

W H I T E C U B E

Bermondsey

Press Release

He Xiangyu

Evidence

White Cube Bermondsey, North Gallery and Auditorium

7 February–8 April 2018

Preview: 6 February 2018, 6–8pm

White Cube Bermondsey presents an exhibition of new work by Chinese artist He Xiangyu (b.1986), showing installation, sculpture and video, as well as the recent film **'The Swim' (2017)**.

Known for his provocative and ambitious works, He is part of a generation of conceptual artists in China who use a range of media to articulate cultural and social concerns. In **'The Swim', which was premiered at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, in February 2017**, the artist returned to his hometown of Kuandian, located close to the North Korean border, to capture the 'strange reality' of his childhood home.

During the film, He interviews several Kuandian residents, including Chinese veterans who fought in the Korean War, as well North Korean defectors who live there illegally, revealing their daily struggle for survival and identity, tragic past experiences and expectations for the future. Collectively their lives touch on historical events that occurred in China and North Korea during the 20th century, including the Civil War, the Korean War and the North Korean Famine. The film culminates with his attempt to swim cross the Yalu River to the border.

In a new series of sculptures, He presents over 500 pieces of scrap metal wire, small tools and implements obtained from a black market discovered while **filming 'The Swim'**. **Presented as relics** in precise groups and configurations, each are carefully labelled with a number and weight. Used for barter, these hand-formed objects are scavenged from machinery and building projects in North Korea and then sold on to Chinese traders for small amounts of cash or goods. Often tightly woven into balls or flattened into loops, so that they can be concealed beneath clothes and smuggled across the border, their forms trace a particular physical history and a close connection to the human hand.

Shown alongside the metal objects are several exact copies of these complex, compressed forms, handmade by the artist. The process is documented through a new video work where his hands, shot from above, work to bend, press and configure the dense forms.

In a new, two-channel video installation, He combines footage of his attempt to swim across the Yalu River with documentary footage of his preparations for the event.

He Xiangyu 'Evidence' runs from 7 February until 8 April 2018 at White Cube Bermondsey alongside exhibitions by Eddie Peake and Andreas Gursky.

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For additional press information and images contact:

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Notes to Editors:

- He Xiangyu was born in 1986 in Liaoning Province, China and lives and works in Beijing and Berlin. He graduated from Shenyang Normal University in 2008. Solo exhibitions include Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing (2015), White Cube, London (2014), A4 Center for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney (2012), Künstlerhaus Schloß Balmoral, Bad Ems, Germany (2011) and Wall Art Museum, Beijing, China (2010). He Xiangyu has also been included in various group exhibitions including The 13th Biennale de Lyon (2015), Fire and Forget, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2015), Shanghai Biennale (2014), Future Generation Art Prize: Exhibition of the Shortlisted Artists at the Pinchuk Art Centre, Kiev, Ukraine (2014), Busan Biennale, (2014), Yokohama Triennale, (2014), 28 Chinese and the Rubell Family Collection, Miami (2013).
- Admission to White Cube is free. White Cube Bermondsey is open Tuesday–Saturday 10am–6pm and Sunday 12–6pm. Address: 144-152 Bermondsey St, London SE1 3TQ, United Kingdom +44 (0)20 7930 5373. Website: whitecube.com
- **White Cube’s exhibition programme extends across its three gallery spaces: Bermondsey in South London, Mason’s Yard in St. James’s, London and Hong Kong Central district. Since its inception in 1993, the gallery has exhibited the work of many of the world’s most highly acclaimed contemporary artists.**
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