

THE ANIMAL
FARM SIMULATOR

策展人
李峥 & 陈江虹

CURATORS
Li Zheng
CHEN Jianghong

动物农场模拟器



Hyundai Blue Prize
Art+Tech 2023

THE ANIMAL FARM SIMULATOR

Date.
4.28.2023 ~ 10.8.2023

Venue.
Hyundai Motorstudio Beijing E-01 Road,
798 Art Zone, No.4 Jiuxianqiao Road,
Chaoyang District, 100015 Beijing, P.R.China

THE ANIMAL FARM SIMULATOR

This is a story that takes place in the future, you can imagine yourself opening an anywhere door. In this imaginative world, some human beings follow the naturalism of Lao Tzu and Rousseau. They live in the natural environment, and constantly reflect on anthropocentrism. While some others, who lost in the confrontation with artificial intelligence and are manipulated by the ever-accelerating technology. They hid in artificial illusions, implanted micrologic chips into their organs, used themselves as biological batteries, and let digital signals took over their thinking.

Historians tell us that humans are no longer the masters of the world, and that anthropocentrism has become a fossilized line of code in the "human data strata" in the cyber library. New theories of natural animism began to rise, and an ideological trend of "decentralized reworlding" was also emerging. People constantly reflect on the relationship between man and all beings in the world, and explore how to achieve optimization and improvement of "anthropocentrism".

In this context, a brand new "Animal Farm Simulator" has been established and just opened to public. A series of discussions on the way of coexistence between human beings and all beings are also being carried out here. This time, can we eliminate the confrontation between human beings and other species, explore a new mode of coexistence, cooperation, mutualism, coexistence and prosperity under the premise of understanding and respect, and write a new chapter of the "Animal Farm" together?

The "Animal Farm Simulator" consists of four sections: the Workshop, the Lab, the Arena and the Co-op, simulating a future experimental field where all beings co-exist, presenting the thinking and exploration of future possibilities. In this mixed field full of infinite imagination, from the "IT" perspective, we produce, practice, co-create and speculate in the "New Animal Farm" and constantly exploring ways to share this beautiful planet with other lives.



PART 01 THE WORKSHOP

The WORKSHOP is the basic unit of production inside the animal farm simulator, where various manufacturing activities are going on. A new type of pink chicken is being bred in the workshop; snacks that can help restore ecological balance are ready for pick-up; the latest series of garment is constantly growing; the edible garden is waiting to be harvested. All species in the farm workshop work together, share resources and labor results.



PART 02 THE LAB

Countless possibilities can emerge in the LAB. Traditions are not advocated here but innovations. We discuss genes, species, life and death. The pessimists may fear and worry about the future mainly because of the uncontrollable future, while the optimists firmly believe that the acceleration of technology will eventually lead the world to a singularity.



PART 03 THE ARENA

The ARENA is one of the most important parts of the Animal Farm Simulator, where the farm residents continue to imagine the reshaping of the beautiful world. In this imaginative space, we can travel through different parallel time and space to understand the evolution of civilization on the earth for hundreds of millions of years. Break through the limits of thinking and extend to the mysterious realm of extraterrestrial beings.



PART 04 THE CO-OP

The CO-OP is a form of cooperative organization established by creatures voluntarily united for cooperative production and management. It first emphasize "cooperation". In our CO-OP, we jointly build a decentralized animal farm, and convey the key concept of "caring for the earth, caring for life, and sharing the surplus".

Exhibition Design: PaM Design Office (MI Qiguang & YAN Mengmeng)

Graphic Design: Fairy Immortal Gentleman (FIG)

Coordination Team: LI Xiner & ZHANG Siyi

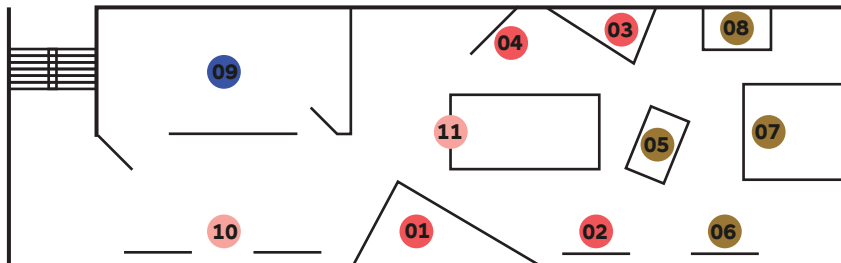
Date.

