

NI HAIFENG

Ni Haifeng's practice stems from an interest in cultural systems of return, exchange, language and production. Through mediums of photography, video and installations, Ni explores the simultaneous creation and obliteration of meaning while drawing attention to the cyclical movements of people, products and goods that are often reflective of patterns of colonialism and globalization.

The concept of uselessness, seen in the desire to offset 'the production of the useful' that is central to the operative conditions of consumerism and the 'dominant economic order', plays a key role within Ni's practice, lending his works a distinct political and social dimension

"As a critical and engaged conceptual artist who does not neglect the visual appearance of his work, Ni Haifeng has a prominent place within contemporary art. In his poetic, multifaceted work he is able to couple a radical conceptualism to a certain Baroque and drama in the visual language.

Any lurking threat of ponderousness in his emotionally charged choice of subject matter is knocked on the head by a light Dadaist irony that is never too far away from his work. By simple interventions in fixed patterns of looking and expectations, he continually enables the viewer to see the world with fresh and amazed eyes. The creation of such confusion and subversion is possibly his most important artistic premise. By making the ambiguity of things manifest, he demonstrates that reality always lends itself to more than one interpretation."

Roel Arkesteijn





In the Labyrinth of Freedom

Lumen Travo Gallery, 2023

On the occasion of his solo exhibition at Lumen Travo Gallery, Ni Haifeng presented the installation "In the Labyrinth of Freedom", originally developed for the exhibition "Freethinkers" at the Amsterdam Museum in 2021.

If freedom is defined as the absence of external impediments to an agent of free will, how responsible are the wills to freedom to society at large? On the other hand, the concept of positive freedom, which holds that the freedom of an individual has to be mediated for the greater societal good, creates a slippery slope where freedom may easily slide into unfreedom.

Through a labyrinth of words, phrases, and visual forms, the exhibition attempts to interrogate the paradoxical nature of the notion of freedom, such as "forming one's own idea," the ideology of individualism, free will, or atomistic notions of selfhood.



Ni Haifeng, *In the Labyrinth of Freedom*, 2023, Installaton view,
Lumen Travo Gallery
Credits: Giovanni Nardi





The excess of liberty;
whether in states or indi-
viduals, seems only to pass

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The flags exhibited at the Lumen Travo Gallery are composed of words, phrases, and texts representing discourses on freedom from various ages, superimposed by the year in which they were uttered.

Across diverse eras with contradictory meanings, the discourses are not a representation of the history of freedom but indexes that call forth the history in which the discourses were once born, lived, inspired or rejected. In other words, history is not depicted but contextualized as a readymade, absent, yet integral part of the work.

Money is a kind of freedom that can
be felt and heard; it is an inestimable
treasure for a man entirely deprived
of true liberty.

1862

History only suggests that
capitalism is a necessary con-
dition for political freedom

1962

The development of freethinking overlapped and coincided with the Enlightenment, the advancement in natural science, colonialism, and the rise of capitalism. History is full of contradictions, and the freethinkers were necessarily embedded in such contradictions. The maze of flags can be seen as murky historical waters for contemporary individuals to retro-navigate through and to reconcile the contradiction between ideas such as "men are naturally free and equal" or "break the chains of mental slavery" with those of colonialism and the slave trade.



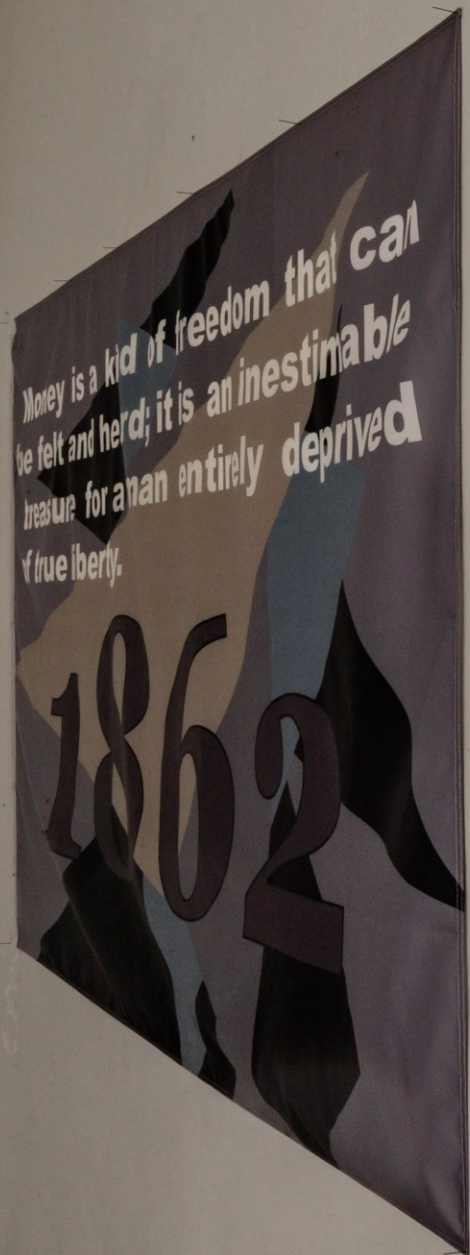


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Ni Haifeng, *In the Labirinth of Freedom*, 2023, Installaton view,
Lumen Travo Gallery
Credits: Giovanni Nardi





