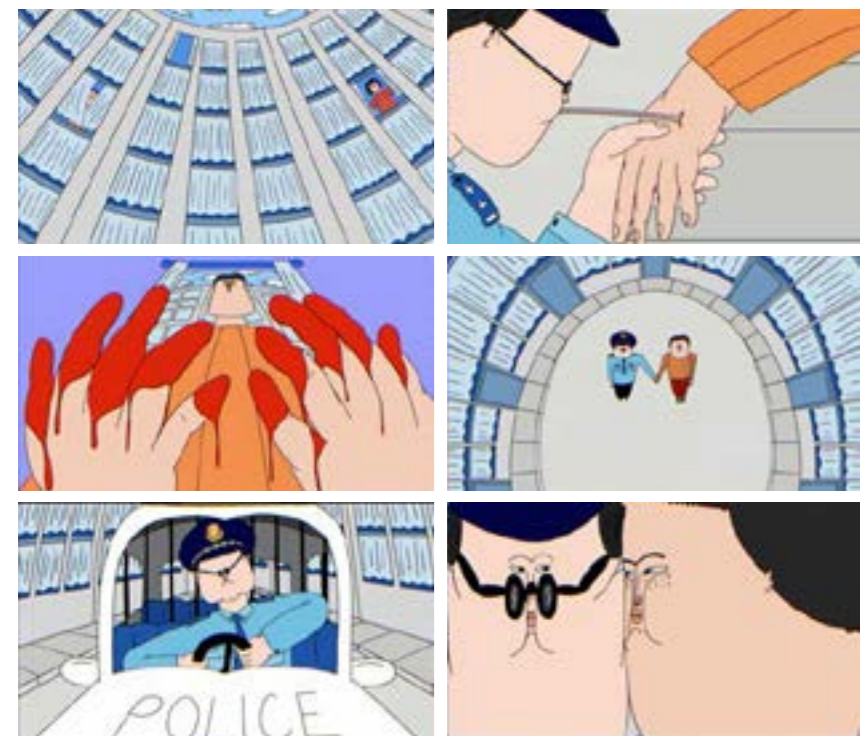
Artist Bei Yu explores the notion of ‘Chineseness’ in his animation films. That inevitably results in multi-layered stories. Yu often chooses a tangible object in a city, in the past, to structure his narrative. In Rain, Tear and Sweat he centres on the jumble of viaducts that separate old Shanghai from the newer districts. But also the Art Deco apartment complex Denis, whose four statues perished in the iconoclasm of 1966. The grainy, moving black-and-white images, sometimes with a touch of colour, engender a sense of melancholy, allowing viewers to ponder a world that we create together layer by layer.

ORDER

SHORTS: GETTING PERSONAL & INTRO
SALOMÉ ATTIAS

SOLD OUT





Screenshot, *Microdistrict* (2022), colored animation, 02:27

Director/Script writing: Bei Yu

Animator/Concept Art: Dal Park

Composer/Mix: Issar Shulman

Voice-over: Joseph Samuel King Milne

Microdistrict (2022)

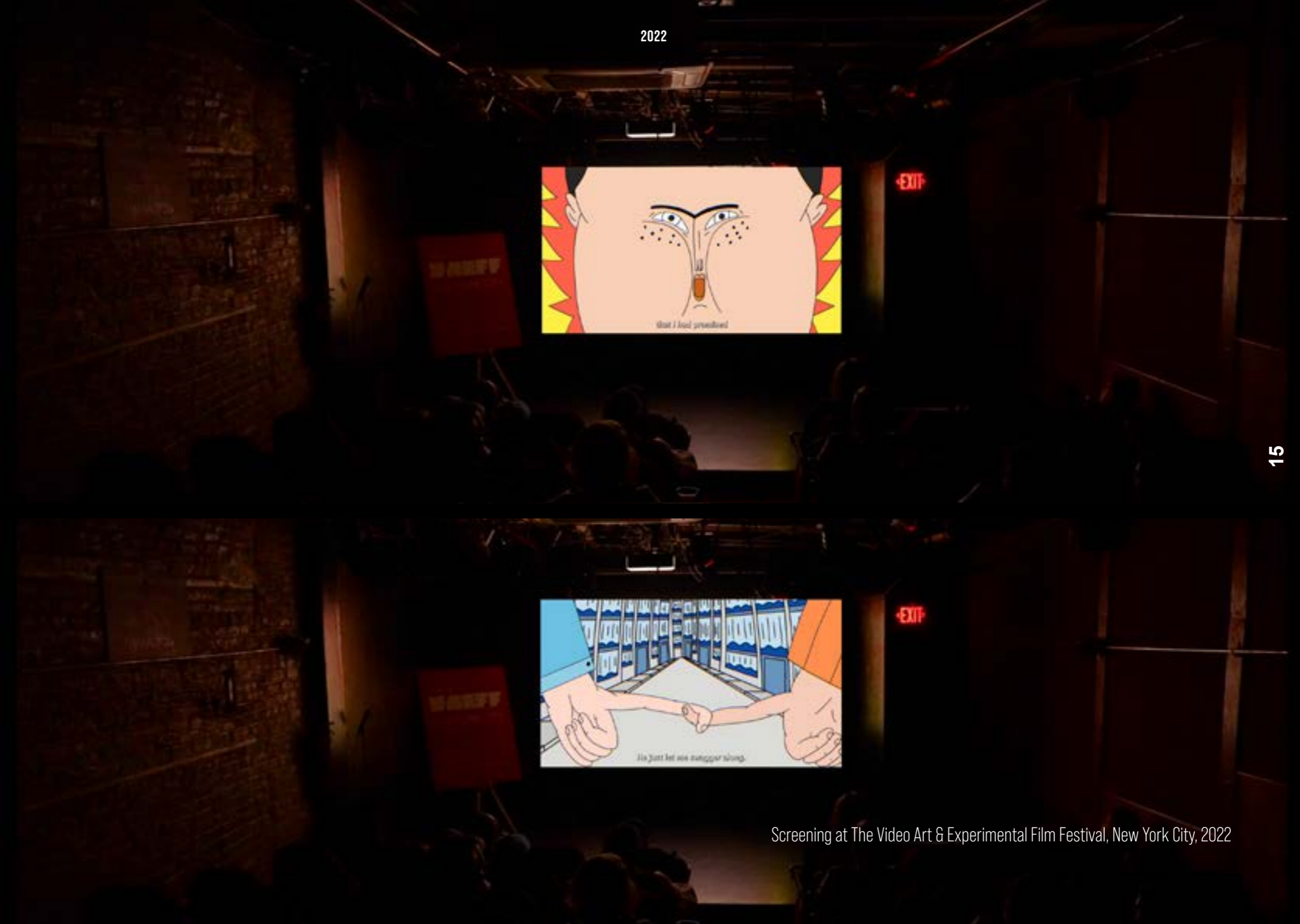
In the mid-20th century, China adopted the microdistrict (小区) concept from Soviet urban planning. This approach aimed to create self-sufficient residential areas with essential services within walking distance. Initially providing public housing for government workers, microdistricts (小区) soon became the national standard for residential development.