4.28.2023~10.8.2023

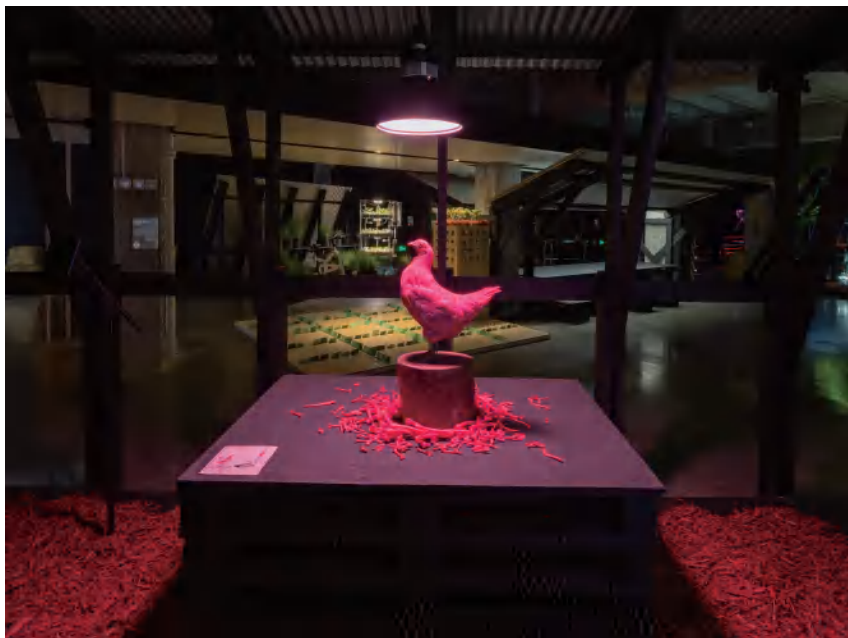
Curators.

LI Zheng and CHEN Jianghong

Exhibition Floor Plan



- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. PINK CHICKEN PROJECT, 2017 | Nonhuman Nonsense Studio |
| 2. ECONUT, 2021 | alterR |
| 3. MUTUALIST NATURE, 2020 | Paula Ulargui Escalona |
| 4. EDIBLE GARDEN, 2023 | XU Chaofan & REN Qingqi |
| 5. SYMBIOSIS OF THE NEW ERA, 2021 | CRUDE_CASTIN (LIU Dian & XU Jianing) |
| 6. UTILITY PET, 2003 | Elio Caccavale |
| MYBIO, 2005 | Elio Caccavale |
| 7. DEVIATION, 2017 | LI Shan |
| 8. HUMAN HYENA, 2016 | Paul Gong |
| 9. L.E.M & REBORN, 2019 | LIU Di & LIU Di x cough in vain |
| 10. TRANSITION HABITATS, 2017 | Extrapolation Factory |
| 11. THE WEED NEVER DIES, 2021 | atelier mobile |



PINK CHICKEN PROJECT

Nonhuman Nonsense Studio

Mixed Media

2017

Every year 60 billion chickens are killed and consumed globally, and their bones leave a distinct trace in the earth's rock strata. Scientists suggest chicken bones to be a primary identifier of our time (the Anthropocene). To signal this identifier of our new geological age, the Anthropocene, this project proposes genetically modifying chickens to have pink bones and features, using a gene from the cochineal insect to produce a pigment that will be fossilized when combined with the calcium from bones. Spreading this gene with the newly invented CRISPR gene-drive technique, the entire *Gallus gallus domesticus* species could be permanently altered, on a global scale, in just a few years. This intervention would modify the future fossil record, coloring the geological trace of humankind, pink!

Framed as an activist campaign, this speculative suggestion reveals the intimate link between social and ecological justice, and allows us to think about the impact of novel biotechnologies from multiple ethical and political perspectives: why should we seek/avoid this future? How can we have ethical relationships with other species in a shifting landscape of human-nonhuman power?

