

RAGGEDY ANN'S FOOT

ROAMING THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2018

Wang Xin - The Gallery at Armory Art Fair March 7 - 10, 2018, and Life Itself Is Art: Wang Xin in Conversation, 2014



"Dear friends,

We would like to invite you to participate in an open call for exhibitions/artwork organized by Chinese artist Wang Xin as part of her ongoing project, The Gallery. The Gallery's 5th exhibition season will take place at The Armory Show at Pier 92/94 in New York City from 7 - 11 March, 2018.

The Gallery is a multimedia art project and an alternative exhibition space. At its core The Gallery disrupts standard museum and institutional review processes and exhibits art of all varieties in prestigious art spaces. It achieves this by issuing a worldwide open call for exhibitions, where the review process is almost non-existent.

The submission deadline to exhibit in The Gallery's 5th exhibition season at The Armory Show is 11th Feb, 2018. More info on the application and about The Gallery can be found here: the-gallery-project.com

We would be very appreciative if you forward this call for art to any people or persons who you feel might be interested in participating.

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Enter your email address:

We look forward to your participation and support! Have a good day!

Best wishes,

[The Gallery](#)"

In honor of **WANG XIN**'s upcoming installation at the Armory, to which all are invited to apply (see link above), I publish *Life Itself Is Art: Wang Xin in Conversation*, my 2014 interview with her below. Enjoy learning about this fascinating artist and go see her/participate in her exhibition at the Armory in March!

UNDERSTANDING CHINA

Since 1980, the generation of artists born after the start of China's one child policy has benefited from educational initiatives, opportunities for international travel and technology. Born in Yichang, Shanghai-based artist Wang Xin earned her MFA at The School of The Art Institute of Chicago. There, she filmed her peers in the studio, letting the camera roll until distinctions between work and play collapsed. Wang's fascination with states of consciousness led her to practice hypnosis and create the ongoing work *The Gallery*, a meticulously designed system where artists fuse art with daily life in public exhibition settings.

–Elisabeth Condon



WANG XIN. Wednesday, July 2, 2014, Shanghai Studio.

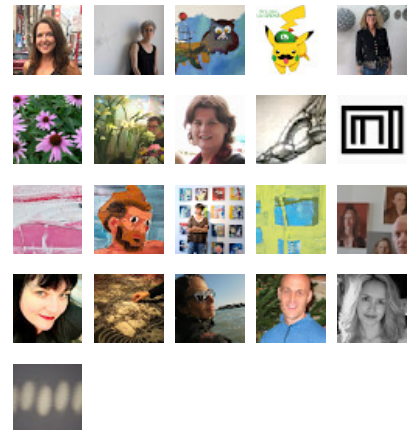
Parting curtains, we entered a riotous pink environment and sat on pink cushions to discuss Wang's work, educational experiences and

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ABOUT ME

EC

The experiential nature and time lapse compositions in Chinese scrolls make perfect sense to me. They inspire paintings of real and imagine spaces combining pours of color, wallpaper patterns and elements of places lived or traveled.

[VIEW MY COMPLETE PROFILE](#)

ARTISTS

The Gallery's second iteration at the Westbund Art and Design Fair in fall 2014.

Is this your studio, an installation, or both? You would not consider this an art piece?

This is my studio. [Gesturing to pink balls on the floor] These are from an installation, now decorating my studio. They have become part of my studio, rather than an art piece. [Distributing catalogs] Here is a catalog of my collection at Ifa Gallery, a gallery in Shanghai, and a catalog of my recent project, The Gallery. Anyone can participate in The Gallery project.

What was your first encounter with art, and what led you to become an artist?

I grew up in a small city in the middle part of China near the Yangtze River and the famous Three Gorges Dam. When I was small, my mother sent me to drawing class to avoid my drawing all over the walls at home! I always wanted to be an artist. I continued drawing through high school and attended Hangzhou's China Academy of Art 2003 through 2007. Two years later I began graduate studies in the School of the Art Institute of Chicago's Film Video New Media and Animation Department, graduating with an MFA in 2011. The following year I was invited to the Swatch Art Peace Hotel Residency in Shanghai and after that, remained in the city.

What works of art inspired you?

My early favorite artist was Leonardo da Vinci because he could draw anything, plus invent a flying machine! But now I visit many art exhibitions. Different forms of art give me inspiration, so not any specific artist— there are many.

Describe your education in Hangzhou.

In Hangzhou I attended the New Media Department; my class was the first to inaugurate the discipline. The professors focused on helping students work as artists, encouraging free thought and experimentation. The professors, Gheng Zhei and Zhang Pei Li, are renowned artists in China. They brought the best artists to advise us, so we enjoyed great classes and study opportunities.