Today, microdistricts (小区) are more than just architectural structures; they symbolise community and status. As students begin their lives in new schools, they often ask one another, 'Which microdistrict (小区) do you live in?'

This essay film explores the journey of the microdistrict (小区) and the sense of community and love that people experience within these neighborhoods.

Link:

<https://vimeo.com/737264159>



Screening at The Video Art & Experimental Film Festival, New York City, 2022



Deconstruction: Just an Ordinary Day (2024)

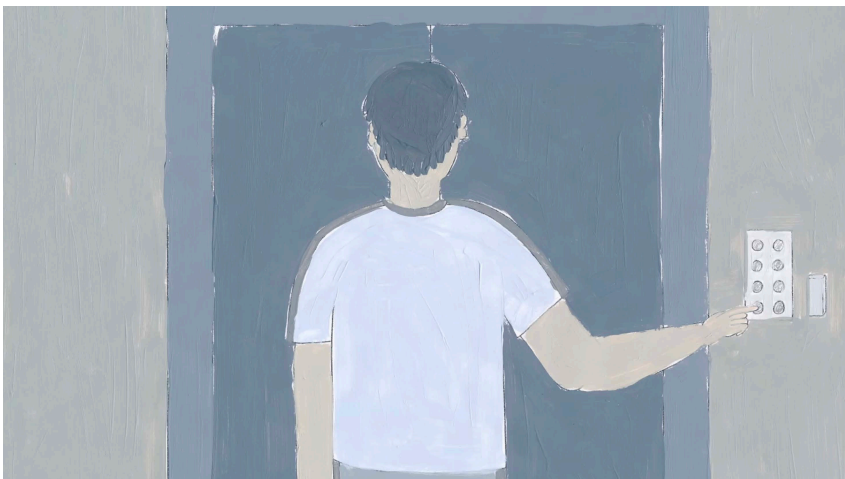
This essay film experimentally blends real-life documentary footage with creative animation. It offers an introspective glimpse into the daily life of the protagonist, capturing the mundane yet complex moments that constitute a typical day. From battling hunger and body image issues to experiencing fleeting connections at the gym and imagining falling in love, the narrative deconstructs ordinary experiences to reveal deeper emotional and psychological layers. Through its mix of mediums, the essay not only portrays reality but also reimagines it, providing a reflective and engaging exploration of everyday life.