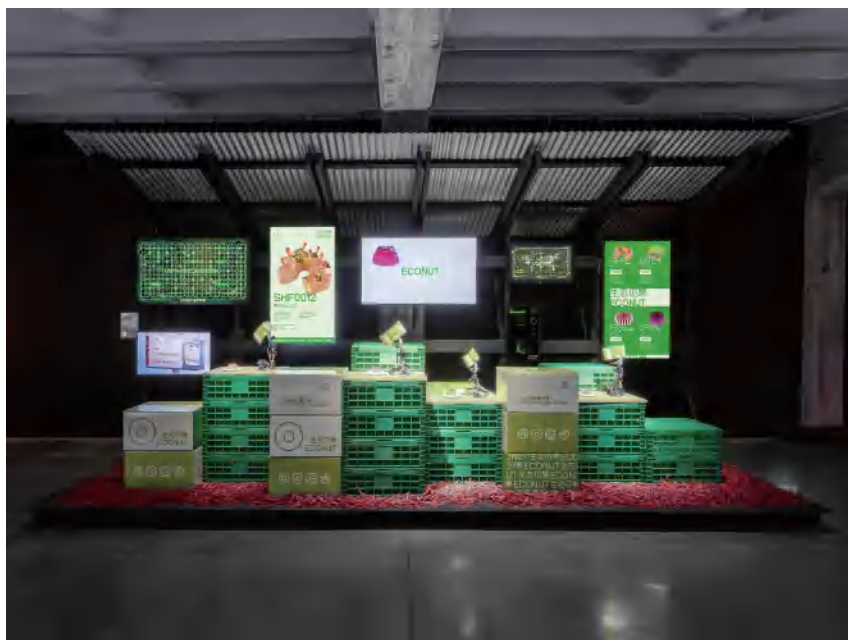
ECONUT

alterR

3D Printing Model, Video

2021

Human activities have greatly impacted the environment, causing widespread disruption and vulnerability. Loss of biodiversity is a major environmental issue, caused by factors such as our food habits and agriculture systems. Breeding species based on our preferences leads to constant disruption of local ecosystems and exacerbates global warming. As a response to this challenge, Econut speculates about an alternative future in which we thrive in a non-human-centered co-living ecosystem. It proposes an eco-balancing food and movement to suggest eating invasive species in order to reduce our current food industry's negative impact on biodiversity. From designed objects to imagined lifestyles, it inquires how we may shift our food habits to better work with ecosystem's resilience and opens up a novel perspective into humanity in its comprehensive context.





MUTUALIST NATURE

Paula Ulargui Escalona

Mixed Media

2020

Mutualism is the biological interaction between individuals of different species, in which both obtain benefits for their growth and improvement. This cooperation is what is established by the mycelia, the set of small roots that make up the body structure of fungi, with plants. Such mycelias are being investigated in many fields: from the aerospace industry to the textile. The fungus, the largest living being on earth, has a really wide and exquisite offering in colors, shapes and species.

Although its growth is complex, its qualities are infinite and within all the species that nature harbors, the mycelia stands out for its ability to lean on other species, helping each other in order to grow stronger.

The purpose of this research was to find out if it would be possible to inoculate and grow different species of mushrooms on fabrics to create a garment with them.

EDIBLE GARDEN

XU Chaofan & REN Qingqi

Mixed Materials

2023

We are living in a world shaped by food. Whenever we walk into a supermarket or a restaurant, there is always food waiting for us. However, we often overlook the hidden crises in the food system. Globally, approximately 2.1 billion people are overweight or at an increased risk from obesity, while 850 million people are still living in hunger. Moreover, one-third of global GHG emissions come from agricultural activities related to food production. Our dietary habits and agricultural practices have plunged us into a self-destruction vortex from which it is difficult to escape. With the rapid increase of world hunger and rising food prices, the concept of food self-sufficiency is emerging, although it is still considered as a dream.

