

January 20, 2018

# The Enormous Space: Double Solo Exhibition of Lee Kit and Cui Jie

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**Dates** January 20-April 8, 2018

**Venue** Exhibition Hall A and B,  
OCAT Shenzhen

**Curator** Venus Lau

**Scenography &**

**Spatial design** Betty Ng

**Organizer**



**Supported by**



深圳市南山区恩平街  
华侨城创意园F2栋  
F2, OCT Loft, Enping Street  
Nanshan, Shenzhen, China  
518053

开放时间 Opening hours:  
每日10:00-17:30 daily  
逢周一闭馆 Mondays closed

电话 Telephone:  
+86 755 2691 5100  
+86 755 2691 5102

info@ocat.org.cn

媒体联络  
Media enquiry:

刘诗羽 Liu Shiyu  
liushiyu@ocat.org.cn

"The Enormous Space: Double Solo Exhibition of Lee Kit and Cui Jie" will be on view from January 20 to April 8, 2018 at OCAT Shenzhen Exhibition Hall A and B. This exhibition will show brand new works by the two artists.

The title of the show is taken directly from *The Enormous Space*, a short story by J.G. Ballard, the famed British writer born in the Shanghai's Former Concessions, mapping the way that "space" is produced in artistic practices and unites the inner imaginary world and external reality. Weary and fearful of suburban life, the protagonist of the story decides to never set foot outdoors again, using the gate of his house as a weapon against the outside world. Ultimately, the protagonist's almost primitive lifestyle reveals the physical outer space that increasingly compresses life itself, yet paradoxically expanding his inner world.

All of Cui Jie's drawings, sketches, and sculptures in this exhibition come out of her research into Chinese architecture and public sculpture over the past few years. She has always closely followed the development and transformation of urban mechanisms. The artist's paintings derive from reflections on the heterogeneity of contemporary Chinese architecture and sculpture, as well as the modes of expression mediated by urbanization and personal aesthetics for the past thirty years (the transitional period from planned economy to market economy after the Reform and Opening-Up). Using accumulative techniques such as scraping away the paint, and applying tape and removing it, the paintings build up architectural details, breaking away from the linear logic found in perspectival space. The works on show extend the proportional relationship between the body and urban space onto Cui Jie's research into Le Corbusier's furniture. Modeled upon Le Corbusian furniture, these new works are objects that connect the body and urban space, and correspond to the architecture and public sculpture commonly found in her paintings.

In Exhibition Hall A, Cui Jie references architect Le Corbusier's unrealized design *Maison Feuter* (1950). The project was laid aside when Feuter passed away. Having consulted archival documents, the artist imaginatively restored the design based on the architectural plans, abstracted some of the architectural details (such as the concrete dome structure in the similar *Maison Jaoul*), and placed it back into the physical space of the exhibition hall. In his modernist manifesto *Vers Une Architecture* published in 1923, Le Corbusier stated that "a house is a machine for living in". The original goal was that through the act of superimposition, architecture

could fulfill human's basic living requirement in single units, effectively limiting the residents' needs for activity within a controlled environment, as a way to liberate humankind. While the pure minimalism, order and efficiency, and plastic quality that characterize the "machine" conform with the aesthetics necessary for large-scale mechanized production, it also suffocated the progress and development of social aesthetics. For Cui Jie, Professor Feuter's villa is the epitome of contemporary urban construction, while also implying the limitations of bio-politique. The coincidence in which Professor Feuter's commissioned project came to a halt due to the former's death, is analogous to unconsciously escaping the surrealist dream of modernity.