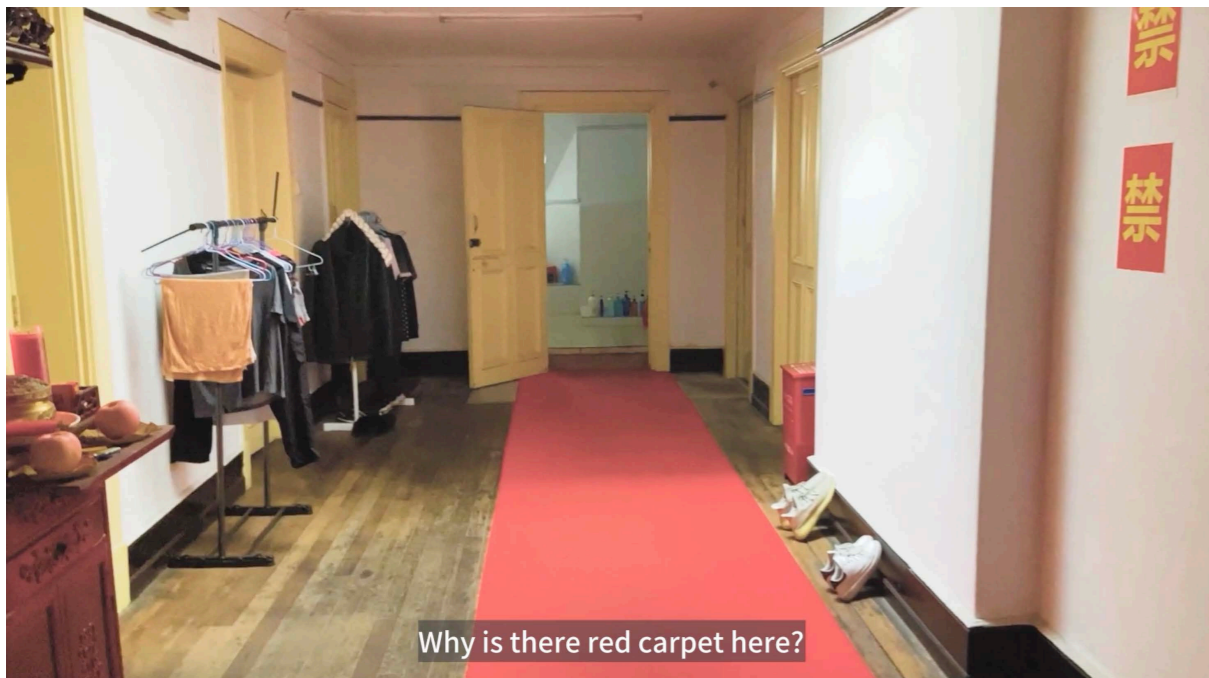


"Deconstruction: Just an Ordinary Day (2024)" is also an attempt by the author after completing "Rain, Tear and Sweat (2022)" and "Microdistrict (2022)." After these, the script for "Parrot Non-Fiction" (2025) is completed.

Expected to finish in November 2024

About Length: 5 minutes





Secret Archives: Red Carpet House (2021)

The Red Carpet House, located at No. 800 Changle Road in Shanghai – the most central and expensive part of the city – is now a dilapidated garden house. The Red Carpet House once belonged to a prominent figure in Shanghai. After the Cultural Revolution and subsequent social changes, the Red Carpet House was divided from a single-family home into properties for many families.

Link:
<https://vimeo.com/723429968>



Nodes
FESTIVAL PREVIEW 2021

Opening at Stadtkino - the international audience award

The sixth Art Visuals & Poetry Film Festival was held for the first time at Künstlerhaus Wien from November 9 to 13, 2021. The festival has been held since 2013 and in 7 years has grown to become the second largest poetry film festival in the world.

The four-day event opened on November 9, 2021 at Stadtkino im Künstlerhaus with the International Audience Award. In a live voting the best international poetry film 2021 in the narrative-documentary genre was awarded. The winners in the audience's favor were ex-aequo the Chinese film by Bei Yu "Secret Archives: Red Carpet House" with Mariam Al-Dhubhani's "No words" (poet Ahmed Abdul Raqeeb Alkhulaidi).

- INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCE AWARD | LIVE VOTING
- AWARD GERMAN SPEAKING COUNTRIES I
- DOCUMENTARY TOMAŽ ŠALAMUN
- SPECIAL AWARD | ANTONIO FIAN
- INTERNATIONAL SIDEPGRAM 2021
- WOMEN IN RESISTANCE
- AWARD GERMAN SPEAKING COUNTRIES II
- FESTIVAL POET 2021 - ANTONIO FIAN
- FESTIVAL JURY 2021
- CALL FOR ENTRIES 2021
- ONLINE TICKETS 2021
- VORSCHAU 2021
- HISTORY (2013 - 2021)



There's a table, a mirror and some potted plants,

Secret Archives: Open-Door Apartment (2021)

This essay film explores the concept of Chineseness through the lens of urban legends surrounding "The Open-door Apartments," two well-known Western buildings in the city center of Shanghai. These buildings, steeped in colonial elements, national memories, and historical background, have become iconic urban legends in Chinese society.

Link:

<https://vimeo.com/783474839>

Sentimental Meeting of Love (2020)

A very 'hybrid' man reads and comments on letters he receives from his friend, a freelance cameraman who frequently travels between London and Tokyo. His friend has a particular interest in national memories within Chinese language societies. One man is from mainland China, while the other is from Hong Kong.

Sammel, whose parents were from mainland China, was born in Hong Kong. He spent his childhood and youth there but attended university in the United States. Afterward, Sammel settled in London.

The story in the letters is based on real events. A Japanese barber who disappeared in London inspired the cameraman to speculate about the reason why. Was it a visa issue caused by a fake marriage? Additionally, why did the newly employed Japanese hairdresser suddenly have tears in her eyes while giving a haircut? What about her quickly wiping them away?

Despite the emotional, hybrid, and controversial expressions in this story, Sammel and the cameraman never feel lost and ultimately reach their original homes, 'Zhong Ting' and 'Qian Pu,' two incredibly strange countries.

This essay film, titled 'Sentimental Meeting of Love,' investigates the issue of Chinese cultural identities within Greater China. It specifically discusses the issue of hybridity through the cameraman's own experiences while living abroad.

