

LUNAR NORTH ◦
CONFLUENCE

2021

Acknowledgements

Macquarie University Art Gallery

Pandemic Bodies is proudly supported by 2020 COVID-19 Response Funding from Create NSW Australia Council of the Arts and the National Association of Visual Arts. We thank with sincere gratitude Fan Dongwang for his amazing commitment and support throughout the genesis of this project. Thank you to the Macquarie University Art Gallery exhibition team Rhonda Davis, Kate Hargraves and Leonard Janiszewski.

Gallery Lane Cove + Creative Studios

Gallery Lane Cove extends its gratitude to Art Atrium, its Director Simon Chan, the artist NC Qin (Nancy Yu) and the staff and management committee members for their support of the *Glass Armours* exhibition and the *Lunar North Confluence* initiative.

Art Space on The Concourse

Willoughby City Council thanks the following people and organisations for their support of the *Resonant Flows* exhibition;

Simon Chan, Director of Art Atrium
Parramatta Artist Studios' and City of Parramatta

Incinerator Art Space

Willoughby City Council acknowledges its partnership with the Australia-China Institute for Arts and Culture at Western Sydney University to present *Precious Treasures*.

Design: Jennifer Brady

Lunar North Confluence marks the coming together of four galleries with a shared objective – to turn the spotlight on the breadth and depth of practice by Chinese-Australian artists across generations. The project celebrates a first-time partnership between Art Space on The Concourse, Incinerator Art Space, Gallery Lane Cove and Macquarie University Gallery, and builds on each gallery's commitment to engage with Asian Art in Australia.

Indeed, the Sydney arts community has a wealth of artists who practise art within an Asian context. This includes those who were born in Australia with Asian heritage, artists who may have immigrated from Asia, and artists who reside and exhibit across both Australia and Asia. These sets of conditions have enriched the broader Sydney arts sector, in which many of these artists have integrated Asian artistic traditions and frames of reference with European perspectives within their contemporary art practice. The fusion is dynamic and constantly evolving.

Lunar North Confluence recognises the importance of the long-standing artistic contribution which Asian cultures have made on the North Shore and their relevance to the wider regional, state and national communities in Australia. The local government areas of Willoughby City, City of Ryde and Lane Cove have emerging Asian communities; Chinese-Australian communities, in particular, are well established in Willoughby City and the City of Ryde.

Three generations of artists are represented across Art Space on The Concourse, Gallery Lane Cove and Macquarie University Gallery in their respective solo showcases, creating interesting points of critical engagement, reflection and dialogue, which will be addressed at an online Zoom panel with the artists and curators. *Precious Treasures*, the group show at Incinerator Art Space, mirrors the inter-generational framework that underpins the presentations at the other three galleries. The exhibition series demonstrates the quality of this cross-cultural engagement, showcasing a broad range of artists from Sydney who are practising across painting, drawing, sculpture, glass, video and sound installation.

Resonant Flows, *Precious Treasures*, *Glass Armours* and *Pandemic Bodies* activate four very different but distinct exhibition spaces; from the industrial heritage character of Incinerator Art Space, the white cube conditions of Gallery Lane Cove and Art Space on The Concourse to the grand hall-like quality of Macquarie University Art Gallery. Together, the exhibitions provide an opportunity to discover the contemporary intricacies of Asian-informed art practices currently operating within metropolitan Sydney.

Cover image:
Cindy Yuen-Zhe Chen, *Sonic Ink Vibrations: Tidal 1*, 2021, ink on Wenzhou paper.
Image courtesy of the artist.

Inside cover background:
Cindy Yuen-Zhe Chen, *Resonant Flows: Still 2* (detail), 2020, video still.
Image courtesy of the artist.



Pandemic Bodies Fan Dongwang

10 February - 31 March
Macquarie University Art Gallery

Fan Dongwang's *Pandemic Body* series creates a treatise, exploring the co-mixture of feelings and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic that has gripped the world. Dongwang effectively uses the structure of the human body as a metaphor for transmutation and its outlying effects. Abound with various traits, guised in both mechanical perfections and unwieldy distortions, they are conjoined by their steadfast resilience.