In Hongzhou I began making videos, animations, and animation installations. By my second year, I connected with contemporary art. I was always very attracted to the unknown. With painting there is already so much history and I wanted to do something I didn't know: New Media.

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Tell a bit about moving to Chicago (2009).

After graduating I stayed in Hangzhou for a while and studied English, but wanted to leave China to see and experience more. Plus American new media is really good. Studying art at SAIC felt very free. I enrolled in the Studio Arts MFA program, completing coursework in Film, Video and New Media as well as Art Psychology. I implemented fabric-making, mechanical interactive installation and creative writing in my work, envisioning writing as a form of new media poetry transforming words into moving imagery during evening performances.

After earning the degree I continued to take classes. I could have stayed three more years to study. In that time I filmed American friends for hours at a time in open-ended play in real-time video installations (then on view at the People's Square's Modern Art Museum).

I traveled to many American cities. I like to go to places with no idea what's going on, just walking around, because in those fresh, fresh moments one feels most receptive to the environment.

Is wandering how ideas unfold?

Some ideas just pop up in the night and sometimes expand on what I naturally find interesting: human consciousness, the subconscious and dreams. I research the human mind and psychopathology, and also perform hypnosis on weekends in a small studio in Hangzhou. The hypnotism studio itself is not an art project, but does inspire art projects. Each week, I travel an hour on the speed train from Shanghai to Hangzhou, where I hypnotize volunteers (mostly artists in Hangzhou).

I work in three main trajectories: video animation, moving images; installation, more interactive and mechanical; and artwork systems that often use the color pink. Since both pink and art are very sexy, I feature the color throughout The Gallery and my studio office.

Describe how you make a project.

I see each project as a system because I like constructing and connecting systems. If the project is conceptual, I research and plan how to construct it. I create 3D effects in Photoshop then write the proposal. Sometimes I will show a curator the proposal and if they like it the project undergoes an editing process. Ongoing projects become a form of research that continues after implementation. For example The Gallery, part of the pink series and a system with many iterations, might develop in the future.

Talk about The Gallery.

The idea came in Chicago. I drew some rough sketches and upon return to Shanghai developed the concept into a proposal. The 3D aspect of the proposal looks real so people can visualize it. Last September, a Beijing curator visited my studio, reviewed the proposal and said she would like to make this art project in her gallery, C-Space in Beijing's Cao Chang Di area. Around the same time another curator from London also reviewed the proposal and was interested. After the Beijing iteration, I exhibited in her art festival in London in May.

[moving through screens, pointing at various images] This is the Gallery proposal for Beijing. At first, I used the white wall of the gallery space to house the work, which I no longer do. I create budgets and structural designs for each component of the installation. My proposals include labor and the ubiquitous clock that keeps time for each project. I organize the different components into a seamless process, from application to finish.

In Beijing it went best when local artists participated. When artists submitted work by email it was not as effective since C-Space is far from the city's populated areas. In London, artists came daily with peers and friends, to create performances, live shows, and large sculptures.

Do you participate in the systems you design?

I don't dilute them by installing my own work. The Gallery is about how I imagine an art system, how to create some alternative space for artworks, I am its constructor.

In premise The Gallery is different than the usual systems we have now. It is always pink, because I want to express that art is sexy. Pink is very basic and moves quickly to the eye. The pink lights in The Gallery can also become very hot. Around so much pink, The Gallery has a soft gesture, like a skirt, or many pretty girls standing together, where everybody joins the middle.

The artworks displayed are transitory. The installations and exhibition are organized to last not for more than a few hours and are timed by a large clock. Every day, two or three exhibitions of different artists and curators are on view, totaling forty or fifty exhibitions in the overall work. The number of participating artists amount to sixty within a two-week period.

The Gallery application states, "All artists can apply online to show their works in The Gallery and each exhibition cannot last more than (a certain amount of) hours." Anybody can participate; if The Gallery is

presented within a gallery or museum, the artists exhibit in my gallery and the art space where The Gallery is installed simultaneously. The Gallery system jumps over the select status quo. Though I don't select artists, if the number of artists who apply exceeds capacity I select according to the time of submission, following the rule first come first served.

What got you interested in hypnotism?

From 2006 I was interested in lucid dreaming, in which you are dreaming but know you are in a dream, so it is a clouded dream. To access lucid dreams many people use hypnosis. I took a hypnotized dreaming class, and still take psychology class every Saturday. (Joking) Oh, I have an examination, maybe soon!

Do you consider your hypnotism and art practice separately?

Right now I consider the art and hypnotism as different channels, though there is a merge point when accompanying people under trance to a museum or gallery. In that context they describe an artwork they see, where they meet their future self. One artist met his future self, who differed from the artist's intentions to attend art school and create art afterward. Under hypnosis, his future self resembled a businessman! That said, when people see visions of themselves it's not really the future, it's a current projection.

