

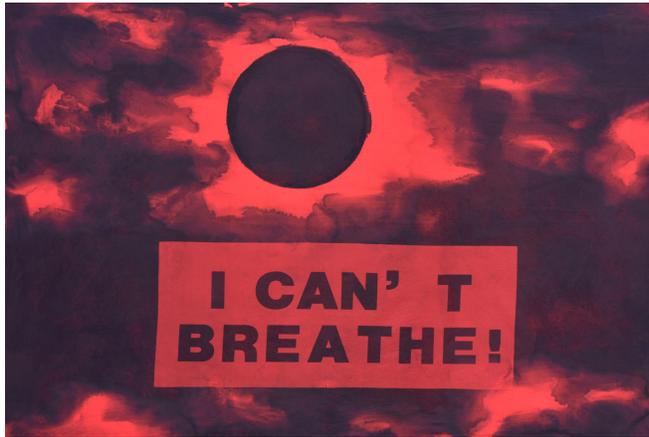
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Zhang Dali - Suffocation

398 West Street, New York, NY 10014

May 19, 2023 – August 19, 2023

Opening reception: Friday, May 19, 2023 | 6-8 PM



Zhang Dali, Slogan (22), 2020. Red cyanotype on cotton. 47 1/4 x 68 7/8 inches (120 x 175 cm).
Courtesy of the artist and Eli Klein Gallery © Zhang Dali

New York, NY, May 2, 2023 - Eli Klein Gallery is thrilled to present “Suffocation,” Zhang Dali’s third solo show with the gallery. An ambitious presentation of 13 unique works of art on cotton by one of China’s most revolutionary and recognized artists. The exhibition examines life under China’s extreme and inhumane Covid and other policies. Many of the cyanotypes on display cannot be exhibited inside of China, where the restrictive Covid policies that were only terminated a few months ago are a forbidden topic forced into the shadows.

Cyanotype has been a highlight of Zhang Dali’s artistic practice since 2009. It is a meticulous process that requires a unique blend of nature, chemistry, and creativity. The process involves coating a surface with a solution, placing objects directly onto it, and exposing it to sunlight. The resulting reaction with ultraviolet rays creates a distinctive silhouette aesthetic, with exposed areas taking on a different hue, while unexposed areas remain white. Invented in 1842, Cyanotype is a complicated physical method of light-maneuvering that produces unique one-of-a-kind works. In Dali’s words, they are the shadow of objects and the shadow of reality.

Cyanotypes provide a distinct monochromatic aesthetic; the shapes depicted have to be the exact same as the original object. Throughout years of experimentation, Zhang Dali developed a technique where he would prepare cotton sheets for portable use - a liberating method as a gesture to break out of the highly restricted political environment which exists in contemporary China. “Suffocation” carefully selects cyanotypes of three different color systems, all created during the time of Covid. With these visually striking works, Zhang Dali raises questions such as “Can we turn to plants for escape when we

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are confronted with oppression?” and “How do we find freedom when we’re constantly faced with restrictions?”

Zhang Dali’s gorgeous cyanotypes of plants depict China’s natural beauty. Before 2020 the dominant / subordinate relationship between humans / urban plants was often taken for granted. But the past few years blurred this relationship in China, when people were not allowed to venture out of their apartments for months, whereas urban plant life breathed freely.

As one of the most influential figures in socio-political artistic movements in China, Zhang Dali has, for decades, challenged the conventional by utilizing governmental slogans. Although he chose to speak with imageries instead of slogans in most of the cyanotypes on view, “Slogan (22)” links us to Zhang Dali’s trademark technique of appropriating slogans. This time, the slogan “I can’t breathe,” which was uttered by a slowly dying George Floyd was appropriated to convey the sensation of suffocation felt by Chinese citizens during Covid lockdowns.



Zhang Dali, Dove (57), 2021. Blue cyanotype on cotton. 59 x 74 3/4 inches (150 x 190 cm)
Courtesy of the artist and Eli Klein Gallery © Zhang Dali

About Zhang Dali:

Zhang Dali's selected institutional solo exhibitions include: META-MORPHOSIS-ZHANG DALI, Palazzo Fava, Bologna, Italy (2018); Body and Soul, Museum Beelden aan Zee, Den Hague, the Netherlands (2017); Permanence and Impermanence-New Works by Zhang Dali, Minsheng Art Museum, Beijing (2016); A Second History, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Argentina (2015); World's Shadow, Kunstverein Ludwigsburg, Ludwigsburg, Germany (2015); From Reality to Extreme Reality: Zhang Dali Retrospective, United Art Museum, Wuhan, China (2015); and Second History, Luxun Academy of Fine Arts Museum, Shenyang, China (2013).

Zhang Dali's selected group exhibitions and biennales include: Summoning Memories: Art Beyond Chinese Traditions, Asia Society Texas, Houston, TX (2023); Harmonious Symbiosis – The 3rd China Xinjiang International Art Biennale, Xinjiang Art Museum, Urumqi, China (2023); A Window Suddenly Opens: Contemporary Photography in China, The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC (2022); Communication Through Art Wuhan Biennale 2022, United Art Museum, Wuhan, China (2022); 40 Years of Chinese Photography, Kulangsu Center for Contemporary Art, Xiamen, China (2022); The Peak of Vision, Chengdu City Museum, Chengdu, China (2022); The Logic of Painting, Xinjiang Art Museum, Urumqi, China (2021); Turning Points – Contemporary Photography from China, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia (2019); 180 Years of Photography in China, Yinchuan Museum of Contemporary Art, Yinchuan, China (2019); A Confrontation of Ideas, Anren Biennale, Anren, China (2019); Travelers: Stepping into the Unknown, The National Museum of Art, Osaka, Japan (2018); The Exhibition of Annual of Contemporary Art of China 2016, Minsheng Art Museum, Beijing (2017); Anren Biennale, Anren-Chengdu, China (2017); Working on History. Contemporary Chinese Photography and the Cultural Revolution, Satliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin,