Dongwang deconstructs and reconstructs the bodies in the realisation the global pandemic has changed forever the way we live. Suspended in unfamiliar territory, time and space, there appears to be two types of embodied figures – one fractured and unanchored, and the other a dance body full of strength and poise. The pandemic bodies are manifestations of the various emotional responses that have emerged, one of the bleakness that has engulfed the world, and the other, the hope and sense of community that has prevailed throughout the pandemic.

Rhonda Davis
Senior Curator



Fan Dongwang, *Descendant Body 2 - Green*, 2000, acrylic on canvas, 170 x 280 cm. Image courtesy of the artist.



Fan Dongwang,
Pandemic Body - Hope, 2020,
acrylic on canvas, 90 x 90 cm.
Image courtesy of the artist.



Fan Dongwang,
Pandemic Body - Encounter,
2020, acrylic on canvas,
125 x 125 cm.
Image courtesy of the artist.

In our pandemic-ravaged world, our bodies bear little resemblance to the 'normal' human body. My work *Pandemic Body* is an imaginative vision of the new bodily world as a huge map of the post-pandemic psyche. With a mix of different ethnicities, colours and genders, the bodies are confused, depersonalised, cool and inorganic, and easy to reshape. The lines and shapes delineate an immense space with new boundaries and depth – full of aching, longing, order-less and distorted bodies forming an assemblage endlessly floating on the blue surface, gasping for air, emerging and submerging, shrinking and extending.

COVID-19 has revealed the fragility of the human race; regardless of our technological and economic advancements, a microscopic and invisible virus has wreaked havoc, shattering our religious beliefs and spirituality, forming a wake-up call for us to rethink our relationship with religion, technology and environment.

In the post-pandemic world, my paintings of Australia's iconic landscapes combined with bodies reflect on the peculiar state of our existence: overwhelmed by its hostile environment, the body is suspended, floating, fragmented, perplexed and isolated, as if we have lost control, purpose, beliefs and identities, which we need to regain to help future generations survive.

Fan Dongwang
2021

Fan Dongwang is represented by **Art Atrium**.

This project is proudly supported by 2020 COVID-19 Response Funding from: **Create NSW**, **Australia Council of the Arts**, and **National Association of Visual Arts**.



Fan Dongwang, *Pandemic Body - Crisis #2*, 2020, acrylic on canvas board, 35 x 45 cm. Image courtesy of the artist.

Glass Armours is a conceptually complex project that centres on expressions of the super ego visualised by pairing Chinese symbology with the medium of glass. The narrative employs dramatic visual metaphors, a method which pays tribute to Greek tragedy but delivered as historical Chinese objects of military aggression—the helmet, armour, shield and sword. Further, the inspiration for the artist's investigations into the human psyche is grounded in philosophies of the European analytical tradition while simultaneously underpinned by her personal experience negotiating two different cultural settings – the Chinese heritage of her parents and that of colonial Australia, her home country. These constant juxtapositions reflect a perspective shaped by both Eastern and Western cultural influences.

The materiality of glass and the artworks' reference to Chinese mythology temporarily evoke a museum experience only to be ruptured by contemporary references of hanging installations. To what end, one might ask, is the collection of ancient armour in glass? The glory or horror of war is suggestive of an identity struggle, between a fragile, idealised self-image and what lies beneath. The presence of strangely disconnected beak-like masks, emblematic of plague doctors of 17th century Europe provides clues. While undoubtedly a commentary on the current COVID-19 pandemic, the mask has become symbolic of appearance, identity and social expectations. In conjunction, the series of works drives home the message that society places a high premium on the idealised image, status and pride regardless of culture. The only difference lies in the primary driver of the internal ego-tussle – the familial/tribal or the individual.

Rachael Kiang
Manager & Curator

Glass Armours **NC Qin**

3-27 February
Gallery Lane Cove + Creative Studios



NC Qin, *Birdsong*, 2020, cast glass, 16 x 22 x 17 cm. Photo by Felix Esteban.