The “Edible Garden” attempts to construct a food circulation system through aquaponics approach, and converts human power into kinetic energy for the whole system to operate. Not only is it a self-sufficient food garden, it explores innovative planting mode including vertical planting and hydroponic technology to achieve more efficient and sustainable planting. It is also a community shared space to encourage people to jointly create a better and vibrant food utopia. In the face of serious food-related environmental and social challenges around the world, “Edible Garden” provides a new idea for creating a fairer and more sustainable food system, and advocates us to think and act through food, re-examine our relationship with technology, and change our diet and planting methods.





SYMBIOSIS OF THE NEW ERA

CRUDE_CASTIN
(LIU Dian & XU Jianing)

Acrylic, Resin, Video

2021

There is an ecological collapse problem in the current technology field, which poses a threat to the environment. Under the influence of anthropocentrism, the living space of other organisms is gradually reduced, which is a worrying problem. We deduce and adopt the symbiotic method of machinery and plants, so that the machinery and plants support each other and establish a harmonious ecological system. This project applies mechanical devices to analyze the needs of plants and provide services, and at the same time uses the organic characteristics of plants to supplement the lack of machinery, achieve biological transformation, and realize the post-species innovation.

UTILITY PET

Elio Caccavale

Mixed Materials

2003

Utility Pets is an experimental project that uses products to draw attention to the ethical consequences of xenotransplantation - the transplantation of animal organs into humans.

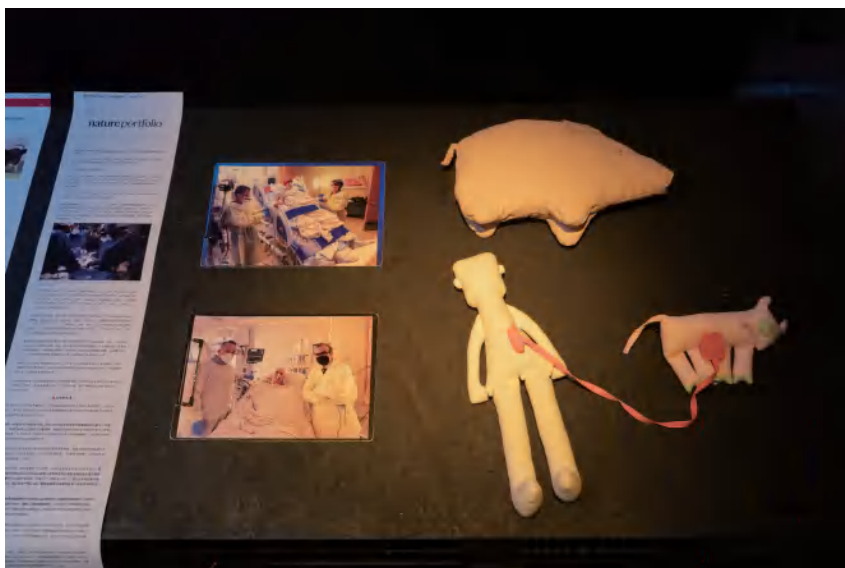
In an imaginary, though not so-distant future, shortly after birth, people will be given a piglet with their own DNA engineered into it. The pig, known as a knockout pig in the scientific jargon, is a form of living insurance policy - an organ bank.

This project explores what kind of new objects might be needed if the pig lives in the home with its owner's family.

The Utility Pet products include:

1. A pig toy with a microphone and a radio handset allowing the owner to listen to the pig enjoying itself.
2. A smoke-filtering device allowing a person to smoke in front of the pig without it suffering the consequences of passive smoking.
3. A low-resolution TV exclusively for pigs, which they can control themselves.
4. A comforter - a psychological product made from the snout of a pig, which helps people come to terms with the contradictory feelings generated by this complex situation.





MYBIO

Elio Caccavale

Mixed Materials

2005

MyBio dolls are a collection of educational dolls exploring the emergence of biological hybrids in biotechnologies, and our moral, social, cultural and personal responses to the strange and different in human biology and also “transhuman” creatures.

Learning from companies and organisations that produce educational dolls, the project includes twelve MyBio dolls that could symbolise possible ‘biofutures’.

The use of narrative and MyBio dolls can help children understand how to deal with applications of biotechnology, and with the social development of biotechnological knowledge. Tomorrow’s children will need to know the key methods used in biotechnology so they can learn to understand the many ambivalent possibilities of biotechnology.