Do you see yourself as a healer?

In the future, I may volunteer to visit dying people in hospices. And if I can hypnotize, I can tell stories so that their experience is not as painful and someone dies happy. Hypnosis can ease pain, and I would like to learn more about easing-pain hypnosis. This is not related to my art, just something I want to do in my life.

Do you see healing as part of art?

Healing is not a part of art because life is bigger than art. If you only think art, then maybe you will miss many wonderful parts of life. Life itself is art.

I read a book of interviews and thought about you while reading about Chen Zhen.

I think I have seen some of his work.

There are many overlaps in your experiences of travel, the sense of time that stretches and warps when moving to a new country (Chen to Paris, Wang Chicago). Chen's research of Chinese medicine (the artist had a rare blood disorder) relates to your study of hypnosis and interest in hospice

work. Your skill with organizing systems and creating situations where people connect to different states within or parts of themselves confirms that art can heal and transform. Is the real project consciousness, to connect profoundly and deeply to consciousness?

The real work is in your life.

Is it important that participants within your structures experience a transformation? Is it important that you experience a transformation in making your work? Do you?

I am not sure whether I correctly understand the meaning of the word "transformation" that you mean, but for my understanding, "transformation" happens in a spiritual way. If I can experience transformation in making my work it is great, but I don't think it is important. I think transformation happens spontaneously and is not decided by consciousness but works in an unconscious way.

Were you brought up with religious beliefs, or do hypnosis and psychology create a new structure for spiritual experience?

I was not brought up with any religious beliefs. Through hypnosis I can access alternative states of consciousness, which are quite different from normal waking states of consciousness. This gives me a new perspective and dimension to explore. Most interesting for me is the dream, subconscious, group unconsciousness, and Jung's theories about archetypes and shadows. When I make animation and video work, I gain inspiration from the subconscious, dreams and so on. For me the process of making an animation work is a descent into and exploration of the unconscious.

Is play and hypnosis--invoking what Animamix curator Sunhee Kim describes as 'the drama within' or an animation wonderland --a mode of resistance against the increasing commercialization or commodification of Chinese life?

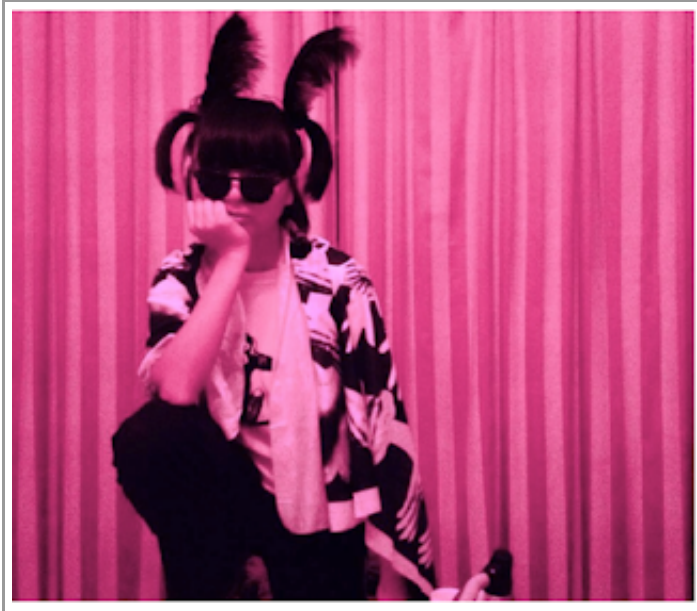
It relates. The play state can be perceived in opposition to the commercialization state of modern life, not just in China. Playing is a state that has been forgotten by most modern people after they say farewell to their childhood. The play expressed in this work is a state full of creativity and self-expression. In the process if the player totally immerses him/herself in his/her inner world, then after a while his/her subconscious will emerge spontaneously through play behavior so play becomes more like a trance.

The Chicago videos take three hours to film and best reveal people at their most relaxed. The Gallery clock counts

exhibition times. How is time a tool, or concept in structuring your works?

I find time very charming. Nothing is forever, and I don't like repetition. I prefer to use time to make structure or another expressive dimension or making various systems running simultaneously in my work.

Do you identify as a Chinese artist? Do you identify as an international artist?



I never think about identifying myself but feel like a human artist.

You have a part time job. Can you describe how the job helps you as an

artist, how it informs or helps you make your work?

It supports my basic living expenses but cannot buy art materials, so I also sell small hand-made editions, such as rabbits on pink balls and stones in limited editions of 200 or less. I am also looking for other way to support myself.

Where did you find all the pink stuff?

Taobao. [laughter]

The interview was partially sponsored by a Hanban Confucius Institute Understanding China Fellowship. Earlier versions of this interview were published online at Playspace Magazine, New York 2015, and Artspy, Beijing, 2014.