Free speech is more important

For a culturally rich

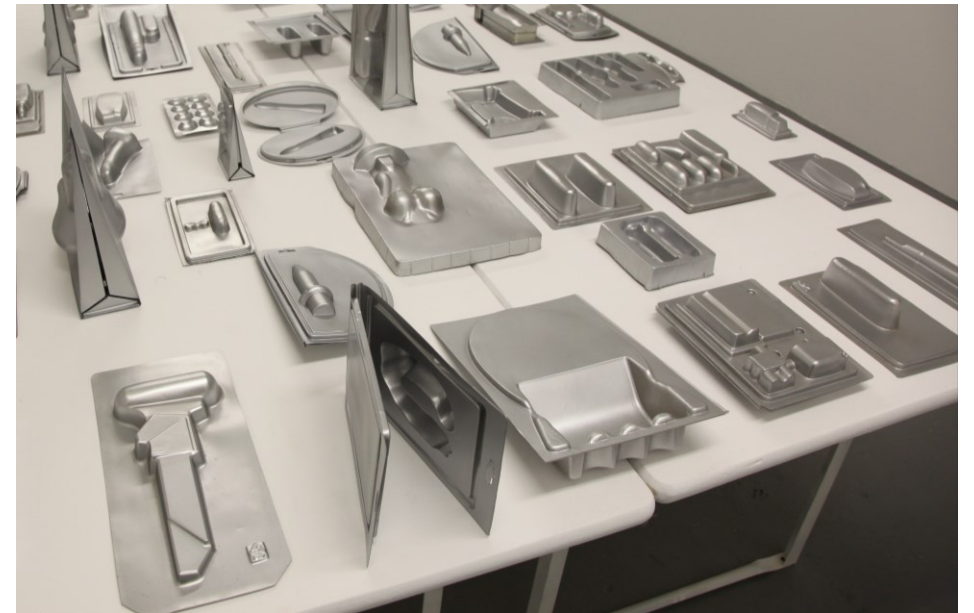
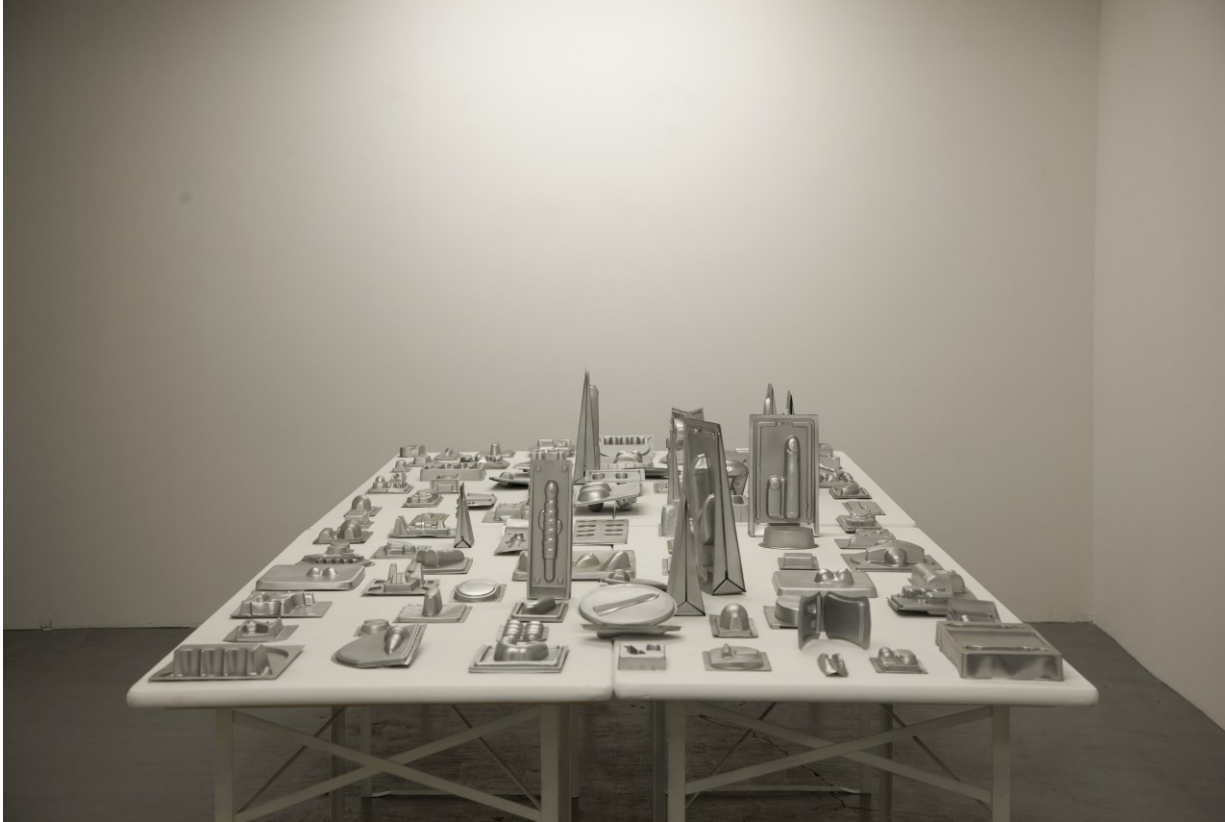
The Negro Enslaved