Starting with a series of “What if” stories, the narrative process gives children a common language for talking about biotechnology. “Suppose that your life could be saved by a pig, what would happen to you and the pig?”

The dolls include MyBio Boy and MyBio Pig which demonstrate the physical transfer of the organ from the animal to the human.

DEVIATION

LI Shan

Silicone, Resin,
Aluminum Alloy Material

2017

Combining the life-size lower body of a man with a monstrously oversized upper body, wings and eyes of a dragonfly, these conglomerate creatures embody Li's fascination with the prospect of DNA sequencing, contemplating the benefits of genetically engineering human chromosomes with those of other lifeforms. Li has conjectured that replacing human eyes with those of a dragonfly might enhance our perception of color, enabling us to experience vision through the approximately thirty thousand facets that make up a single dragonfly eye. Probing speculative biological futures, Li's work invites us to reflect on the uncertain position of humankind in our planet's ecology.





HUMAN HYENA

Paul Gong

Mixed Materials

2016

In this project, the artist imagine transhumanists, DIYBIO enthusiasts and makers coming together to form a group known as “Human Hyenas”, who want to tackle the increasingly serious problem of food wastage.

Inspired by the hyena species, they use synthetic biology to create new bacterias, and make use of three new tools to modify their digestive system to be like that of the hyena – with its different sense of smell and taste. The “Human Hyenas” are able to consume and digest rotten food like the scavenger hyena.

The “Human Hyena” raises the question of whether humans can modify their body using synthetic biology in order to solve bigger issues.

L.E.M & REBORN

LIU Di & LIU Di x cough in vain

3D Animation

2019

The name of the work comes from a novel "Childhood's End" by Arthur C. Clarke. Aliens from an advanced civilization appeared in the novel. They came to Earth and made many specimens to bring back to their own galaxy, where they have an exhibition hall to display species collected from all over the universe (Cosmic Species Exhibition Hall). This is actually the counterpart of the New York Museum of Natural History.

If the creation of the universe came from a certain will, the original instruction booklet should have said: A thing has a body, and a dead thing rots. But the specimen is an exception, it is unnatural, and nothing that humans create is natural.

Human beings themselves are born out of nature, and then oppose nature through creation. If man was created for any purpose, it should be that will to define nature by making man create the unnatural.

The taxidermy-filled human body sculptures in the work came from the idea that the human body, like other creatures, comes from nature, which allows the human consciousness to understand how the world looks incredible.

The animated work "REBORN" was co-created by Liu Di and cough in vain, reflecting the interesting point of view in Stanislaw Lem's "Solaris": "anthropocentrism" is the helplessness of human beings, bugs trust "bugism", bacteria trust "Bacterialism", this is understandable, each has its own helplessness. But looking for bacteria with the eyes of bugs, or looking for bugs with the eyes of bacteria, will lead to a series of questions about whether it is possible or not. It is human beings who judge whether something is possible or not. This is actually an extension of the human world, whether it is the world of human existence or the world of human values. We are tightly imprisoned by our own world.





TRANSITION HABITATS

Extrapolation Factory

Mixed Materials

2017

Conversing with creatures on an intellectual level seems like a pipe dream, but design-based research studio Extrapolation Factory believes people need to learn to listen differently. Transition Habitats creates an environment for humans to interpret messages from local species, blending qualitative and quantifiable methods of communication with old fashioned mailboxes. The project asks participants to imagine environmental futures, using the mailboxes as a data collection point for both scientific study and creative public engagement. "It kind of serves as a beginning opportunity for people to really think about these species as intelligent in their own way. When we look around and see non-human organisms around us, we start to think about what we could learn from them. They're really important information channels."