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Germany (2017); All Matherings of Mind: Transcendent Imagery from the Contemporary Collection, Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Durham, NC (2017); Chinaescape: From Rural to Urban, Spazioborgogno, Milan, Italy (2016); Audacious: Contemporary Artists Speak Out, Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO (2016); Busan Biennale, Busan, South Korea (2016); Agitprop!, The Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY (2015); Beyond the Earth – The First Xi'an Contemporary Photography Exhibition, Xi'an Art Museum, Xi'an, China (2015); A New Dynasty – Created in China, ARoS Aarhus Art Museum, Aarhus, Denmark (2015); Krakow Photomonth 2015, Foundation for Visual Arts, Krakow, Poland (2015); DECONSTRUCTING CHINA: Selections from the Asia Society Museum Collection, Asia Society Museum, New York, NY (2015); Focus Beijing: Des Heus-Zomer Collection of Chinese Contemporary Art, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, the Netherlands (2014); Chinese Contemporary Art Research Exhibition, United Art Museum, Wuhan, China (2014); Chinese Contemporary Photography 2009 – 2014, Minsheng Art Museum, Shanghai (2014); FUCK OFF 2, The Groninger Museum, Groningen, the Netherlands (2013); The 55th International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy (2013); RE-INK: Invitational Exhibition of Contemporary Ink and Wash Painting 2000-2012, Hubei Museum of Art, Wuhan, China; Today Art Museum, Beijing (2013); Aftermath: Witnessing War, Countenancing Compassion, 21c Museum, Louisville, Kentucky (2013); OMEN 2012 – Chinese New Art, Shanghai Art Museum, Shanghai (2012); Faking it: Manipulating Photography Before Photoshop, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY (2012); The Unseen: The 4th Guangzhou Triennial, Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China (2012); The Life and Death of Buildings, Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, NJ (2011); The Evolving Art, Academy of Arts and Design at Tsinghua University, Beijing (2011); Guanxi: Contemporary Chinese Art, Today Art Museum, Beijing; Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou (2011); New Photography 2011, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY (2011); Speech Matters, The 54th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy (2011); A Decade – Long Exposure, CAFA Art Museum, Beijing (2010); The Original Copy: Photography of a Sculpture, 1839 to Today, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY (2010); Exhibition, Exhibition, Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Turin, Italy (2010); Images from History, Shenzhen Art Museum, Shenzhen, China (2009); Calligraffiti: 'Writing in Contemporary Chinese and Chicano Art, USC Pacific Asia Museum, Pasadena, California (2009); Stairway to Heaven: From Chinese Streets to Monuments and Skyscrapers, Kansas City Art Institute, Kansas City, MO (2009); Stairway to Heaven: From Chinese Streets to Monuments and Skyscrapers, Bates College Museum of Art, Lewiston, ME (2008); The Revolution Continues: New Art from China, Saatchi Museum, London, UK (2008); Logan Collection, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA (2008); China Gold, Musee Maillol, Paris (2008); The Avant-garde in the '80s and '90s of the Last Century in China, Groninger Museum, Groningen, the Netherlands (2008); Christian Dior & Chinese Artists, UCCA Center for Contemporary Arts, Beijing (2008); All of our Tomorrows: The Culture of Camouflage, Kunstraum der Universität, Lünenburg, Germany (2007); China Now, Cobra Museum of Modern Art, Amsterdam, the Netherlands (2007); Red Hot, Houston Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas (2007); China Now, ESSL Museum, Vienna, Austria (2006); 6th Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju, South Korea (2006); Chinese Contemporary Sculpture Exhibition, Museum Beelden aan Zee, Scheveningen, the Netherlands (2005); New Photography and Video from China, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (2005); 1st Guangzhou Triennial, Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China (2002); China Art Now, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore (2001); Contemporary Chinese Photography, Oulu Art Museum, Oulu, Finland; Finland Museum of Photography, Helsinki, Finland (2001); Unveiled Reality – Chinese Contemporary Photography, Chulalongkorn University Museum, Bangkok, Thailand (1999); Transparence opacité? Touming bu touming, Maison de la Villette, Paris (1999); Beijing in London, ICA, London, UK (1999); Chinese Contemporary Photography, Lehman College, New York (1998); The 11th Tallinn Triennial, Tallinn, Estonia (1998); and Wash Painting Salon in Peking, Capital Museum (Confucius Temple), Beijing (1989).

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Zhang Dali's work is included in important museum collections worldwide including The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; The Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA; British Museum, London, UK; Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO; International Center of Photography, New York, NY; The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX; The Saatchi Gallery, London, UK; Smart Museum, Chicago, IL; Asia Society, New York, NY; AW Asia Foundation, New York, NY; Beelden aan Zee, The Hague, Holland; 21c Museum, Louisville, KY; Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; De Heus-Zomer, Rotterdam, the Netherlands; Fukuoka Art Museum, Fukuoka, Japan; Guangdong Art Museum, Guangzhou, China; Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, MA; He Xiangning Art Museum, Shenzhen, China; Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL; Nasher Museum of Art, Durham, NC; Rothschild Collection, Paris, France; Smart Museum, Chicago, IL; The Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA; United Art Museum, Wuhan, China; and White Rabbit Collection, Sydney, Australia.

Zhang Dali currently lives and works in Beijing, China.

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