



尤伦斯当代艺术中心
Center for Contemporary Art

Liao Fei: Seeing All Forms

Released May 16, 2025

Exhibition Period:

2025.5.17 – 2025.9.7

Location:

UCCA Beijing
New Gallery, West Gallery

Media Contact:

Jiannan Hu
Senior Media Relations Manager
+86 10 5780 0258
+86 185 1062 2663
jiannan.hu@ucca.org.cn

Press material available at

ucca.org.cn/en/press

UCCA Center for Contemporary Art presents “Liao Fei: Seeing All Forms” from May 17, 2025, to September 7, 2025, a solo exhibition featuring the artist’s key early sculpture, installation, and video works alongside a series of recent creations. This exhibition is Liao Fei’s most comprehensive institutional solo exhibition to date and serves as an overview of the latest phase in his exploration of physical matter and the essence of being that has spanned nearly two decades.

BEIJING, China—From May 17 to September 7, 2025, UCCA Center for Contemporary Art presents “Liao Fei: Seeing All Forms,” Liao Fei’s (b. 1981, Jingdezhen) most comprehensive institutional solo exhibition to date. Structured around five keywords—matter, site, extension, infinity, and inference—the exhibition surveys the artist’s artistic practice for nearly two decades, from his early works that focus on the relationships and tensions between different physical materials, to recent series including “Chiral Extent”—Liao Fei’s return to figurative sculpture after more than a decade of abstraction—and “One Way Sculpture” and “Partially Obscured Circles,” constructed and completed through a methodology of exhausting formal possibilities. With a rigorous formal language and an experimental way of thinking, the works on view transcend the conventional concerns of the sculptural form, presenting a distinctive aesthetic that lies between art and logic. “Seeing All Forms” seeks to examine the dialectical relationship between the objective and the subjective. Through transforming rigorous logical deduction into intuitive visual experiences, the artworks reveal the artist’s persistent interrogation of the fundamental laws of the physical world. This exhibition is curated by UCCA Curator Neil Zhang.

Liao Fei’s practice stems from his reflections on existence and its inherent limitations as he inquires into the essence of matter, grounding his personal artistic exploration in the observation and contemplation of objective principles. From his early training in sculpture, Liao Fei has developed a practice that merges deductive reasoning with reflections on scientific methodologies and metaphysical propositions to construct a visual language that exists in the liminal space between rationality and intuition.

The title of the exhibition “Seeing All Forms” draws from the *Diamond Sutra*, evoking the notion of “seeing is believing:” all things in the world manifest in their self-evident forms before our eyes. This concept underscores Liao Fei’s exploration of the relationship between



form and physical matter, dissolving the boundaries between perception and cognition through artistic practice. The exhibition's spatial design echoes this inquiry: the partition walls between UCCA's New Gallery and West Gallery have been removed to create an open layout embodying a sense of "unobstructedness" that resonates with Liao Fei's work.

Upon entering the exhibition space, visitors will encounter a field of installation, video, and sculpture works on view in a site imbued with an internal logic that gestures towards the artist's reflections on the essence of existence. The removal of the partition walls between the two galleries further enhances the experience of the space, where the artworks could engage in an organic conversation in an open field. At the entrance, *Move No. 1* (2013) captures a tense physical experiment: two chairs, stacked together with one flipped inside down, with two ice blocks held between them, slowly melting as time passes. As this structure of balance disintegrates over time, viewers become witness to the moment when natural forces operate in motion. The adjacent video work *A Transitory Vacuum Sculpture* (2015) presents a fragile horizontal line assembled from toilet plungers, a common household object. While this structure could, in theory, extend indefinitely at both ends, it ultimately deforms as the vacuum force of the plungers depletes. Through setting an initial condition that allows the works to undergo a transformative process from order to chaos, these early works explore the states of matter that are seemingly stable yet constantly in flux. On the other side of *Move No. 1*, *Signal* (2015) shows a dynamic map composed of 30 days of bike routes following the same rule each time—pedaling through green lights and turns right at red lights without stopping. The method reveals the possibilities that arise within a fixed set of rules, serving as a metaphor for the operative laws of the physical world.

Infinite, Natural Typography 1 (2017/2025) turns a geometric point into a continuously extending line that eventually becomes a plane. As the line expands in space, the rigor of mathematics becomes intertwined with the infinite possibilities within the form. As for *One Way Sculpture 1-4* (2017–2022), Liao Fei makes use of the unidirectional nature of plastic cable ties to convert the physical limitations of this industrial material into a medium through which to explore the language of space, exhaustively testing their arrangements to reveal all possible spatial structures. These two works exhibit a unique tension within the dialectical relationship between the bounded and the infinite, suggesting the limitations and possibilities of human cognition.