We feel the act of use we
but it very language is
circulate in the mind
2001

Miserable
laissez-faire
1892

Flowers of Evil, 2018

Plastic packaging, car paint, dimensions variable



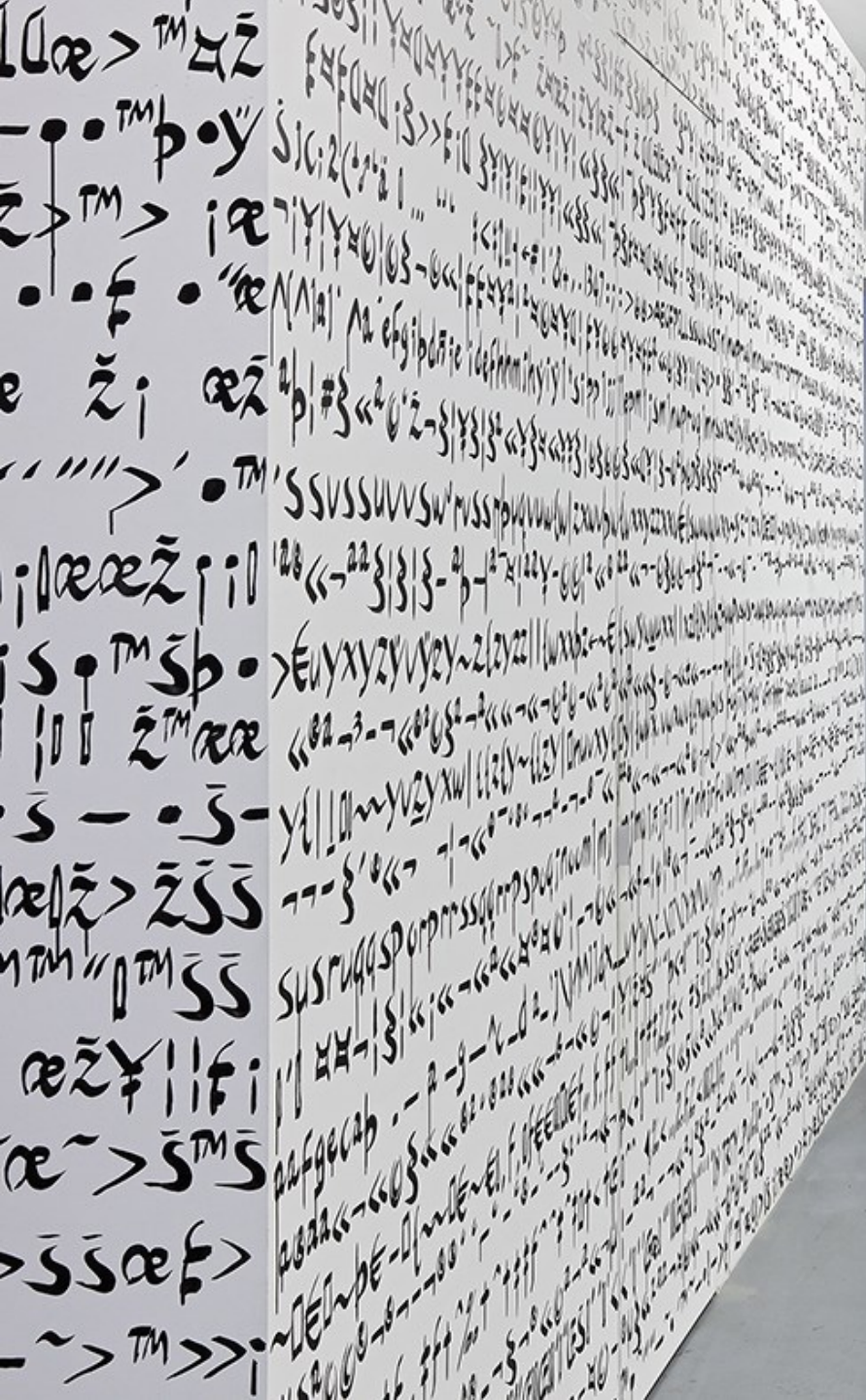
The Para-Textual

In Situ- fabienne leclerc, 2017

My practice stems from an interest in systems of culture, language, economy and the politics of the everyday. Through photography, video and installation, I seek to explore the simultaneous creation and obliteration of meaning. The attempt to subvert the status quo of dominant economic order" and counteract p the "reconceived notions of meaning play a key role within my recent practice, lending the works their political and social dimension.



Haifeng Ni
The Para-Textual, 2018
Exhibition view at In Situ - fabienne leclerc Paris
© Thomas Lannes



55 Days at Peking