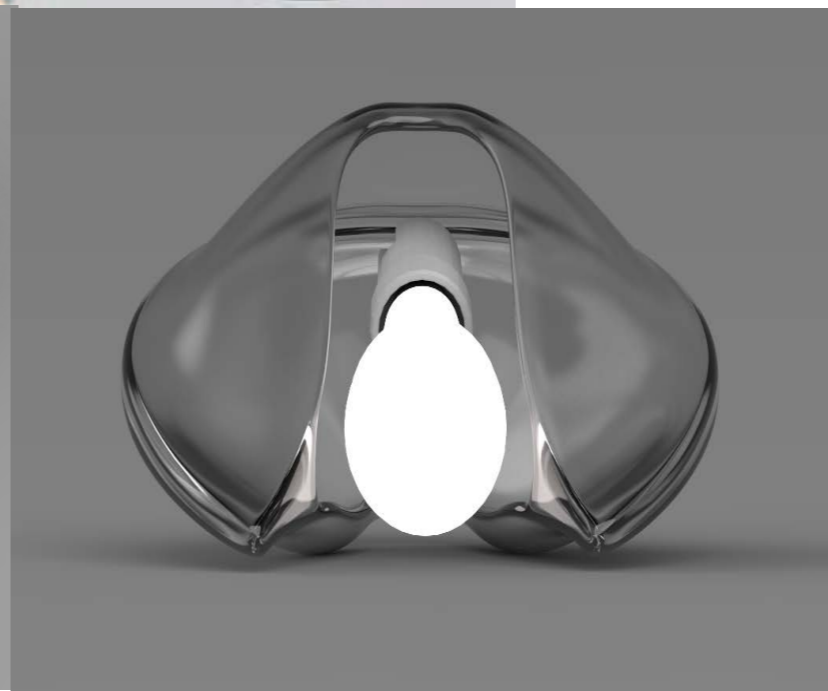
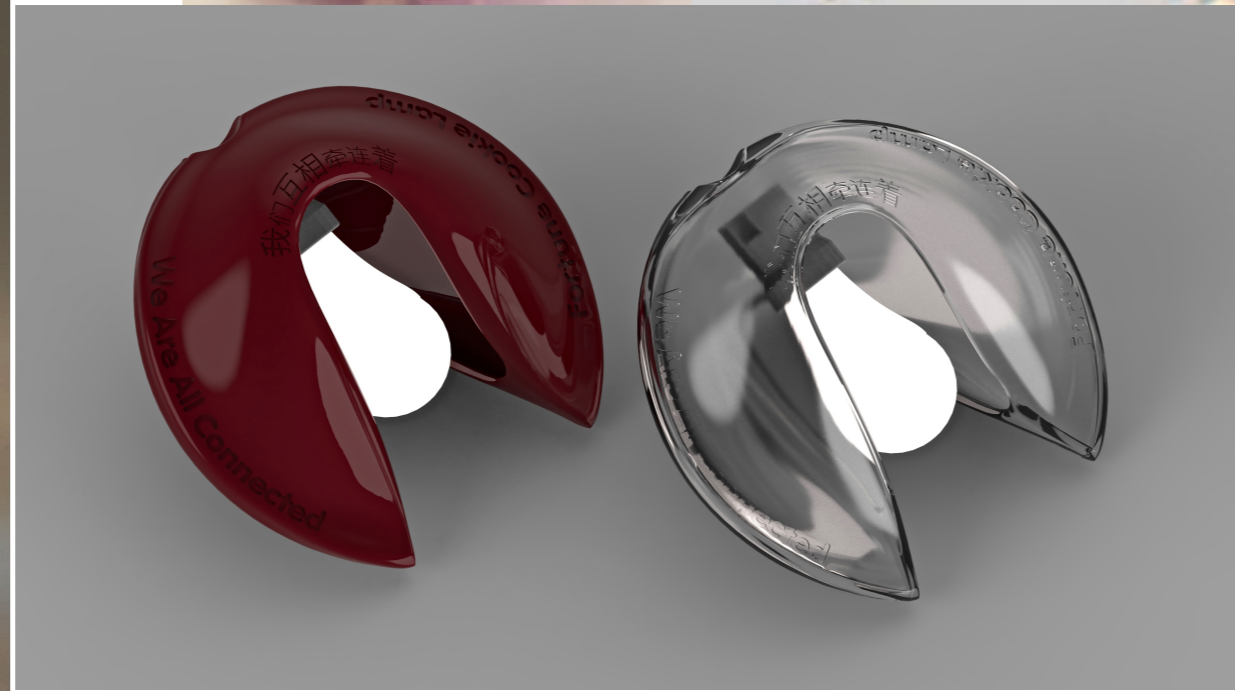
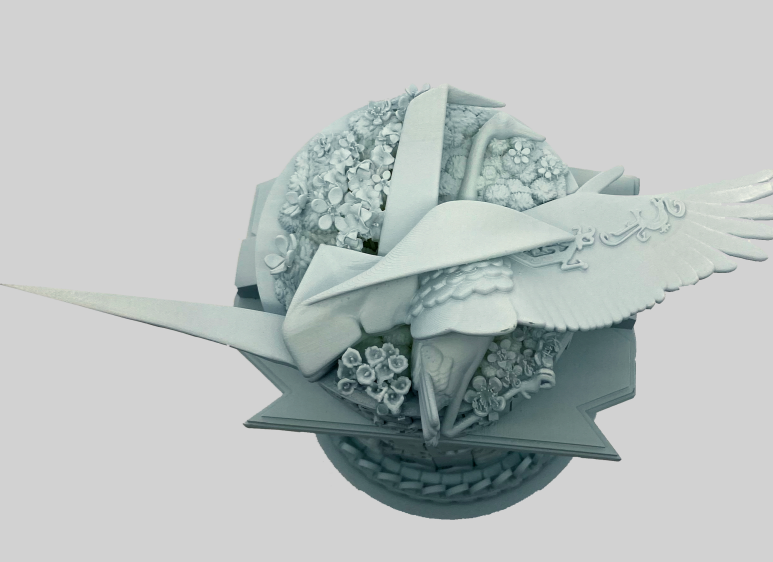
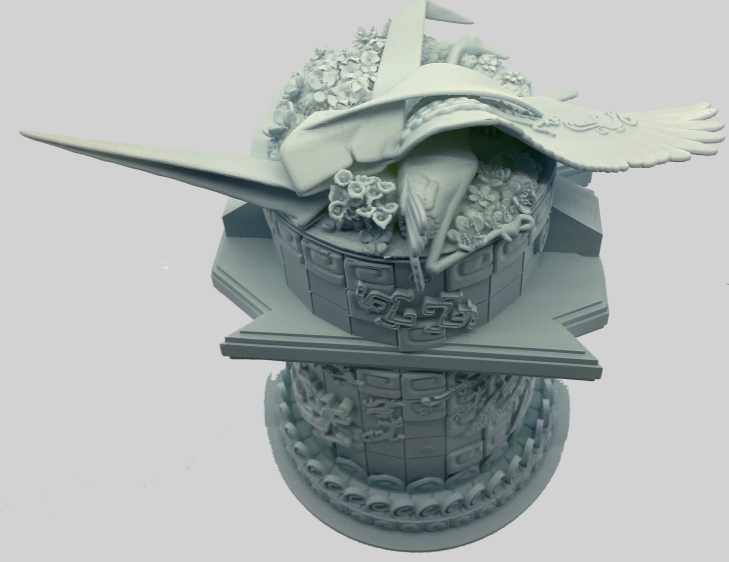
Duration: 20 minutes



