

Home is where the haunt is, X Museum

Curated by Poppy Dongxue Wu & Cyril Rao

X Museum will present the X Museum Triennial 2023 exhibition, Home Is Where the Haunt Is, from 27 August through 26 November 2023. As a highly anticipated, recurring exhibition programme introduced to coincide with the opening of the institution, X Museum Triennial is a three-year recurring review of Chinese contemporary art and its development. With a continuous focus on emerging artists, the second edition, Home Is Where the Haunt Is, will bring together eight newly commissioned works and more than 30 recent works from 19 artists. Encompassing kinetic sculpture, e-textile, silk embroidery, site-specific installation and simulation video installation, the exhibition will offer a rich audio-visual experience that explores the enduring cultural connotations of 'home' through the eyes of a new generation of Chinese artists and their diasporic community in the context of globalisation.

The exhibition responds to the complex social and historical construct of 'home' and its etymological implication, 'haunt'. Connecting ideas of intimacy, memory, heritage, ethnicity, alienation, possession and obsession, Home Is Where the Haunt Is brings together a wide group of multicultural Chinese artists whose fluid practice constantly straddles between home and elsewhere, individual and community, past and present. As a universal social institution and an essential constituent of society, 'home' denotes a dwelling place and bears the sentiment of the permanence of history. Broadening home as a hotbed for psychological states, the exhibition explores the evolving of human selves in a global context of cultural heterogeneity and that which invades or disturbs it. From physical contact induced by e-textiles in moments of isolation, to the various uses of mulberry in the system of Chinese Medicine, to coral and deep-sea creatures, works in the exhibition expand intimacy as a practice of generative kinship—the latest ecosystem formed by new technology and the relational existence of organisms.

History infiltrates the current through memory and heritage, through possession and obsession. By unravelling the multiple connotations of 'home', the exhibition also examines history's effect on the present, it delves deeper into the roots of Chinese culture through a wide arrange of installations. Encompassing sound clips, audio-visual installations, and site-specific works, the artists in this exhibition use Xiang (Hunan) embroidery and Shaanxi shadow puppetry, folktales, and novels in their contemporary expression. Revolving around diasporic memories and fantastical futures, the exhibition also attempts to invoke the interstitial existence between now and then, time and space, presence and absence. The works in the exhibition oscillate between abandoned buildings on Bangkok's streets, linger around the dimly-lit dance pool of ballrooms and excursion in the sugar refineries of the previous century. After the fragments of time are pieced together, these scenes of profound historical moments—often associated with a community's ethnic relations and kinship—become places where hauntology comes to exist.

As a research-based project on the development of contemporary Chinese art over the past three years, Home Is Where the Haunt Is zooms in to the millennial artists growing up under the tide of globalisation by unwrapping the intricate meanings of 'home'. These artists are simultaneously inside and outside, and their practice is often situated at the boundary between knowledge and technology. Some works are tender hymns of love and dependence that emerged during momentous migration; others connect reality and the virtual, exploring the invisible power structure lurking behind the human and technology interaction through reshaping the fragments of mundane life. In these boundary-defying expressions, the fluid concept of 'home' lingers over various times and spaces through senses such as scent and sound. Ultimately, the exhibition returns to artists' practice and the complexity incurred by media and representation through a multifaceted, multi-linear discursive approach, thus responding to the enduring and timeless essence of 'home'.

X Museum Triennial Award is founded in coincidence with X Museum Triennial, and it aspires to encourage a wider interest in contemporary Chinese art and to introduce emerging Chinese artists. For the second instalment, one participating artist will be awarded for an outstanding presentation at the end of the exhibition. Comprising 3-4 influential international curators from different regions, X Museum Triennial Awards strives to have a diverse jury panel that provides multicultural perspectives.