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RAM
上海外滩美术馆
ROCKBUND ART MUSEUM



WangShui, *Encounter II*, oil on aluminium, 244x152cm, 2023. Courtesy of the artist and kurimanzutto.

The Rockbund Art Museum Shanghai, presents
WangShui: poiesis
April 1 – June 11, 2023

This exhibition of WangShui's new work inaugurates the Rockbund's new artistic program and will immerse viewers in a shapeshifting installation of paintings that never stand still

Exhibition: WangShui: *poiesis*

Venue: Rockbund Art Museum, 20 Huqiu Rd, Shanghai

Location: Level 4 and 5

Date: April 1 - June 11, 2023

The Rockbund Art Museum (RAM), Shanghai, is proud to present *poiesis*, the first museum solo exhibition by the New York-based artist **WangShui** (b.1986, United States). This project is the first show at the museum since the end of the zero-COVID policy in China and will also relaunch the RAM under the new Artistic Director, [X Zhu-Nowell](#). Known for their technically complex yet ethereal works, WangShui blends poetics and cybernetics in multilayered paintings, installations, and video. Titled after the Greek word *poiesis*, meaning "to bring something into being," this exhibition expands upon WangShui's artistic research into alternative modes of collaboration and unexpected ways of "integrating different agents," in the words of the artist. This exhibition and new body of work highlight the most recent development of WangShui's singular art practice, questioning the idea of human consciousness as the sole wellspring of creative activity while interrogating the logic of perception and the politics of (in)visibility.

Poiesis revolves around a new commission on the fourth floor of the museum that consists of eight aluminium floor paintings which change position throughout the duration of the show. The choreography is driven by an invisible algorithm that processes real time ultrasonic frequencies collected in the museum. This shapeshifting installation brings out the modular nature of each painting, which shuffles through the space to form a greater collective composition.

In collaboration with the design studio The Roll, WangShui has created an immersive architectural intervention that spans the fourth and fifth floors. This dream-like chamber is constructed with a multi-layered, semi-translucent fabric that refracts both interior and exterior light, creating a unique visual experience. On the top floor of the chamber, the artist presents a new series of paintings that depict otherworldly figures and encounters. WangShui's process of "machine painting," which usually involves collaboratively generating images with artificial intelligence (AI), is further abstracted in the *poiesis* exhibition. The artist presents a mix of works, some made with AI and others without, engaging equally with various other elements, such as atmospheric conditions and historical research.

Unlike conventional Western paintings, which typically use oil and other media on a stretched fabric surface, WangShui intricately abrades images into the surfaces of aluminium panels and applies paint sparingly to illuminate these scratches. This approach challenges the history of Western painting, which emphasizes the creation of an everlasting fixed image. In contrast, WangShui's paintings shift with light and movement – appearing and disappearing all at once.

WangShui: poiesis is organized by the Rockbund Art Museum and curated by X Zhu-Nowell, Artistic Director of the Rockbund Art Museum.

Organizer
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About WangShui



WangShui. Photo by Sam Clarke.

WangShui's work explores structures of perception. Through video, sculpture, painting, and installation, they examine the loops of mediation that form our experience of the world. The artist's interdisciplinary practice seeks to integrate diverse personal experiences and research into trauma, architecture, and media. A central theme in the work is liminality and its radical potential as a form of resistance. WangShui often addresses the latent space of images and materials as a way to activate the hallucinatory states between detail and distance, transparency and opacity, knowing and unknowing. WangShui earned a BA in Art Practice and Social Anthropology from UC Berkeley and an MFA in Film/video from Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts, Bard College. Their work has been exhibited at the 2022 Whitney Biennial, 2022 Biennale de Lyon, Hammer Museum, Hessel Museum, Sculpture Center, Julia Stoschek Collection, Tai Kwun Contemporary, The Shed, New York Film Festival, International Film Festival Rotterdam, and EMPAC. Forthcoming exhibitions: Haus Der Kunst, Munich (solo exhibition).

<https://www.wangshui.co>
www.instagram.com/wangshui

About Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai

Inaugurated in 2010, the Rockbund Art Museum (RAM) is a contemporary art museum located on the Bund in Shanghai. The museum is housed in a historic Art Deco building from 1932 that was originally one of the first modern museums established in China. The landmark building was renovated by David Chipperfield.

In considering what it means to be an Asia-based contemporary art museum in the 21st century, RAM aims to explore the importance of “archipelago thinking”: connecting to artistic culture across Asia and beyond to gain richer perspectives on today’s challenges, practices, and networks within contemporary artistic practices. We wish to build constructive, creative relationships between multiple localities in Asia and different cultures globally, to create a hub for working with a broad range of artists, researchers, and scholars, and to dive into subtle and dense layers of new experiences with our audience.

With a strong reputation for an innovative curatorial approach, RAM experiments with different models of what an art project can be, from research to alternative learning programs, from exhibition-making to unexpected performative formats. By supporting bold contemporary art practices, we aim to recognize local histories while responding to global art challenges and social change.

RAM regards the role of exchange as an essential process for cultural growth, by building up a network of multi-regional, international, and cross-disciplinary partnerships. Through this process, we aim to cultivate diverse and deep-rooted connection to our audiences and communities, and also to different social and cultural organizations. With strong support from our board, patrons, and Advisory Committee, we strive to observe, learn, and pursue opportunities to develop original art projects that explore and engage with the multi-faceted elements of contemporary life.

www.rockbundartmuseum.org

International Press

For more information and interviews with X Zhu-Nowell and WangShui, please contact: Sarah Greenberg, Evergreen Arts: sgreenberg@evergreen-arts.com or +44 (0)7866543242.

For image sheet please click [here](#)
For HR images, please contact Panagiotis Panagopoulos, Evergreen Arts: ppanagopoulos@evergreen-arts.com

Chinese Press

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