Furniture Design (2020)



Fortune Cookie lamp,
transparent resin,
2020

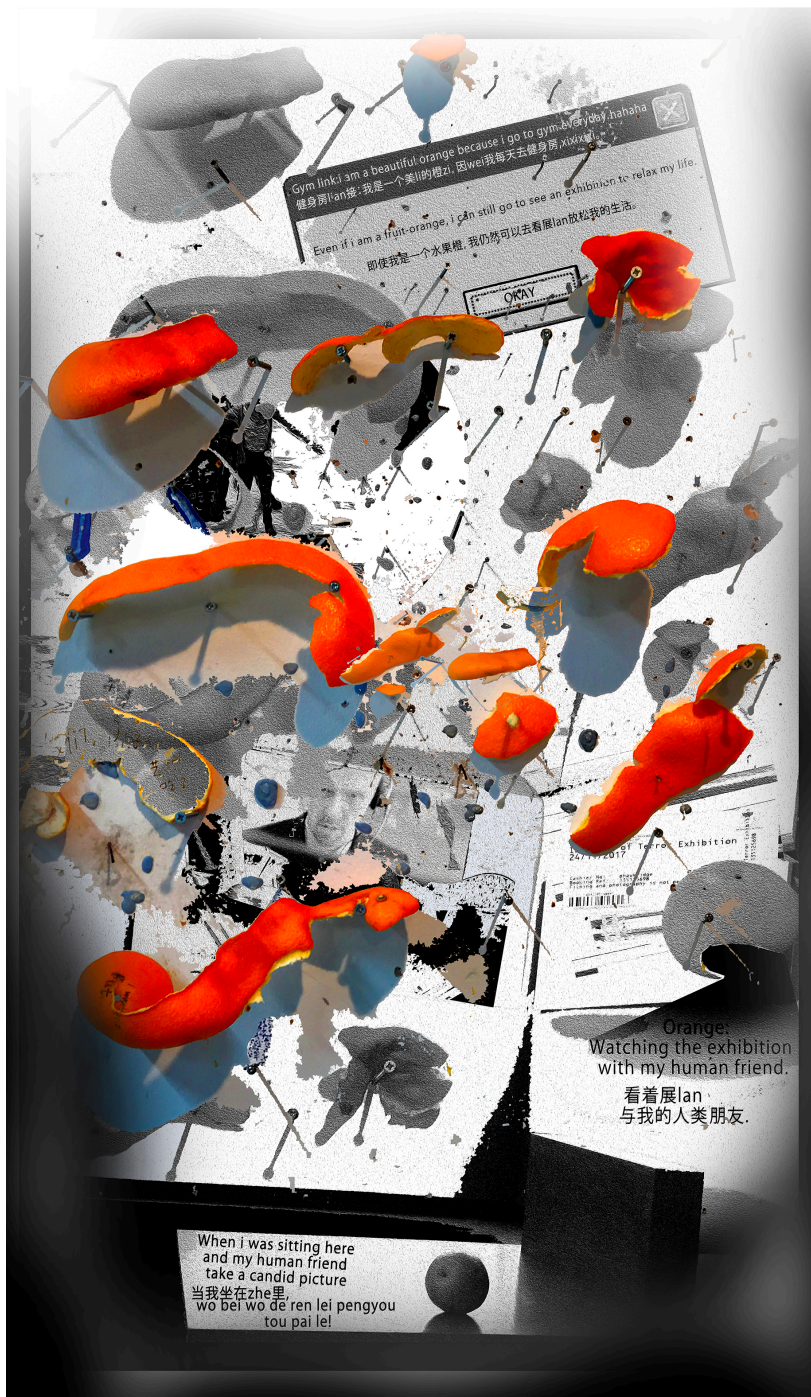


After the sunrise: when i wake up(7:00 a.m)

