

## The Long Way Around

Curator: Sun Wenjie

Artists: Hu Wei, Xiang Kaiyang

Opening: 15:00, 18 December, 2021

Duration: 18 December, 2021 - 18 February, 2022 (11am–6pm, Mon closed)

Location: ShanghART Beijing, 261 Caochangdi, Airport Side Road, Chaoyang District

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Opening 18 December, ShanghART Beijing is pleased to present “The Long Way Around”, an exhibition curated by Sun Wenjie, showcasing a series of works by two emerging artists—Hu Wei and Xiang Kaiyang. The exhibition title comes from a novel of the same name by renowned Austrian writer Peter Handke.

“Listen to me. I don’t want to perish. At the moment of losing all that, I longed to return, not only to a country, not only to a certain region, but to the house where I was born.”

—Peter Handke

What makes “homecoming” so fascinating? Just like Homer’s story of Odysseus, who is carried off the ship in his sleep to return home; or the protagonist in Handke’s book, who tries to fight against a fate to perish and embarks on a journey back to his former residence. “Homecoming”, usually written in words, echoes throughout the artistic practice of Hu Wei and Xiang Kaiyang, while the symbiotic relationship between text and art is also examined in both artists’ works: revolving around issues of aesthetics and poetics, their art probes the boundaries between language, semantics and imagery.

In Hu Wei’s video and sound installations, the absent images, limbed languages and meanings are transformed into a particular rhythm and subtle emotions. “...Island is the second origin. Only on the island can people feel that they are detached from the world.” Hu Wei’s investigation into the marine culture can be considered as a pursuit of “home”. His non-paradigmatic, dynamic, and variable series of works evoke our imaginations of the “sea nomad (human & non-human)”.

When looking at Cézanne’s landscape paintings, Handke realises that the pine trees and cliffs overlap each other in the picture, forming an interrelated, singular hieroglyph as well as a complete integration of “thing-image-script”. The Word painting series by Xiang

Kaiyang is a typical example of Handke's viewpoint. The artist places words onto the canvas, whose inner harmony is then strengthened through the repeated use of reduplication. His work explores the spiritual qualities beyond the text itself, featuring a fresh interaction beyond the conventional aesthetic relationship between word and image.

Perhaps we can regard "homecoming" as a state stripped of the notion of time, a mixture of the protagonist's inner and outer worlds woven from memory fragments. "Homecoming" in Hu Wei's work alludes to a projection of reality that probably involves the artist's own struggle against "home" and freedom; in regards to Xiang Kaiyang's work, the memories triggered by images strive to approach the original appearance of things. Isn't it also a kind of "return" to real life?

### About the Curator

**Sun Wenjie**, born in 1989 in Dalian, lives and works in Beijing. She is a curator and writer. Sun studied at the China Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA), and later at the Goldsmiths College, University of London, where she received her MFA in Curating. Sun joined the Red Brick Museum in 2016 and has held the position of Head of Exhibitions at the Museum since 2017. The exhibitions she curated solely and jointly include: Call and Response: Judy Chicago x Stanley Whitney, Longlati Foundation, Shanghai (2020); Escape Routes - Bangkok Art Biennale, Bangkok, Thailand (2020); Chen Zihao: 2.5 D, Tang Contemporary Art, Bangkok, Thailand (2019); Andres Serrano: An American Perspective, Red Brick Art Museum, Beijing (2017); Wen Pulin Archive of Chinese Avant-garde Art of the 80s and 90s, Red Brick Art Museum, Beijing (2016); Re-coding, CAFA International, Beijing (2016); An Exhibition on Exhibiting, CAFA Art Museum, Beijing (2011), etc.

### About the Artists

**Hu Wei**, born in 1989 in Dalian, lives and works in Beijing. In 2012, he graduated from the China Central Academy of Fine Arts, Oil Painting Department, and obtained his MA in Fine Art at Dutch Art Institute in 2016. Working in a variety of media including film making, installation, printed images, performance and drawing, Hu Wei explores the precarious relationship between labour, affect, and value judgments in different political and economic environments, technological conditions, and events. Recent exhibitions include: Space Oddity, UCCA Dune, Hebei (2021); The 8th Huayu Youth Award Exhibition: A Long Hello, UCCA, Beijing (2020); Future, Future—curated by Yang Fudong, Centre for Experimental

Film, Shanghai (2020); Study of Things, Times Museum, Guangzhou (2020); Sunset on a Dead End, Power Station of Art, Shanghai (2019); Happy People, Inside-out Art Museum, Beijing (2019); Toward the Emergence of Resistance, Taikang Space, Beijing (2016), etc. His works have also been exhibited in Korea, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, Iran, America, and Mexico.

**Xiang Kaiyang**, born in 1991 in Wenzhou, lives and works in Beijing. In 2015, he graduated with a BA in Fine Art from the Goldsmiths College, University of London, and later in 2020 received his MFA in Oil Painting at the China Central Academy of Fine Arts, the 5th Studio. Xiang Kaiyang's creative art form assumes a fundamental synthesis of texts and drawing. His passion during his student era centered on Chinese poetry writing, leading to his themed artistic experiments with texts and words during graduate school. Xiang grounds his artworks on Chinese words, phrases, poetry, and texts, explicitly or implicitly presenting them through intricate yet delicate brushwork in his paintings. How to effectively and accurately convey the roles of these Chinese characters through visual representation, transforming them into imagery signals, is the focus of his experiment.