NC Qin, *Intent*, *Phantom of Ego/Armour Series*, 2020, cast Blackwood Crystal, 20 x 65 x 5 cm.
Photo by Felix Esteban.



NC Qin, Chest Plate (Glass Armour Series), 2020, cast Blackwood Crystal, marble, brass, 46 x 42 x 8 cm.
Photo by Felix Esteban.



NC Qin, Headcase Trio, 2020, cast Blackwood Crystal. Photo by Felix Esteban.

The *Glass Armours* series explores the tension between the image we think we project and the reality of our experiences donning the armour of pride. Presenting the ornamental and fragile rather than strong and solid, something heavy and burdensome as opposed to functional and light, I use glass to create a phantom of ego we wrap around ourselves for protection, letting its translucency show its lack of substance, and its beauty reveal how much we elevate its importance. The glass armour acts as an allegory for the super ego or the high minded legal or moral ideals that are imposed by society at large.

Constructed as a tribute to my Chinese heritage and acknowledgement of the symbology of armours to Asian culture as an object of pride and expectation, I subvert their meaning by using glass to create the armour and render it ineffective in its mechanism for defence, thus exploring themes of guilt, shame and repression that are often sourced from the frustrated efforts to attain an ideal. I question what pride and ego are and what they actually do for us.

This exhibition features the *Head Cases* series, a trio of three Han dynasty inspired glass helmets,

each featuring different designs with the aim of generating a sense of individuality yet facelessness in the sculptural triptych. When presented in a line or in a triangle forward facing formation, they give rise to an imposing and suffocating atmosphere, as if the audience is having a standoff with three faceless generals. This panel of faceless, ghostly judges reiterate and reflect our internal judgements arising from the failure to live up to ideals inculcated by our parents, culture and society.

By creating something intentionally faceless, I reference the well-known Chinese saying "losing face" as a way of expressing the action of something shameful or dishonourable and question what "face" is given to us when ideals are relentlessly pursued. Once this question is addressed, we can perhaps decide on what to do with these ideals that are placed on a pedestal and carried around in our everyday life.

NC Qin
2021

NC Qin (Nancy Yu)
is represented by Art Atrium.



**GALLERY
LANE COVE
+ CREATIVE
STUDIOS**

Resonant Flows

Cindy Yuen-Zhe Chen

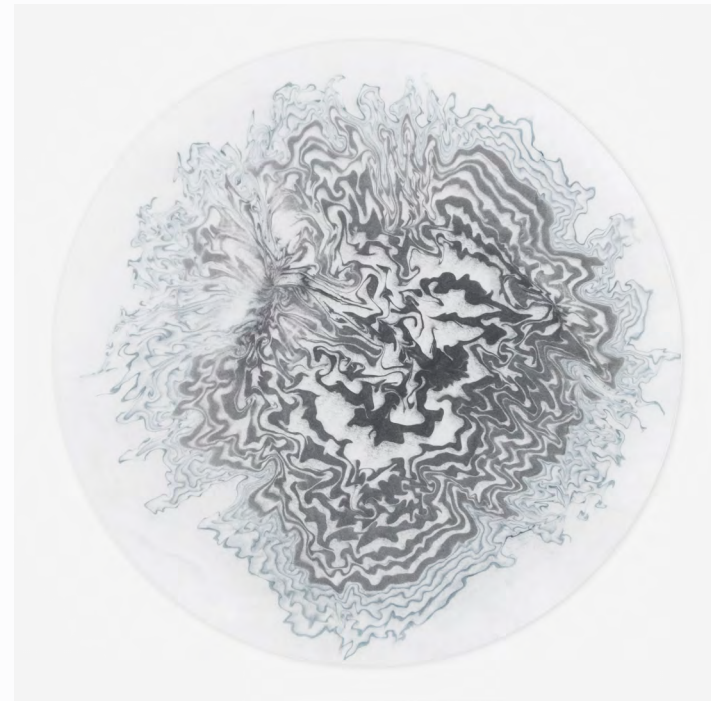
3 - 28 February
Art Space on The Concourse



Cindy Yuen-Zhe Chen, *Fluvial Dynamics: Rain and Foraging Birds*, 2020, ink on Wenzhou paper. Image courtesy of the artist.