日出之后: 当我醒来(7:00)



Orange Peel Project (2016-2018)



100x240cm (left) and 160x160cm (right)

Print on Canvas

2016-2018



450x200cm
Print on Canvas
2016-2018



Museum Exhibition
Print on Canvas
2018



240x120cm
Print on Canvas
2016-2018

Africa Orange

Dubai Orange

Huang Pu River in SHANGHAI
Translation:黄浦江

I am from French

Translation:泰晤士河
Thames River in London

WORLD MAP
POLITICAL

I am from Korea
China Orange

I am from Japan

USA Orange

UK Orange

I am from Germany

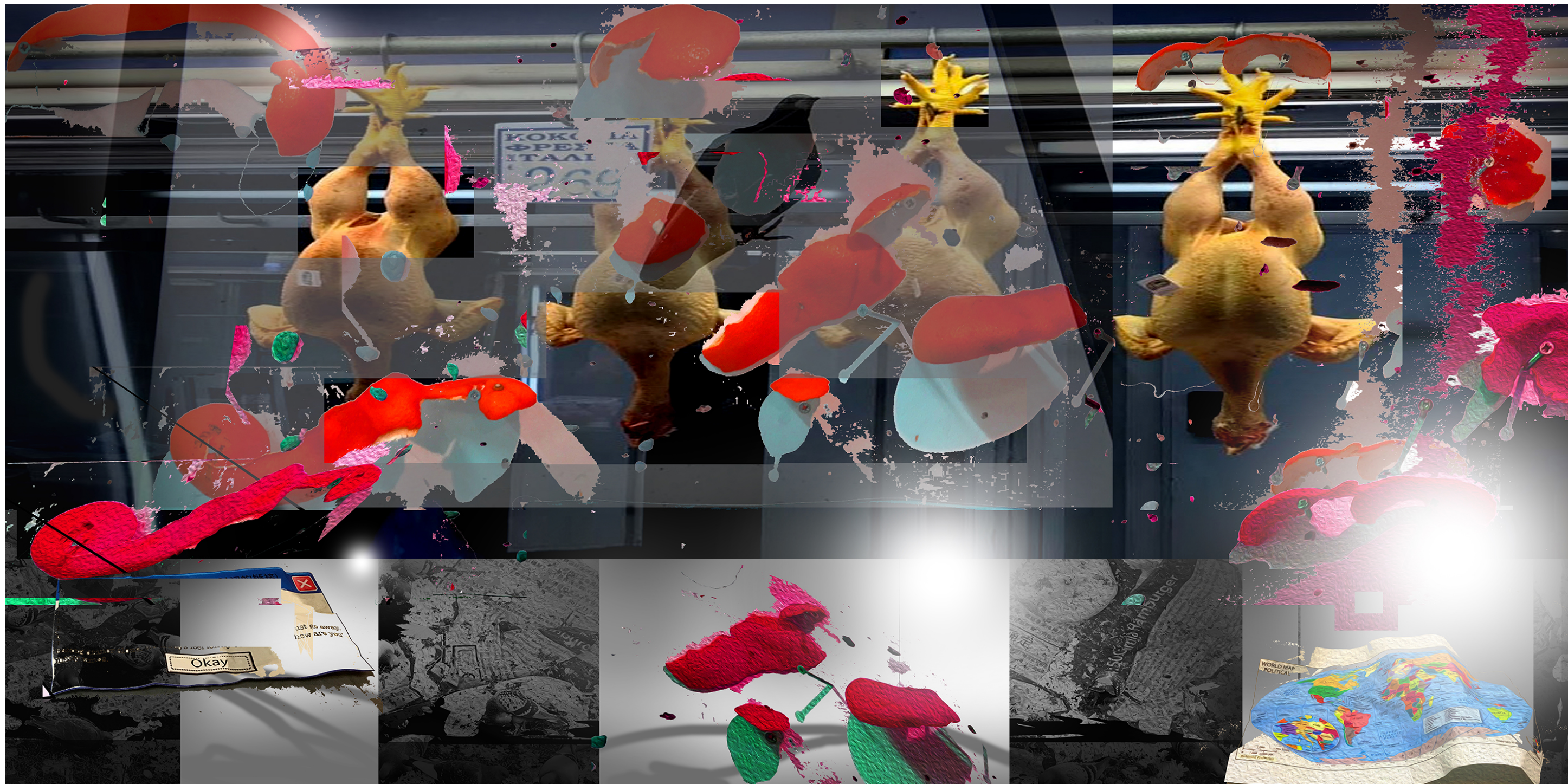
Translation: You can't force
Huang Pu River (China)
to get married
with
Thames River (London)