Shown in parallel manners in Exhibition Hall A and B, *I didn't know that I was dead*. was specifically created by Lee Kit for this exhibition. Composed of ambiguous poetic texts, dislocated walls, diluted and overlaid colors, the work assembles and blends mundane fragments, using space as canvas, combining projection and sound, and juxtaposing multiple highly personalized narratives. It makes use of a method similar to Freud's theorization of Transference, as a way to construct and further a new depth-of-field inside the exhibition, molding the work's "inner space". Distinct from modes of direct viewing, the irregular space creates a kind of familiar environment through obstruction and perspectival juxtaposition, responding to the object under the framework of the modern city, while attempting to awaken the obscure consciousness of the audience. During his early training period for painting, Lee distanced himself from figurative styles and constraints of the frame, simplifying the act of painting on different fabrics into repeating lines and grids, using this process of rumination as a way to record the passage of time and emotions. As the starting point for Lee Kit's artistic practice, the hand-painted fabric was transformed into ordinary day-to-day items, such as curtains, tablecloths, towels, bed sheets, rags, and even picnic mats. When inserted into public space, they dispel visual and affective experiences that people are all too familiar with. For example, by inviting the audiences and friends to picnic together (*Sunday Afternoon: Picnic with friends and hand-painted cloth at Yun Shu O, Sai Kung*, 2003), or engaging in daily cleaning rituals (*Bathed with hand-painted cloth*, 2003), these works construct artificial environments through the format of "Happening Art", leaving behind uncertain traces of participants that unintentionally drive the works to grow.

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## About the artists

### Lee Kit

Born in 1978 in Hong Kong, Lee Kit lives and works in Hong Kong and Taipei.

Solo exhibitions include A small sound in your head, S.M.A.K., Ghent, Belgium (2016), Hold your breath, dance slowly, The Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis, USA (2016), The voice behind me, Shiseido Gallery, Tokyo (2015), 'How are things on the west coast?', Jane Lombard Gallery, New York USA (2014), 'You (you).', The 55th Venice Biennale, Italy (2013), 'Every breath you take.', Minsheng Art Museum, Shanghai (2012), House M, The Pavilion, Beijing (2012), 'This is not an easy thing.', Arrow Factory, Beijing (2012), Henry (Have you ever been this low?), Western Front, Vancouver, Canada (2011), etc.

Group shows include, among others, All watched over by the machines of loving grace, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France (2017), Generosity, The Art of Giving, National Gallery in Prague, The Czech Republic (2016), Sharjah Biennial, UAE (2015), Ural Industrial Biennial, Yekaterinburg, Russia (2015), Room Service, Staatliche Kunsthalle, Baden Baden, Germany (2014), Beating in the Bush, Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastrich, The Netherland (2014), Hugo Boss Asia Art, Rockbund Museum, Shanghai, China (2013), The Ungovernables, New Museum, New York, USA (2012); Print/Out, MoMA, New York, USA (2012); Platform in Kimusa, Seoul, Korea (2009) and Sprout From White Night, Bonnier Kuntshall, Stockholm (2008).

### Cui Jie

Born in 1983 in Shanghai, China, graduated from China Academy of Art, lives and works in Beijing, China. Her recent solo exhibitions include Latter, Former, Mother's Tankstation, Dublin, Ireland (2016), Cui Jie, Start Gallery, Jaffa, Israel (2014), Cui Jie: The Proposals for Old and New Urbanism and Cui Jie, both at Leo Xu Projects, Shanghai (2014 and 2012), among others.

Her works have been included in many exhibitions, among many others, Past Skin, MoMA PS1 (2017), The New Normal, UCCA, Beijing (2017), Hack Space (curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Amira Gad) K11 Art Foundation, Hong Kong (2016), The World in 2015, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China (2015), My Generation: Young Chinese Artist, Tampa Museum of Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Oklahoma City Museum of Art, USA (2014), 1st CAFA Future: Sub Phenomena, CAFA Art Museum, Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, China (2012), Face, Minsheng Art Museum, Shanghai, China (2012), The 4th Prague Biennale, Prague, Czech Republic (2009), Poetic Realism: An Reinterpretation of Jiang Nan, Contemporary Art From South China, Centro de Arte Tomás y Valiente, Madrid, Spain (2008), Notes of Conception, Iberia Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China (2008).

## About OCAT Shenzhen

OCAT Shenzhen was founded in 2005 and functions as the headquarters of the OCAT Museums. As the first art establishment among the OCAT museums, OCAT Shenzhen has a long-term commitment to the practice and research in the field of contemporary art and theory both inside of China and in the international arena.