In partnership with Chatswood Year of the Ox Festival, Willoughby City Council presents an exhibition of installation, drawing and video by Cindy Yuen-Zhe Chen. *Resonant Flows* explores the interdependent relationship which exists between our bodies, places and water. Chen responds to the continual flux of atmospheric changes and sonic events through experimental drawing, listening and sounding processes. In doing this, her work examines the reciprocal effects of her interactions with bodies of water such as Middle Harbour, Lane Cove River and Parramatta River. By acknowledging the manifold cultural, environmental, social and economic factors that shape our relationship with water in Australia, Chen's work draws attention to the meaningful connections that we create as individuals. Her own experience of seeing, feeling and hearing become integral acts of ritual within the making process. She engages nature as a collaborator, allowing wind, rain and sound to assist in the creation of her work.

Cassandra Hard-Lawrie
Curator & Visual Arts Coordinator



Cindy Yuen-Zhe Chen,
Sonic Ink Vibrations:
Tidal 1, 2021,
ink on Wenzhou paper.
Image courtesy of the artist.



Cindy Yuen-Zhe Chen,
Sonic Ink Vibrations:
Tidal 4, 2021,
ink on Wenzhou paper.
Image courtesy of the artist.



Cindy Yuen-Zhe Chen, *Fluvial Dynamics: Rain, Wind, People*, 2020, ink on Wenzhou paper.
Image courtesy of the artist.

Two interlaced notions of fluidity weave through this collection of works: the watery cycles of rivers, rain and harbours, and the fluid dynamism of places that are constantly evolving. This understanding emerged as I responded to the contingent vitality of Middle Harbour, Lane Cove River and Parramatta River through the seasons of winter, spring and summer in 2020, a year shaped by volatility. The drawings, sound and video installation of *Resonant Flows* articulate my body's interaction with the atmospheric, sonic and social occurrences that enliven these places. These works explore the interdependent relationships that exist between our bodies, places and water, and draws attention to the meaningful connections that we create through our actions.

In mid-winter at Parramatta River, I listened to the transitory flow of cyclists and pedestrians, jackhammers breaking concrete and the rumbling of traffic passing overhead. In late spring and early summer, choruses of cicadas crescendoed to greet the sun as it emerged from behind rain clouds, illuminating the tidal waves that have shaped the sandstone shoreline of Middle Harbour for generations.



Cindy Yuen-Zhe Chen, *Printing with Rain: Midnight* (detail), 2020, ink and rain on Wenzhou paper.
Image courtesy of the artist.

Resonant Flows, the eponymous work of this exhibition, is an installation of sound and video that articulates these moments of embodied listening at Parramatta River, Middle Harbour and Lane Cove River. My gestural responses to recorded sounds are expressed in Sound Feedback Drawing compositions, and the instability of hand held video footage speaks of the physical strain of crouching low to listen closely to patterns of flowing water.

Resonant frequencies of the Sound Feedback Drawing composition from Middle Harbour were used to vibrate water and ink, creating *Sonic Ink Vibration Drawings* in an experimental technique that combines traditional Japanese ink marbling and acoustics. This expanded approach to drawing can also be seen in three looped paper Möbius Scrolls which mediated my engagements with the rain, wind, sounds, animals and people of Parramatta River, Lane Cove River and Middle Harbour. These looped paper scrolls are imbued with ink that have been diffused by rain; the paper shaped by actions of walking, sitting, listening and drawing along the pathways, riverbank and shoreline. The interconnected processes of drawing, listening and sounding that underpin the works in *Resonant Flows* emphasise our entanglement within places as they unfold.

Cindy Yuen-Zhe Chen
2021

Cindy Yuen-Zhe Chen is represented by
Art Atrium.

Presented by **Willoughby City Council** and
Chatswood Year of the Ox Festival.





Louise Zhang, *Scholar Mound (with Rope) Study*, 2019, foam clay, polyurethane, wood, flatpack pearls.
Photo by Silversalt Photography.