at DRC No. 12, Beijing, China, 2017

55 Days at Peking is a 1963 American historical epic which dramatizes the siege of the foreign legations' compound in Beijing during the Boxer Rebellion, which took place from 1898-1900 in China.

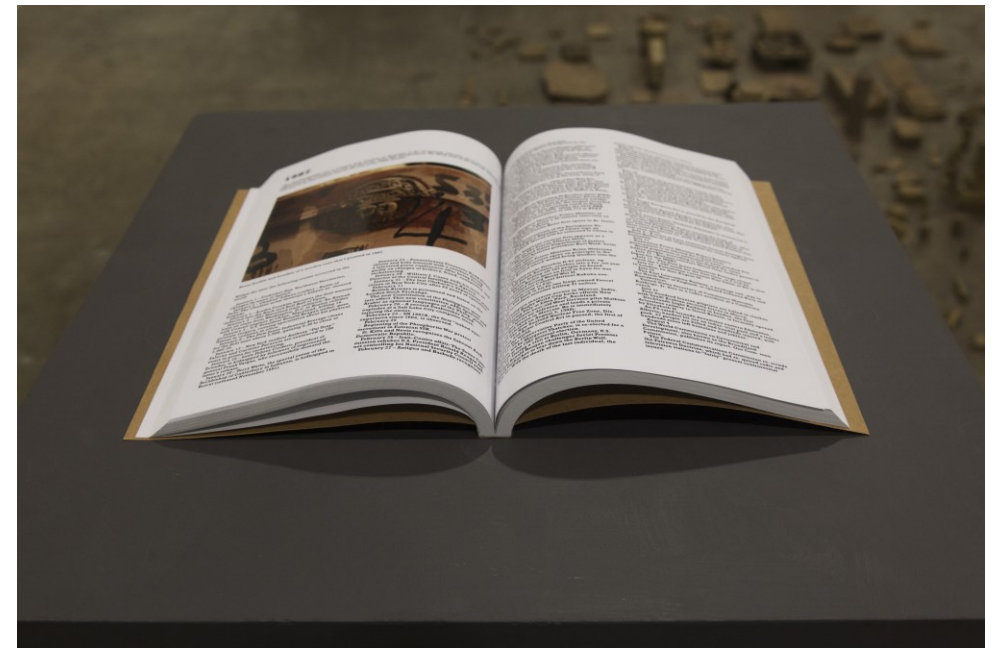
The exhibition is titled after that of the film and it is structured to coincide the timeline of the real historical events in 1900.

The project is about time, the visibility and perceptibility of time. It is as if various temporalities, from the fictional cinematic time to the unfolding of present time, are inserted into the rigid frame of 55 days, the real historical duration. The project posits that history is a form of time, and it resides in the distorted cinematic time, in the deconstructed historic continuity and in the fragmented every day.