THE WEED NEVER DIES

atelier mobile

Installation: Mixed Materials

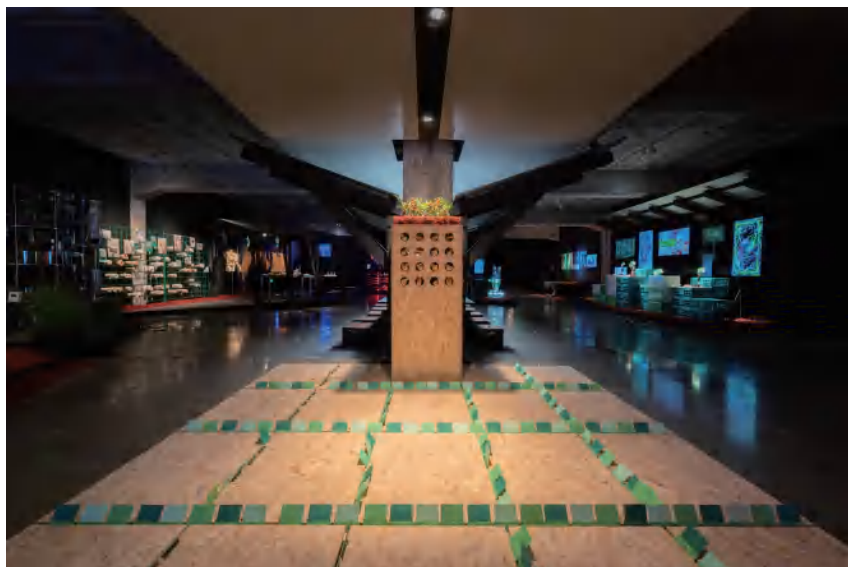
2021

The installation's title (in English: The Bad Weed Never Dies) is an Italian common saying that refers to the toughness of grass weeds which can survive being destructed and come back to life. This ability is a manifestation of Nature's strength over human will, which allows us to reconsider the impermanence of our world through Nature's resilience. Three levels of impermanence are represented: seeds, symbolizing vegetation's life cycle; built space, representing human impact on Nature; and 'alive,' associated only with man-made environments, excluding Nature's presence.

The first level shows an abandoned man-made floor reclaimed by wild grass growing in the grout lines. This uncontrolled growth symbolizes the impermanence of human actions.

In the second level, visitors interact by tearing up tufts of grass and taking them away, highlighting the impermanence of our choices.

The third level represents the impermanence of Nature, where the seeds taken by visitors may grow into grass, flowers, and plants in a different space and time.



About the Artists

Nonhuman Nonsense Studio

Nonhuman Nonsense Studio consists of Leo Fidjeland, Linnea Våglund, and Filips Staņislauskis, and is based between Berlin and Stockholm. It is a research-driven design and art studio creating near-future fabulations and experiments somewhere between utopia and dystopia.

alterR

alterR is a design innovation studio dedicated to speculating and prototyping possible futures. We use experimental artifacts and experiences as the medium to frame our preferable long-term futures, helping humanity to manage the disruptive forces of emerging technological, ongoing environmental and cultural changes, and plan our next evolution.

Paula Ulargui Escalona

PAULA ULARGUI X NATURE is a small studio founded by Paula Ulargui with the aim to investigate, develop and create garments in collaboration with nature itself. This philosophy of designs is extremely link with the urgent need of a more sustainable fashion industry and way of living.

We need to move forwards from this problematic Anthropocene era and reconnect with nature. A nature we are so disconnected from, that we can't even feel the price of its absence. We live distanced from our essence denying its rhythms and processes in ourselves.

XU Chaofan & REN Qingqi

Xu Chaofan graduated from the Central Academy of Fine Arts, majoring in Art and Technology, and now works at Beijing Academy of Agriculture and Forestry Sciences. She focuses on cross-field research on biology/ecology, and tries to use biological media, devices, images and other comprehensive materials to discuss the sustainable development of nature and society.

Ren Qingqi, a new media artist. Graduated from the Central Academy of Fine Arts with a master's degree in media art research, and worked as a horizontal scientific research assistant for robotics technology and art research at the Central Academy of Fine Arts. Focuses on the field of new media art, devotes himself to the research of art and technology, uses programming and other technical means to create art, and the scope of creation covers interactive video installations, 3D digital art, sound and visual performances, etc.

CRUDE_CASTIN (LIU Dian & XU Jianing)

「CRUDE_CASTIN」 art studio is a team with the concept of 'free creating'. Our works including but not limited to art installation, video, sculpture and other forms of creation. Through the creation and display of art works, we hope to convey our thoughts and concerns about the society and human destiny, and inspire the public to reflect on social issues.