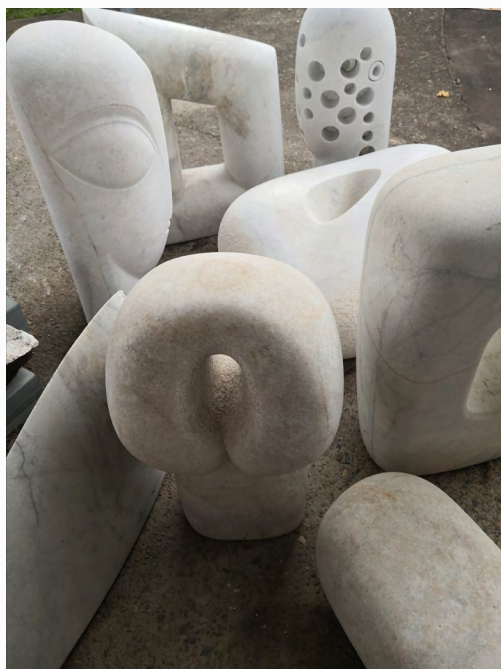
○ *Precious Treasures* Curated by Guan Wei

Amy Fu . Jason D Phu . Justin Qian
Guan Wei . Yang Xifa . Louise Zhang

3 - 28 February
Incinerator Art Space

In the oldest Chinese dictionary *Shuowen Jiezi*, treasure is defined as 'precious'. The unique perception of life that artists instil in their artworks strikes a chord with people globally, creating universal threads of kindness and beauty. Being able to transcend across cultures, such artworks can be perceived as 'precious treasures'. The character *zang* in Chinese has multiple meanings. Apart from 'treasure', it can also mean 'storage' or 'collection'.

Australia, cradled by the Pacific and Indian Oceans, enjoys a well-preserved natural environment, with unique flora and fauna and many natural treasures. It provides a fertile space for artists to envision and create a wide range of artistic treasures.



Justin Qian, *Glittering Stars*, 2020, Australian marble stones.
Image courtesy of the artist.

The first generation of Chinese artists in Australia were modest and humble, hiding themselves in the Western world. Overtime, more recent generations of artists have learnt to amalgamate the philosophies and sensibilities of the two worlds in their artistic creations.

The current generation of Chinese Australian artists grew up in the Western world, but the cultural heritage from their parents continues to flow in their blood. In the search for self-identity, they have learnt to incorporate this unique biculturalism within their artistic processes. Their work reveals a strong 'sense of self' and contains a distinctive aesthetic derived from the power of fusion.

Ernst Cassirer says in his book *An Essay on Man*, "Great art of all times has arisen from the interpenetration of two opposing forces". The artworks in this exhibition demonstrate the interpenetration of Eastern and Western cultural forces. They represent a range of Chinese Australian artists of different ages and backgrounds, and have turned Incinerator Art Space into a treasure trove.

Guan Wei
Curator

Presented by **Willoughby City Council** and
Chatswood Year of the Ox Festival.
In partnership with Australia-China Institute for
Arts and Culture at **Western Sydney University**.

Assistant Curator, **Angela Xu**.