The book of things, 2016

Personal objects cast in bronze, book, dimensions variable



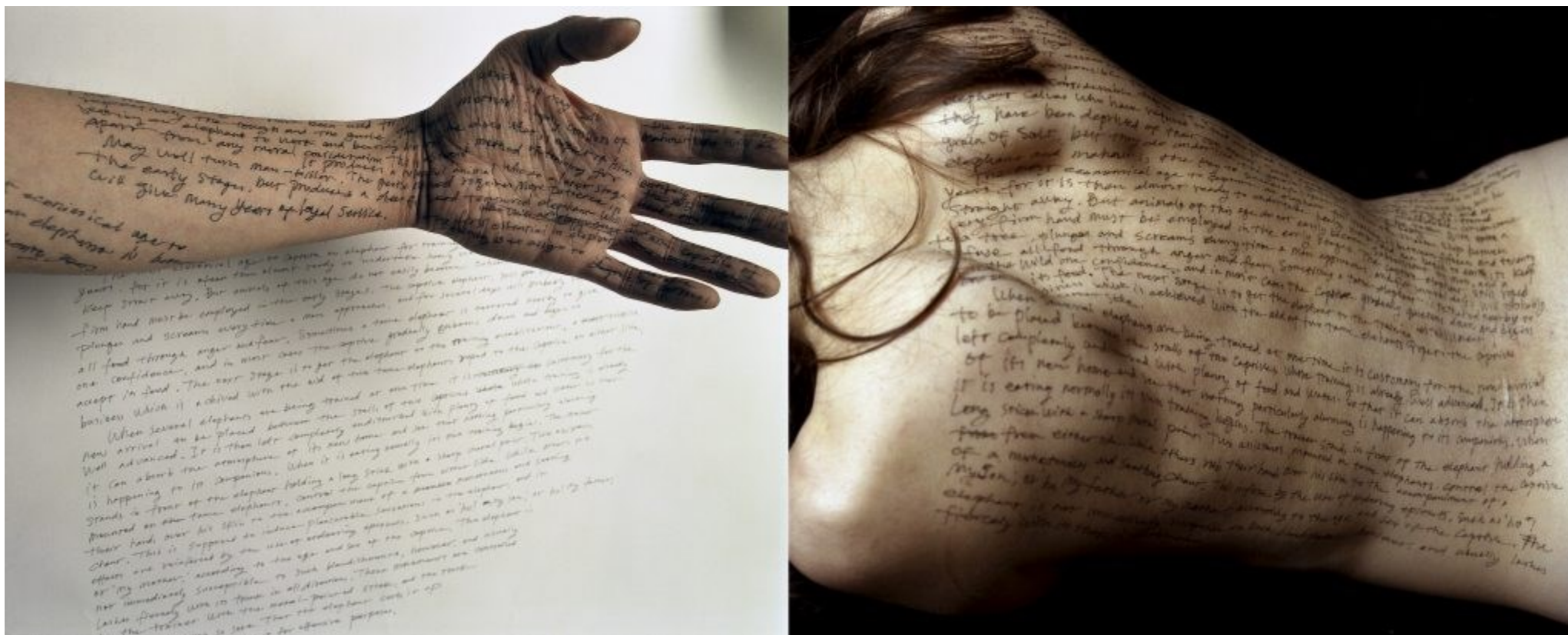
Asynchronous, Parallel, Tautological et Cetera

PearlLam Galleries Hong Kong, 2015

Pearl Lam Galleries presented a solo exhibition by Amsterdam and Beijing-based artist Ni Haifeng, featuring works from the late 1980s to the present. The exhibition invites viewers to draw parallel meanings between the artworks and, in doing so, to contemplate on their narrative as a whole. Ni's artwork refutes a linear or chronological interpretation by staging an experience that situates art, in the artist's words, "in a zero moment or an instant of no gravity."