In *Extended Dotted Line* (2016), presented here as a photographic work, the artist attaches seven buoys to stones of varying weights and throws them into a river. The weight of the



stones determines the intervals of their descent and they appear to form an extended dotted line, while the floating buoys cast a faint trajectory on the water surface. Caught between being tethered and being adrift, this state of matter appears as a visual allegory to illustrate certainty and uncertainty. In contrast, *Winding Curve* (2018) shows the artist folding and assembling paper to create a spatial paradox between curves and straight lines. These two works mark a shift in Liao Fei's creative approach as he moved away from direct intervention in the physical world to consider the relationship between geometric forms and their logic, in attempt to reveal the subtle and elusive relationship between human intervention and natural laws.

The exhibition concludes with works from Liao Fei's most recent series "Partially Obscured Circles" (2024–2025) and "Chiral Extent" (2021–2025), both of which explore the compositional rules of physical material at a micro level. Using minimalist geometric forms, the artist derives unexpected abstract patterns that generate a crystalline visual rhythm amidst the interplay of flatness and spatial depth. "Chiral Extent" draws from the directionality of abstracted hands, experimenting with their symmetry and balance, along with the spatial language they are capable of generating. This series of arrangement and iterations underlines how the experiences of the human body shape our cognition of the world, while touching upon the artist's contemplation of the structure of the Chinese seal script and how the act of writing mediates the relationship between the self and the external world.

About the Artist

Liao Fei (b. 1981, Jingdezhen; lives and works in Shanghai) graduated from Shanghai Normal University in 2006. His recent solo exhibitions include "Physics Temple" (Vanguard Gallery × Tihho Art Space, Shanghai, 2023); "Depiction" (The Cloister Project, Shanghai, 2021–2022); "Is everything a contingent occurrence?" (OCAT Shanghai, 2021); "Res Extensa" (Vanguard Gallery × O Art Center, Shanghai, 2018); and "Plain" (Shanghai Museum of Glass, 2016). Select group exhibitions include "Pictures of the Post-80s Generation—Generational Leap" (TANK Shanghai, Shanghai, 2024); "An Atlas of the Difficult World" (Macalline Center of Art, Beijing, 2024); "Endless Mountains: Spanning Mountains and Seas—An Exhibition of Art and the Tang Poetry Road" (Osaka Culturarium at Tempozan, 2024); "Silent Thunder" (UCCA Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, 2021); "Dis-/Continuing Traditions: Contemporary Video Art from China" (Salamanca Arts Centre, Tasmania, Australia, 2021); "In the Open or in Stealth" (Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art, 2018); "Frontier: Re-assessment of Post-



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Globlizational Politics” (OCAT Institute, Beijing, 2018); and the 11th Shanghai Biennale “Why Not Ask Again? Arguments, Counter-Arguments, and Stories” (Power Station of Art, Shanghai, 2016–2017).

Public Programs

At the public opening, the exhibition’s curator Neil Zhang and artist Liao Fei will jointly lead a special guided tour, offering an in-depth introduction to the curatorial vision, the works on view, and the artist’s creative approach. Responding to the specific characteristics of his works, artist Liao Fei has designed and transformed the exhibition space to create a setting in dynamic resonance with the artworks. During this guided tour, visitors will have the opportunity to experience this interplay between the artworks and the space in which they exist.

Over the course of the exhibition period, UCCA will also feature a conversation centering on Liao Fei’s artistic practice. Luo Shiping, who holds a PhD in Art Philosophy through the joint program of Tongji University and Freiburg University, will join the curator and the artist in this discussion.

Known for his rigorously rational approach to artistic practice, Liao Fei has long engaged with questions of existence and the limits of cognition. Through the translation of mathematical systems, logical structures, and language forms, he probes the visibility and perceptibility of underlying essences. This conversation will explore how contemporary art can creatively translate logical grammar, and further examine the dialectical relationship between technological rationality and humanistic values, as well as the ongoing presence of mathematical logic in Liao Fei’s work. The discussion will also extend to the formal parallels between ancient Chinese grammar and contemporary computer languages, opening a dialogue on the potential structural affinities between the linguistic logic of Eastern languages and emerging artificial intelligence language models.

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About UCCA

UCCA Center for Contemporary Art is China's premier museum of modern and contemporary art. Committed to the belief that art can deepen lives and transcend boundaries, UCCA presents a wide range of exhibitions, public programs, and educational initiatives across four architecturally and programmatically distinct locations. Owned by a group of committed patrons, it is funded by donations, sponsorship, ticketing, and proceeds from the commercial activities of UCCA Lab. UCCA has presented more than 200 exhibitions and welcomed more than ten million visitors since its founding in Beijing in 2007 as the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art.

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