Elio Caccavale

Elio's research is an exploration into new visual and three-dimensional design vocabularies for thinking about ethical and social issues in the sciences, and it aims to contribute to the ongoing methodological debates in the sociology of emerging scientific knowledge. His contribution to practice-based research has been recognised with the acquisition of his projects in the permanent Design collection of MoMA New York.

LI Shan

Li Shan is a Chinese contemporary artist and a pioneer of Bio-Art (shengwu yishu). He was born in Lanxi, Heilongjiang Province in 1942, studied at the Shanghai Theater Academy 1964-68 and later taught there until his retirement in 2002. In the 1960s he started to engage in contemporary art. He lives and works in Shanghai and New York now.

Li Shan was also one of the main participants in the Chinese '85s New Wave Art Movement. In 1993, Li began investigations on life science through his art. Based on molecular biology, he completed the first-ever genetic Bio-Art project Reading in 1998 and published the article The Story of Fish and Butterfly in 2000.

Paul Gong

Paul Gong (b. 1988, Lincoln, Nebraska, USA) is a speculative designer, artist, curator, and one of the pioneers of speculative design in Taiwan. He is currently an Assistant Professor Rank Specialist of the Department of Industrial Design at Shih Chien University in Taipei. He holds a BA in Industrial Design from Chang Gung University in Taipei, and an MA in Design Interactions from the Royal College of Art in London. He sees design as a research method and thinking tool to explore different possibilities, to criticise the past and the present, and to speculate the future. Design should stimulate debate, imagination, and reflection for people. It is also interesting for him to explore the aesthetics of the representation for possible futures. He attempts to use installation, text and image, conceptual objects, performance, and exhibition to create a kind of scenario for people to imagine and explore.

LIU Di

Liu Di believes that “by violating the rules of common sense, we can break the hypnotic trance induced by familiar reality.” Liu uses digitally artworks to investigate the friction between the natural world and urban residents. He’s works look at a mutually destructive relationship through ruins of both human and animal living spaces. Liu first conceived of the project while navigating the crowded suburbs of Beijing, where he has been based since his graduation from the Central Academy of Fine Arts.

Extrapolation Factory

The Extrapolation Factory is a design-based research studio for participatory futures studies, founded by Chris Wuebken and Elliott P. Montgomery. The studio develops experimental methods for collaboratively prototyping, experiencing and impacting future scenarios.

Central to these methods is the creation of hypothetical future props and their deployment in familiar contexts such as science museums, vending machines and city sidewalks. With this work, the studio is exploring new territories for democratized futures by rapidly imagining, prototyping, deploying and evaluating visions of possible futures on an extended time scale.

atelier mobile

atelier mobile is a nomadic non-profit cultural association that was founded in 2011 by a group of architects and designers. Since then, it has focused on experimental education through design and build projects. atelier mobile's goal is to share a conscious, responsible, and creative design approach towards the spaces of everyday life by involving architects, local communities artisans, skilled workers, students, universities, and citizens.

Each project is unique, and it is the result of many minds and many hands working together. The process is always the same following a three-phase path that goes from conception to building and installation.

atelier mobile's approach is to think site-specific, collect local, sustainable materials and ideas, deliver solutions for needs, and build for long-term permanence, re-use, and wider public use.

About Hyundai Blue Prize Art + Tech

Launched by Hyundai Motor Company and Hyundai Motorstudio Beijing in 2017, The Hyundai Blue Prize has explored on “Social Mobility” (2018), “Future Humanity” (2019), “Social Intelligence” (2020), “Resonant Cities” (2021), “Disruptive Future” (2022), and “Decentralized Re-Worlding” (2023). Hyundai Blue Prize Art + Tech have recognized and supported emerging curators in China, fostering innovative and critical exploration of major contemporary issues.

The website (<https://art-tech.hyundaiblueprize.com/>) serves as a digital archive for the previous projects.

Disclaimer: Hyundai Motor Company believes the information contained herein to be accurate at the time of release. However, the company may upload new or updated information if required and assumes that it is not liable for the accuracy of any information interpreted and used by the reader.