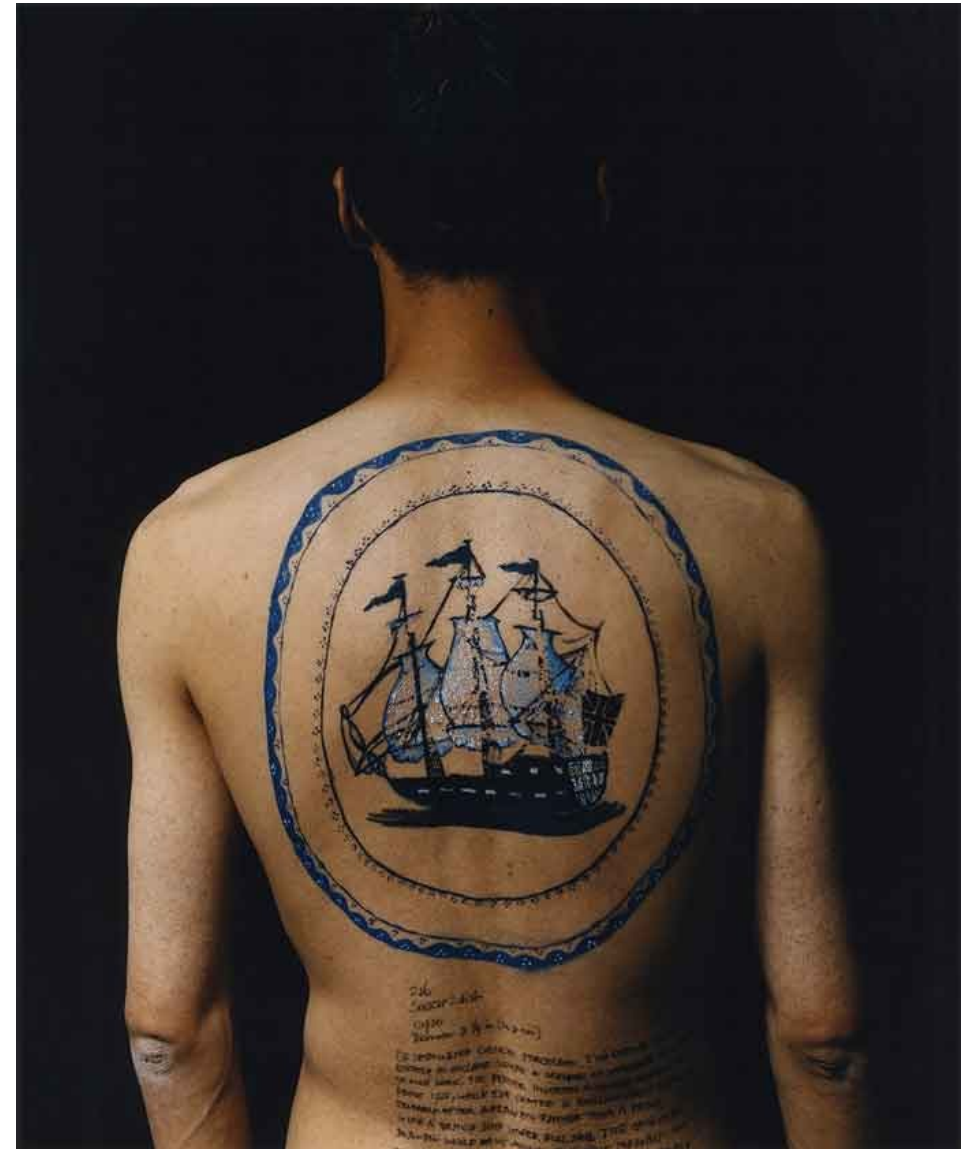
Ni Haifeng, *Warehouse no.3*, 1988, hand-painting on various materials and building, installation view, PearlLam Galleries



Ni Haifeng, *The domesticated*, 2003, Diptych of two C typed photographs mounted on alluminum, PearlLam Galleries

Ni Haifeng was born in 1964 in Zhoushan, China. In 1986, he graduated from Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts, now the China Academy of Art. He currently lives and works between Amsterdam and Beijing.

His work was recently presented in the group exhibitions: Moving Stories, Het Valkhof Museum, Nijmegen, NL (2022), Freethinkers, the Amsterdam Museum, NL (2021), From Revolution to Globalization, Museum M+, Hong Kong (2021), Object Love, Museum Morsbroich, Leverkusen, Germany (2020), Say it Loud, Bonnefontenmuseum, Maastricht, NL (2020). Rhizome, Today Art Museum, Beijing, China (2018). Dialogues, Manifesta Office, Amsterdam, NL (2017). Selected solo exhibitions include: The Para-Textual, Gallery In situ - Fabienne Leclerc, Paris, France (2018), Asynchronous, Parallel, Tautological et Cetera, PearlLam Galleries, Hong Kong (2015), Vive la Difference, Gallery Lumen Travo, Amsterdam, the Netherlands (2010).



Ni Haifeng, *Self-Portrait as Part of the Porcelain Export History 1 - Back, 1999-2001*

Solo Shows**2017**

The Para-Textual, In Situ- fabienne leclerc, Paris, FR

2016

Ni Haifeng, Art Basel Hong Kong 2016, with gallery In Situ Fabienne Leclerc Paris, Hong Kong

Convention Center, Hong Kong

Ni Haifeng, kleinste galerietje (Smallest Gallery), Amsterdam

2015

Asynchronous, Parallel, Tautological et Cetera, PearlLam Galleries Hong Kong, Hong Kong

2010

Vive la Difference, Gallery Lumen Travo, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

2008

Para-Production, Joyart, Beijing

Vive la Difference - Ni Haifeng @ Arrow Factory, Arrow Factory, Beijing

2007

The Return of the Shreds (in collaboration with Kitty Zijlmans), Stedelijk Museum De Lakenhal

Scheltema, Leiden

2006

Of the Departure and the Arrival, KunstRAI, Amsterdam (with Gallery Lumen Travo), Amsterdam