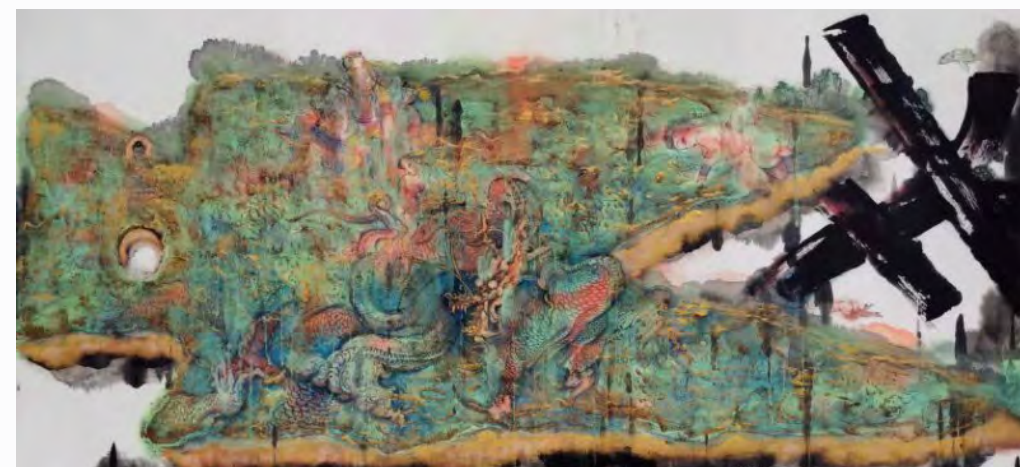


Guan Wei, *Star Map No. 1*, 2020, acrylic on board.
Image courtesy of the artist.

INCINERATOR
ART SPACE



Australia-China Institute
for Arts and Culture



Yang Xifa, *Capital Theory Series #7*, 2020, mixed media. Image courtesy of the artist.

About the Galleries

Macquarie University Art Gallery

The Chancellery, 19 Eastern Road, Macquarie University
Tues - Fri 10:00am - 5:00pm

Macquarie University Art Gallery has a changing annual exhibition program to engage audiences from all walks of life into the wonders of art and its links with education and research. The exhibition program encourages independent and critical thinking on a range of topics and issues. We utilise an interdisciplinary framework to explore the intersections between art, science, history, philosophy, media, music and culture. MUAG produces exhibitions that contribute to our broader understanding of Australian art in relation to contemporary society and the socio-political and cultural histories that emerge as part of this cross disciplinary dialogue.

Gallery Lane Cove + Creative Studios

Upper Level, 164 Longueville Road, Lane Cove
Mon - Sat 10:00am - 4:30pm

Gallery Lane Cove + Creative Studios is a not-for-profit gallery and art centre managed by Centrehouse Inc. with funding support from Lane Cove Council. It presents innovative contemporary practices alongside conventional approaches with social impact projects being a key focus across its program. The studios offer classes across painting, printmaking, ceramics and textile art practices as well as three private art studios for hire. The integrated gallery and studios program encourages collaboration across regions and disciplines, fosters creative exchange, and promotes development of the visual arts in the broader North Shore area.

Art Space on The Concourse

409 Victoria Avenue, Chatswood (next to Box Office)
Wed - Fri 11:00am - 5:00pm, Sat - Sun 11:00am - 4:00pm

Art Space on The Concourse opened in 2011, located within The Concourse's Performing Arts Centre. Its annual program presents Willoughby City Council-curated exhibitions and high-quality visual arts events. It is available at other times for hire to artists, arts groups and curators. Engaging a wide range of audiences and artists, this space presents an inclusive exhibition program which aims to support professional artists and diverse community groups. Its location in the heart of the busy Chatswood CBD is symbolic of the Art Space's intention to build community spirit and promote the cultural vitality and diverse community which makes up Willoughby City.

Incinerator Art Space

2 Small Street, Willoughby
Wed - Sun 10:00am - 4:00pm

Incinerator Art Space is in an iconic and heritage-listed Walter Burley Griffin designed building. The interior has been sensitively renovated to create an art space that exhibits a broad range of contemporary art exhibitions in a semi-industrial environment. The space is programmed by Willoughby City Council and has fast gained a reputation as a hidden gem for the arts on Sydney's North Shore. Incinerator Art Space also hosts workshops, artist talks, performance art events and demonstrations.

• Public Programs

Saturday 13 February | 11:00am - 12:00pm

Gallery Lane Cove + Creative Studios

NC Qin in conversation with Rachael Kiang

Saturday 13 February | 2:00pm - 3:00pm

Art Space on The Concourse

Cindy Yuen-Zhe Chen in conversation with the Curator

Saturday 20 February | 2:00pm - 3:00pm

Lunar North Confluence Online Panel

Artists and curators from exhibitions celebrating Lunar New Year across the North Shore discuss the artworks in *Lunar North Confluence*.

Wednesday 10 March | 1:00pm - 2:30pm

Macquarie University Art Gallery

Discussion Panel

The Pandemic and the Role of the Artist

Guest speakers join Fan Dongwang

Afternoon tea will be included.