你不能强迫黄浦江与
泰晤士河结婚。

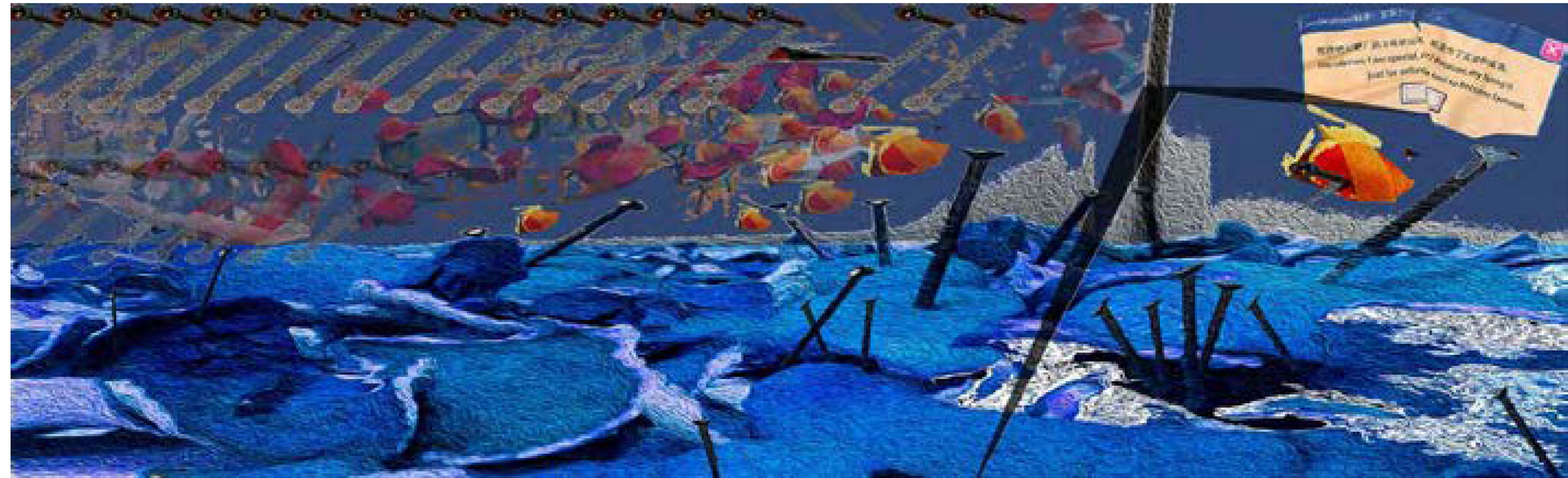
这是一张很英俊的绘画，值得收藏
Translation: this is a handsome painting!
Collect/Buy it!