2005

New Works, Gallery Lumen Travo, Amsterdam

Of the Departure and the Arrival, Het Museum Prinsenhof, Gemeente Delft, Delft

2004

Ni Haifeng. Xeno-Writings, Museum Het Domein, Sittard

2003

Multiple lies, GEM, museum of contemporary art, The Hague

2002

Airbag. Ni Haifeng Solo Exhibition, Pond Paulus, Schiedam

2001

No-man's-land, Lumen Travo, Amsterdam

1999

Sociosphere II, Stadhouderskade 112, Amsterdam

1997

Anonymous, Gallery Gaby Kraushaar, Dusseldorf

1996

Secrets, Gate Foundation, Amsterdam

1995

From Human to Humbug, Centrum Beeldende Kunst, Leiden

Group Exhibitions**2017**

En marge, Gallery In Situ Fabienne Leclerc, Paris, France

Dingen, Art Chapel, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

2016

BRIC-à-brac: The Jumble of Growth, Today Art Museum, Beijing, China

Permanent Abstraction: Epiphanies of a Modern Form in Escaped Totalities, Red Brick Museum, Beijing, China

Amongst Treasures, De Nederlandsche Bank, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Renewed Past, Coda Museum, Apeldoorn, The Netherlands

2015

Everything Must Go - Art and the Market, Lewis Glucksman Gallery, University College Cork, Cork, Ireland

Paper Theater, PearlLam Galleries Shanghai, Shanghai, China

Ceramix, Bonnefantemuseum, Maastricht, the Netherlands

Spiegeloo - *Het zelfportret in de Nederlandse kunst*, het Museum Arnhem, Arnhem, the Netherlands

Biennale Internationale Du Lin de Portneuf 2015, Quebec, Canada

2014

Dai Hanzi - 5000 Names, UCCA, Beijing, China, Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam, the Netherlands

Meeting Point 2, Gallery Lumen Travo, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Look at Me, Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

2013

Suspended History, Museum Van Loon, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Kanaalwerken, Gemeente Museum, Helmond

Kindred Spirit, Artzone Rabobank Netherlands, Utrecht, the Netherlands

2012

Manifesta 9 - The Deep of the Modern , the European Biennial of Contemporary Art, Waterschei, Genk, Belgium

Manifest Present - then Today Tomorrow, Kasteel Oud-Rekem, Rekem, Belgium

Image Anxiety, PhotoEspana, Madrid, Spain

2011

Global Contemporary, ZKM Museum for Contemporary Art, Karlsruhe, Germany

2010

Certified Copy, Verbeke Foundation, stekene, Belgium

Analogue Story, Huis Merseille, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Today's Document II – Negotiation, Today Art Museum, Beijing, China

Twisted Doubles, Museum de Lakanhal, Leiden, The Netherlands

Coup de Ville, WARP, Antwerpen, Belgium

The Art of Book-Keeping, HALLE 14 Art Center, Leipzig, Germany

Contemporary Porcelain, Musée Historique · Château de Nyon, Nyon, France

Home-Stay, Osage Contemporary Art and Ideas, Shanghai, China

Dialogue, Gallery Lumen Travo, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Glass Factory, Iberia Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China

Personal Frontier, ia32space, Beijing, China

The Pavilion of Realism, Other Gallery, Beijing and Shanghai, China

2009

Silent Writings, Espace culturel Vuis Vuitton, Paris

imPOSSIBLE, San Francisco Arts Commission Gallery, San Francisco

Ultra Skin, Coreana Museum of Art, Seoul

The China Project, Queensland Art Gallery, Queensland

2008

Reflective Asia – The Third Nanjing Triennial, Nanjing Museum, Nanjing

Between the Light and the Dark - On the Borders of Chineseness, Canvas International Art, Amstelveen

Open /Invited ev+a 2008, Limerick City Gallery of Art, Limerick

Between the Light and the Dark - Shifting Fault Lines, Arario Beijing, Beijing

Dessins contemporains des Pays-bas – Sign mouvants, institut neerlandais, Paris

Toekenning 036, Fonds BKVB, Amsterdam

2007

Presentatie van de eindresultaten van het landelijke onderzoeksproject COOPs, Stedelijk Museum De Lakenhal in Scheltema, Leiden

Wherever We Go, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco

Thermocline – New Asian Waves, ZKM Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe

Forms of Exchange, Museum Het Domein, Sittard

Forged Realities, Universal Studios, Beijing

Drawing Topologies, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Amsterdam

An Impossible Mix, De 11 Lijnen, Oudenburg

Energy, Today Art Museum, Beijing

Spicy Dutch, Stadsmuseum IJsselstein, IJsselstein

2006

Wherever We Go, Spazio Oberdan, Milan

VideoZone: The 3rd International Video Art Biennale in Israel, Centre for Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv

