

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Ye Funa - The Big Dream Show

398 West Street, New York, NY 10014

September 6, 2023 – November 1, 2023

Opening reception with the artist: Wednesday, Sep 6, 2023 | 6-8 PM



Ye Funa, *Big Dreamer's Collage*, 2023. Mixed media collage on canvas. 39 3/8 x 57 1/2 inches (100 x 146 cm).  
Courtesy of the artist and Eli Klein Gallery © Ye Funa

New York, NY, August 9, 2023 - Eli Klein Gallery is honored to present "The Big Dream Show," Ye Funa's first solo show with the gallery. The exhibition features 12 new mixed media collage works from the "Neo Folk Matrix" series, in addition to a video and two paintings, each demonstrating a unique "dream" where different characteristics, items, symbols, colors, traditions, and cultures intersect. Filled with intricate details, these pieces are elaborately executed and contain a variety of elements such as plastics, artificial crystals, metals, fabrics, and an assortment of found objects. These "little worlds and dreams," in Ye Funa's own words, highlight her aspiration to explain what roles "folk" should play under the framework of contemporary art.

As is true with the majority of single-child families in China, Funa's relationship with her mother was "offspring-centered." Her mother Fu Liya started her career as a talented painter and sculptor, but decided to become a full-time housewife in order to care for the family. With "Neo Folk Matrix", the artist further examines the reciprocal relationship between her and her mother, or the "provider" and the "recipient." What if traditional crafts and skills (folk) are supported by a contemporary framework (collage)? Or, what if Ye Funa can eventually be the champion of her mom? This time around, Funa and her mom finally get to witness the growth of the hundreds of little "modified Funas" together.

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Ye Funa sees through this process of merging a contemporary framework with traditional skills by working and sewing with her mother, in an impromptu style. This methodology of working also constitutes an “in-between space,” consolidating both the private channels of art creation and the public domain of tradition. Graduating from and teaching at the School of Experimental and Sci-Tech Arts at the Central Academy of Fine Art (which was initially called the “Folk Art Department”), Ye Funa is fluent in the expression of traditional mediums such as paper-cutting, stitching, and embroidery. When approaching this new body of work, she initially provided a tone and a theme, but intentionally left many voids for the details and the potential development of the stories. With the crafty



Ye Funa, *Buddha and Blossoms*, 2023. Mixed media collage on fabric, 33 1/2 x 42 1/8 inches (85 x 107 cm).  
Courtesy of the artist and Eli Klein Gallery © Ye Funa

hands of her mother, Funa would then continue these initial prompts without further limits. She describes the creation process as “emotional and free-flowing”. The co-creation process between the artist and her mother also echoes Funa’s determination to empower women in the Chinese society, which has been a prominent component throughout her artistic career.

The distinction between the personal and socially-assigned identities has been another focal point of Funa’s practice. In this new series of works, she extends her examination on individual human beings to everything in the natural and man-and-woman-made world. A cut-out of a waterfall, a dazzling peacock tail, a pink plastic toy that is simultaneously a banana and a necklace, a large number and variety of flowers which were all sewn differently. All these items have come to life so vividly in “Neo Folk Matrix”, each carrying its own literal and cultural significance. These items are juxtaposed with Funa’s “modified self” in hundreds of iterations. It is almost impossible to identify which Funas are the self-centered ones and which Funas are the socially-catering ones.

Instead of treating “folk” as a genre, Ye Funa’s newly-defined “neo-folk” extends to being the medium, the object, the motif, the content, and simultaneously, the self-reflective process of, “folk-ing”, all woven into a big dream which consists of contemporary existence reinforced by tradition.

## About Ye Funa:

Ye Funa was born in Kunming, China in 1986. She graduated with a BFA in Experimental Art from the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, China and an MFA from the Central Saint Martins College of Art, London, UK. She’s currently pursuing a Practice-led Ph.D. at Slade School of Fine Art, London, UK.

Ye’s practice is concerned with the relationship between the realities of everyday life. She is interested in the perceived connection between authority and many areas of social life such as different power structures, ethnic groups, and the fictional space of propaganda for the concept of ‘perfection’ in an ideological system, and utopian landscape. Her work is politically charged, subtly engaged in pastiche as a satirizing style of propaganda.

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Ye Funa's work has been the subject of solo exhibitions including: Ye Funa: Meet My Better Self, Caijin Space, Beijing (2021); Ye Funa: The Smart Galley, C5cnm, Beijing (2021); Ye Funa: The Peach Spring Beyond This World, Ame Nue, Hamburg, Online (2021); Ye Funa: Flying Dance, Bilsart, Istanbul (2019); Ye Funa: From Hand to Hand, Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham, United Kingdom (2018); Ye Funa: Selfiction, Longmen Art Projects, Hong Kong (2018); Alternative Cinema, Metro Pictures, New York (2017); Nailhenge, Space Station, Beijing (2016); Curated Nail Residency, MoCA Pavilion, Museum of Contemporary Art, Shanghai, China (2015); People's Congress via their Nails-Exhibitionist's Curated Nails, Art Museum of Nanjing university of the Arts, Nanjing, China; Zha Golden Flowers--News from Nowhere, V Art Center, Shanghai, China (2014); and Ye Funa, Galerie Pièce Unique, Paris, France (2014).

