



Fortune Exhibition of Li's Family House
5.15-7.3, 2021

Organizers: LI Liao & WHITE SPACE BEIJING
Venue: WHITE SPACE BEIJING, No.255 Caochangdi, Chaoyang District, Beijing
Fengshui curator: YUAN Lu
Artists: Peter Peter CHAN-SOMMERFELD, FEI Yining, WANG Yuyu, Joey XIA, ZHANG Lian

Li Liao and WHITE SPACE BEIJING are pleased to present the "Fortune Exhibition of Li's Family House" at WHITE SPACE BEIJING, from May 15 to July 3, 2021, featuring specially commissioned works by artists Chen Pi, Fei Yining, Wang Yuyu, Qiaoyi Xia, and Zhang Lian.

The "Fortune Exhibition of Li's Family House" began in 2020, a project organized and hosted by artist Li Liao, invites a Fengshui master as its "curator of Fengshui" and commissions artists to make works on this occasion. The exhibition has been held twice previously at Li Liao's home in Shenzhen. The current edition of the show is co-organized by Li Liao and WHITE SPACE BEIJING, held at the Beijing gallery space. The original layout, details, appearance, and orientation of Li's house will be restaged in the exhibition space on a 1:1 scale. This exhibition invites different "Fengshui curators" and artists' participation from the previous two editions.

In "Mengzi - Li Lou I", it is said that "Without the compass and square, you cannot form squares and circle"; "Guanzi - Xing Shi Jie" also states that "If you adopt the rules to make squares and circles, you will succeed; if you measure the length according to the standard, you will receive; if you rule the people by the law, you will obtain peace." In their respective systems, "Fengshui" and "contemporary art" are initially indeterminate media, vague in scope, and constructed by numerous theories. Moreover, the feng shui masters and artists share somewhat different understandings and practices in their fields. The gray area drawn by ambiguous boundaries seems to create baseless actions and setbacks while providing the practitioners' freedom and power to expand under the rules they abide by.

In the "Li's Family House" exhibition, two seemingly unrelated rules and outcomes, "feng shui" and "contemporary art," intersect under predetermined conditions, framing and constructing a more complex field of "feng shui-art" – intertwined with each other. Regarding space, the "Li family house" and the "WHITE SPACE BEIJING," defined by geographical coordinates, three-dimensional scale, orientation, material texture, functionality, and other attributes that are either imaginary or real, will be momentarily switched during the exhibition period. With little or lack of understanding of each other, the "curator of Fengshui" adopt the "Li Family House" at "WHITE SPACE BEIJING" as a site to determine its Fengshui and provide guidance that will transform the Li Liao Family House. On the other hand, the artists will create works with specific givens, device one's abilities, and respond creatively based on the explicit or vague rules and requirements provided by the Fengshui curator.

With this, we warmly invite you to attend the "Fortune Exhibition of Li's Family House" to witness what creative possibilities the Fengshui curator and the artists will present in this otherwise restricted creative context.

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Exhibition Preface

Text by YUAN Lu, Curator of Feng Shui

Fengshui is part of the five commands of Daoist practice in traditional Chinese culture, namely, anthroposcopy (meditating in the mountain, medicine, fortune-telling, anthroposcopy, and divination). A "study of living" emerged out of the ancient's resistance to natural disasters and wild animal attacks. Throughout human social evolution, it continues to integrate rituals and customs from different historical periods and through the principles of building and artistic creation, attributing special meaning and purpose to Chinese architecture. This kind of cultural product, which reflects human spirituality and will through the site selection, form, and structural design of the building, is common among many countries. However, precisely due to the integration of Fengshui, Chinese architecture has become a vehicle that extends its lasting cultural lineage and passing it on to this day, which can be considered a treasure of human cultural history.

The essence of the Chinese Feng Shui consists of "The unity of all things, where heaven and man become one." It embodies the unique consciousness of civilized Chinese society that embraces "living and working in peace, aiming for prolonged stability." It aims for a balanced and peaceful world view concerning nature and humanistic concerns.

There are many schools of Fengshui, and the methods of calculation vary greatly. Rather than considering this as a setback, it's better to realize that the study of Fengshui departs from actual situations when confronted with various geographic and customary conditions. It designs layouts according to the existing givens based on accumulated experiences. But the practice of Fengshui does not deviate from astronomical observation and conversion logic of "look up the sky and inspecting the earth."

In the study of Fengshui, there is a kind of cultural products created in a "transcendental way," which fulfills the purpose of "pursuing good fortune and avoiding evil, praying for blessings and avoiding disasters" by employing ornamental patterns, color, and shapes, objects and techniques, etc. These cultural products are collectively known as "good omen" or "apotropaic objects," which is the "Fengshui installation" rendered through artistic means in the course of generating Fengshui. Nowadays, they are collectively referred to as "Fengshui ornaments" by the industry and the public. These objects are projections of human nature, are often shown as combinations of pictograms and ideas from Chinese philosophy. All of which have had a profound impact on Chinese architecture, gardens, and decorative artifacts.

In "Fortune Exhibition of Li's Family House," Li Liao brings the layout of his living space in Shenzhen to WHITE SPACE BEIJING and invites five artists to engage in art practices in this Fengshui "architecture." The exhibition space's Fengshui calculations are obtained according to the current popular Fengshui algorithm. Then, they gather feng shui elements and functions each data represents to the curator, who then invites the five artists to create their works according to these results.

We hope this exhibition would offer a greater understanding of the inevitable evolution of Chinese feng shui throughout history and informing the artists of the dire scarcity and deterioration of contemporary Fengshui installations. At the same time, it also hopes to open up the minds of Fengshui practitioners, who would adopt a broader perspective of the world, and return the architectural profession to architects and the design profession to designers with the awareness of social development, focusing on studying the essence of this ancient academic discipline. They would begin with the current times and the elasticity of future society, considering the study of human destiny and security as their base, without practicing bias, exercising authority, or creating mystery.

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