240x120cm
Print on Canvas
2016-2018



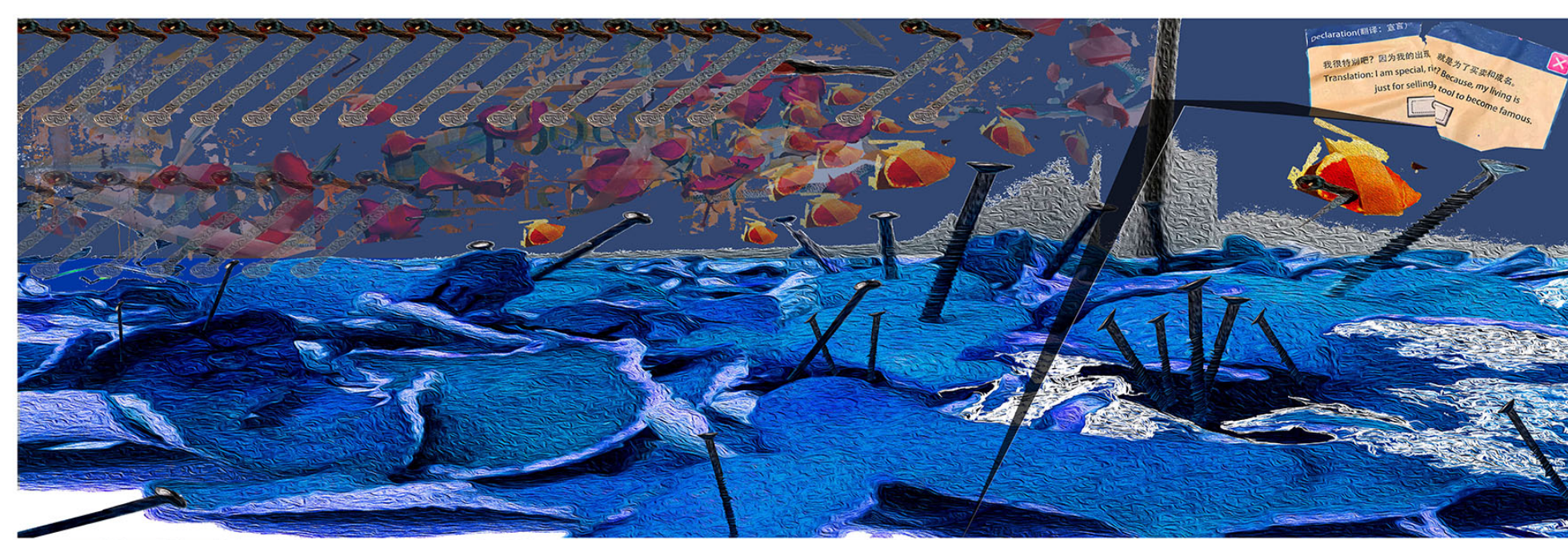
240x120cm
Print on Canvas
2016-2018



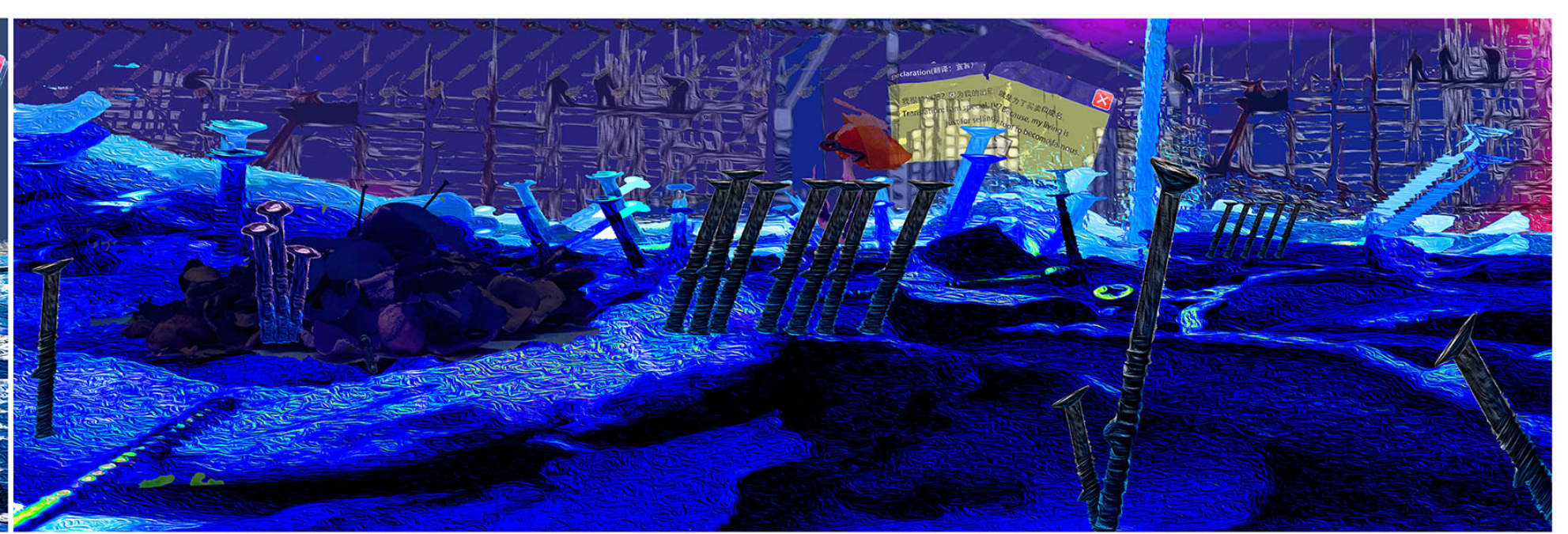
480cmx120cm ; Print on Canvas ; 2016-2018



480cmx120cm ; Print on Canvas ; 2016-2018



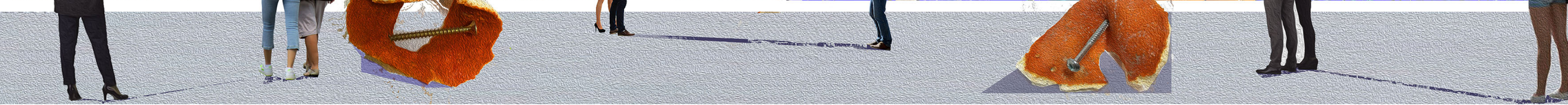
declaration(翻译:宣言)
我很特别吧?因为我的出场 就是为了卖货和成名。
Translation: I am special, right? Because, my living is
just for selling, too, to become famous.



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我很特别吧?因为我的出场 就是为了卖货和成名。
Translation: I am special, right? Because, my living is
just for selling, too, to become famous.



After the sunrise: when I wake up
when I wake up and have a good sleep
I feel a little bit of happiness and I want to
share it with you. I hope you can be happy
too. I hope you can be happy too.



A link for dinner time - 2004(晚餐时间的链接)
Me: How are you my friend?
Her: Good, you?
Me: Always good like you.
Her: Perfect. See you tomorrow.
Me: See ya.
This talk happened every time in public. And then people just go away
Eating dinner alone. We always feel lonely even if we say "how are you"
many times.

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480cmx120cm
rint on Canvas
2016-2018



Emotion and personality
of love oranges and any I only
Whyday and I don't know why
I have emotion and personality
OKAY
意识到自己有情感和个性

Translate: 很冲动, 有情绪, 很难受, 但是没关系
Translate: My activity without second thoughts

每天起床的第一件事就是
我爱橘子
I love oranges
Suddenly
The first thing when I up
我只爱橘子
is to say I love oranges
I feel
I feel
很难受
Feel like I can't breathe really
But I still find
橘子是甜的
橘子是酸的
橘子是苦的
橘子是涩的
橘子是香的
橘子是酸的
橘子是苦的
橘子是涩的
橘子是香的
橘子是酸的
橘子是苦的
橘子是涩的
橘子是香的

240cmx120cm ; Print on Canvas ; 2016-2018



140cmx300cm ; Print on Canvas ; 2016-2018