

ULLENS CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ART 尤伦斯当代艺术中心

Psychology, biology and religion collide in *The Anatomy of Rage* —“Curated by Zhang Peili” introduces emerging multimedia artist Lu Yang

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In just three years, the UCCA “Curated by...” series has evolved into a forum where established curators have free reign to showcase the work of China’s most talented emerging artists. Every exhibition in the series is now free to the public, thanks to the generous support of Bloomberg, and every exhibition has broken new ground by making it easier for young artists to bring their work to the broader public.

In this latest edition of the “Curated by...” series, UCCA welcomes guest curator Zhang Peili, the “founding father” of Chinese video art and a pioneering figure in the field of new media. He will curate *The Anatomy of Rage*, an exciting solo exhibition by young artist Lu Yang, whose unique blend of BioArt and animation has made her one of the brightest stars in the Chinese multimedia scene.

UCCA Director Jérôme Sans agrees: “Already, Lu Yang has emerged as one of the most compelling voices in China’s new generation of multimedia artists. Using 3D animation, video projections, detailed schematics, medical diagrams, supporting text and music, she has created a brand of BioArt that explores the darker implications of modern science and technology. Her talent for juxtaposition is evident in past works that combine environmental themes with electroshock therapy, and state-of-the-art treatments for Parkinson’s disease with techno music and DJ culture.”

This time around, Lu Yang sets contemporary scientific theory and the latest advances in brain mapping against a decidedly traditional religious concept: so-called “Wrathful Deities” whose fierce expressions belie their

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role as representations of the Buddha's infinite compassion. But, Lu Yang asks, is it possible to maintain compassionate thoughts when one's face is contorted in anger? Her approach to answering this question is both deadpan and absurd. Taking Tibetan Buddhism's wrathful Vajrasattva deity as her protagonist, Lu Yang creates a series of 3D animation projections – bolstered with medical diagrams and supporting text – to try to analyze the contradictory nature of fury and compassion.

Curator Zhang Peili notes the scholarship and attention to detail that underlies Lu Yang's art: "For some time now, Lu Yang has been obsessively, meticulously engaged in the study of biology and living organisms. But this sort of research is rife with contradictions: it is seemingly scientific but non-rational; seemingly refined but inherently violent; seemingly real and yet unreal. Within [her own] carefully-constructed reality, Lu Yang employs convincing visual language to expound [a unique] aesthetic point of view. In an age when concepts proliferate and calculations take the place of intuition, Lu Yang's attitude and approach are particularly valuable. Her works are a breath of fresh air, proof positive that dynamic artistic language need never again be a litany of seemingly "correct" concepts..."

Lu Yang's artist statement also highlights her serious approach to science: "When the first signs of anger reach the human brain, the information is first transmitted to the hypothalamus. This activates the amygdalae to carry out certain processes, which in turn set off a chain reaction by activating a number of other structures in the brain. These structures are responsible for transforming nerve signals into visible expressions of anger." Her statement ends, however, with a slight wink to the reader, a hint that this is an artist with a sense of fun: "This project is a foolhardy attempt to superimpose religious concepts of wrathful deities onto scientific theories of the brain's anger response mechanisms."

In summing up the exhibition, UCCA Director Jérôme Sans provides some insight into the attitude of this young artist, and what we might expect from her future efforts: "With mischief and mastery, science and satire, Lu Yang dissects the anatomy of rage, forcing us to acknowledge the limits of our own humanity and our capacity for both cruelty and compassion."

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About Curator Zhang Peili

Pioneering Chinese video artist Zhang Peili (b. 1957, Hangzhou, China) graduated from the China Academy of Art, Hangzhou, in 1984. He has held solo exhibition at REDCAT (Roy and Edna Disney/CalArts Theatre, Los Angeles); Tilton Gallery (New York); Govett-Brewster Art Gallery (New Plymouth, New Zealand); OCT Contemporary Art Terminal (Shenzhen, China); and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. He has also been included in shows at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (Beijing); the Serpentine Gallery (London); Centre Pompidou (Paris); the Venice Biennale; the Queens Museum of Art (New York); P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center (New York); and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Zhang Peili is a professor and the founding dean of the New Media Department at the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou. He currently lives and works in Hangzhou.

About Artist Lu Yang

Lu Yang (b. 1984, Shanghai) holds undergraduate and master's degrees from the New Media Department of the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou. Her experimental multimedia artwork uses video, scientific drawings, illustrations and installations to address topics related to science and technology, biology, religion, psychology and other fields, and to comment on issues of control in modern society. Her shocking combinations of grotesque imagery and deadpan instruction manuals have made her the most controversial young Chinese multimedia artist of her generation. Lu Yang has participated in a number of exhibitions, including *KRAFTTREMOR Project* (2011, Boers-Li Gallery, Beijing), *Lu Yang: Hell* (2010, Art Labor Gallery, Shanghai), *Torturous Vision* (2010, input/output, Hong Kong) and *The Power of Reinforcement* (2009, Zendai MoMA, Shanghai).

About the UCCA “Curated by...” Series

Initiated in July 2008 by UCCA Director Jérôme Sans, the UCCA “Curated by...” series invites established Chinese artists to recommend emerging talents and curate exhibitions for them. The series helps to forge connections between artists of various ages working at different stages of their careers, and provides valuable exposure and exhibition opportunities for young Chinese artists, particularly those who have never held a solo exhibition before. The average age of the young artists showcased in these exhibitions was 30 years old; the youngest was a second-year student at the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) in Beijing. In 2011, Bloomberg began sponsoring the “Curated by...” series,

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thus enabling UCCA to make the series free to the public.

About UCCA

The Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) is a non-profit, comprehensive art center founded by collectors Guy and Myriam Ullens in November 2007. UCCA presents exhibitions of established and emerging artists and develops a trusted platform to share knowledge through education and research.