She has also exhibited in group shows worldwide including: Renew: A Recent Survey in Chinese Contemporary Photography, Eli Klein Gallery, New York (2022); ONLINE: Connections, Virginia Bianchi Gallery, Online (2022); The Circulation of Images: A Study of Medium Identity, Voyage UCCA Lab, Shanghai (2021); Manque de Recul: Interdisciplinary Trends in Art, Pearl Art Museum, Shanghai (2021); Where are we? Where is the future?, CAFA Museum, Beijing (2021); The Photography is Not What's Important: Photography at the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Three Shadows Photography Art Center, Xiamen, China (2021); The Photography is Not What's Important, CAFA Museum, Beijing (2021); Handcraft: Teachers from school of Experiment art, CAFA Museum, Beijing (2021); Guerrillas in Flatland: Unite! Digital Voyagers, Emerging Curators Project 2020Online, Power Station, Shanghai (2021); True Self, AMO Gallery, Beijing (2020); A Room of Her Own, HOW Art Museum, Shanghai (2020); We=Link: Ten Easy Pieces, Chronus Art Center; Art Center Nabi; Rhizome of the New Museum, online (2020); When Speed Become Form - Live in Your Screen, Wind H Art Center, Beijing (2020); La Belle Noiseuse, MOCUBE, Beijing (2020); Immortal on Screen, National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taipei (2019); Berlin Peking Visual Exchange, Museum für Fotografie, Berlin (2019); Influence, BACA Art Centre, Beijing (2019); Nana Power, Today Art Museum, Beijing (2019); New Art History – Chinese Contemporary Art, MOCA Yinchuan, Yinchuan, China (2019); Oscillation – New Media Art Exhibition, 33 Contemporary Art Center, Guangzhou, China (2019); Flow Out, Bilsart, Istanbul (2019); Chinternet Ugly, Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art, Manchester, United Kingdom (2019); The New Masses, Art Museum of Nanjing University of the Arts, Nanjing, China (2018); Collage, C5+86 Space, Beijing (2018); Oscillation – New Media Art Exhibition, 33 Contemporary Art Center, Guangzhou, China (2018); Collecting the Contemporary, The Lens of Fosun Foundation, Shanghai (2018); Cosmopolis #1.5: Enlarged Intelligence, Mao Jihong Arts Foundation in Collaboration with the Centre Pompidou, Chengdu, China (2018); STÈLES II - Vive Sans Temos Mort, Ying Space, Beijing (2018); Notes on Region, Contemporary Gallery Kunming, Kunming, China (2018); Line – Chinese Contemporary Art Exhibition, China Cultural Centre in Sydney, Sydney (2018); True Me, 798 Art Factory, Beijing (2018); ONLINE: Connections, Virginia Bianchi Gallery, Online/Virtual/Visual Contemporary Art Exhibition, Self-Created Universe, Eli Klein Gallery, New York (2017); Noyes Museum of Art, Atlantic City, NJ (2017); Intermediary, Video Art From China, Edna Carlsten Art Gallery at UWSP, Stevens Point, Wisconsin (2017); Exhibitionist: Peep Stream, OCT Contemporary Art Terminal, Shanghai, China (2017); Digital Samplers, or A New Generation Deep Dive into Internet Superposition, The Galaxy Museum of Contemporary Art, Chongqing, China (2017); Folklore of the Cyber World-CAC @ the Chinese Pavilion, Periphery Event of la Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy (2015); The Civil Power, Beijing Minsheng Art Museum, Beijing, China (2015); Base, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China (2015); Tomorrow's Party, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China (2014); Contemporary Photography in China 2009 - 2014, Minsheng Art Museum, Shanghai, China (2015); Busan Biennale 2014 Special Exhibition: Asian Curatorial, Going, Going, Until I Meet the Tide, Kiswire Sooyoung Factory, Busan, South Korea (2014); Ten Year in One Inspection, CAFA Art Museum, Beijing, China (2014); Poker Face: Wu Junyong / Ye Funa, Ray Art Center, Shanghai, China (2014); Contact: Through the Body, University of Toronto Art Centre, Toronto, Canada (2014); Art That Heels, V Art Center, Shanghai, China (2013); Get it Louder - Future, Liang Dian Design Center, Beijing, China (2012); The First 'CAFAM - Future' Exhibition, CAFA Art Museum, Beijing, China (2012); PERIPHERIES--2nd Asian Art Triennial Manchester, Piccadilly Place, Manchester, U.K. (2011); Future Pass--Collateral Event of the 54th Venice Biennale, Fondazione Claudio Buziol, Venice, Italy (2011).

Ye Funa currently teaches at the department of experimental art, in the Central Academy of Fine Arts, in Beijing, China. Ye Funa lives and works between Beijing and London.

## **Inquiries:**

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