Co-ops, BAK, Basis Actuele Kunst, Utrecht

Nederland 1, MuseumGoudA, Gouda

Jianghu, Jack Tilton Gallery, New York

Roam Is My Home, CM Studio, Centraal Museum Utrecht, Utrecht

2005

Beyond - 2nd Guangzhou Triennial, Guangdong Art Museum, Guangzhou

Respect - Poldermodellen - Een tentoonstelling van hedendaagse kunst uit Nederland in Marokko, Musée Dar Si Saïd, Marrakech, Mondriaan Foundation, Amsterdam

Out of Sight, De Appel, Amsterdam

Nouvelle Biennale de Chateauroux 2005, Les Musees Ville de Chateauroux, Chateauroux

Plato and His Seven Spirits, OCT Contemporary Art Terminal of He Xiangning Art Museum, Beijing

ADAM, Smart Project Space, Amsterdam

H x B x D, Gemeente Museum Den Haag, The Hague

2004

Techniques of the Visible - 5th Shanghai Biennale, Shanghai Art Museum, Shanghai

Salon de Los Inmigrantes, De Oude Kerk, Amsterdam

Migrating Identity – Transmission/Reconstruction, Arti et Amicitiae, Amsterdam

A l'Ouest du Sud de l'Est /A l'Est du Sud de l'Ouest, Villa Arson, Nice, Centre Régional d'Art Contemporain, Sète

2003

In and Out – Dutch Contemporary Art 2003, National Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul 2002

Synthetic Reality, East Modern Art Center, Beijing

Mirage, Suzhou Art Museum, Suzhou

2001

Unpacking Europe, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam

1999

Food for Thought, Mu Art, Arctic Foundation, Eindhoven

Waterverf?, De Zaaier, Amsterdam

1998

Kijk op de Wijk, Stichting Kade Aterliers, Utrecht

Democracy, Gate Foundation, Amsterdam

Lengte, Breedte en Diepte, De Gele Rijder, Arnhem

1995

Configura II, Gallery am Fischmarkt, Erfurt

6. Triennale Kleinplastik Europa- Ostasien,

Sudwest LB Forum, Stuttgart, Museum Moderne Kunst, Stiftung Ludwig, Wien

Balanceakte, Ifa Gallery, Stuttgart, Ifa Gallery, Bonn

1993

China's New Art Post '89, Hong Kong Arts Center, HongKong

China Avantgarde, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, Kunsthall, Rotterdam, The

Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, Kunsthallen Brandts Kleadefabrik, Odense,

Roemermuseum, Hildesheim

1992

Begegnung mit den Anderen, K 18, kassel

New Art from China, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Queensland Art Gallery, Queensland, City of Ballaarat, Fine Art Gallery, Ballaarat, Canberra School of Art Gallery, Canberra

1991

Garage Show, Shanghai Educational Forum, Shanghai

1986

Red 70%, Black 25%, White 5%,

Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts, Hangzhou

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Louise Schouwenberg, 'Man of the Mind', *Frame* 65 (2008) NOV/DEC, pp. 88-95

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Ni Haifeng, Kitty Zijlmans (eds.), *The Return of the Shreds*, Amsterdam (Valiz), Leiden (Stedelijk Museum De Lakenhal) 2008

Marianne Brouwer, 'A Zero Degree of Writing and Other Subversive Moments', *Avant-Garde Today*, 14 (2007) 4, Shanghai (Shanghai People's Publisher), pp. 247-261.

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Cat. Ni Haifeng, Zhu Jia (eds.), *Synthetic Reality*, Hong Kong (Timezone 8) 2004.

Roel Arkesteijn, Ni Haifeng (eds.), *Ni Haifeng. No-Man's-Land*, the Hague (GEM), Amsterdam (Artimo) 2003.

Marianne Brouwer, 'De nulgraad van het schrijven en andere subersieve momenten', in: Tessa Boerman, Patricia Pisters, Joes Segal (eds.), *Beeldritsen*, Amsterdam (de balie), 2003, pp. 10-26.

Janet Koplos, 'Ni Haifeng at Lumen Travo Gallery', *Art in America* 90 (2002) 3, p. 139.

Sebastian Lopez, 'Ni Haifeng. Laws of inscription', in: Salah Hassan, Iftikhar Dadi (eds.), *Unpacking Europe. Towards a Critical Reading*, Rotterdam (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen / NAI Publisher) 2001, pp. 332-337.

Cat. *Ni Haifeng – Anonymus*, Dusseldorf (gallery Gaby Kraushaar) 1997.

Cat. *Ni Haifeng*, Bunnik 1996.



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