

XIAO LU

Dignity of Memory (记忆的尊严)

1 - 30 March 2024

[MARS]



Xiao Lu (肖鲁) was born in 1962 in Hangzhou, China. In 1988 she graduated from the Oil Painting Department of the Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts (now the China Academy of Art). She currently lives and works in Sydney, Australia.

In 1988 Xiao Lu created her installation work *Dialogue*, which was exhibited in 1989 in the China/Avant-garde Exhibition in the National Art Museum of China in Beijing. On the opening day of the exhibition, she fired a gun at her work *Dialogue*. This performance is referred to on Wikipedia (s. v. Xiao Lu): "When the Tiananmen Square massacre occurred four months later, her actions were heavily politicized, referred to as "the first gunshots of Tiananmen"." The Tiananmen Incident of June 4, 1989, started as a demand by students for dialogue with the government and ended with the government sending troops in to suppress the demonstration with gunfire. By a coincidence of history, this work became a harbinger of the Tiananmen Incident.

It wasn't until 2004 that Xiao Lu openly talked about the original intention of *Dialogue*, and that people learned that the reason for her creating this work was the MeToo experience of her youth. Back in 1989, she was unable to face the Xiao Lu behind the gunshots, and her 15 years of silence after the gunshots led to a misunderstanding about the authorship of the work. A man who was present at the shooting took the opportunity to enter her life. He provided an explanation of the performance work to the outside world and became one of its apparent creators.

In 2003 Xiao Lu again raised a gun in the work *Fifteen Gunshots.....from 1989 to 2003*, which was her declaration that she had decided to claim sole authorship of *Dialogue*. In 2022 this work was exhibited in the opening exhibition of the Art Gallery of New South Wales new 20th-century galleries in Sydney, Australia. When Xiao Lu for the first time said openly: "This is my work! Not a collaboration!" it aroused great social controversy. In response, she wrote her autobiographical novel *Dialogue* (Hong Kong University Press 2010 in Chinese, and in an English translation by Archibald McKenzie) from 2004 to 2006, setting out the story behind the work *Dialogue*. Ever since 2004, Xiao Lu has abandoned her past silence and has courageously faced up to herself and to society. The difficulties of claiming sole authorship caused a real awakening of Xiao Lu's awareness of feminist rights, and her works moved from individual to social relevance.

Through the publication of a large amount of documentary material, this work has had the opportunity of being shown in many important art museums under Xiao Lu's name: "Democracies" at Tate Liverpool 2020-2023; "Collection 1970s-Present" at MoMA, New York, 2019-2020; "Performer and Participant", Tate Modern, London, 2018-2019; "Art and China after 1989: Theater of the World", Guggenheim, New York, 2017-2018. In China, *Dialogue* has featured in the important exhibitions: "Engaging with the World: Modern and Contemporary Chinese Art Since the Dawn of the 20th Century" Taikang Art Museum, Beijing 2023-2024. "Image History Existence" National Art Museum of China, Beijing, 2011; "The New

Wave of '85: China's first contemporary art movement" Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, 2007-2008; "Wen Pulin Archive of Chinese Avant-Garde Art", Red Brick Art Museum, Beijing (2016). In January 2019, on the thirtieth anniversary of Xiao Lu's *Dialogue*, University of Melbourne art historian Claire Roberts with co-curators Mikala Tai and Xu Hong presented "Xiao Lu: Impossible Dialogue", a solo exhibition that provided a true artistic overview, at 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney. Other exhibitions include: "Framing the Revolution" Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, Eugene, Oregon (2023).

Xiao Lu's work *One* was shown in the "China – the past is present" at the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2022-2023. The work featured on the front page of the NGV Magazine (Issue 37, November 2022), and in the magazine, Xiao Lu was introduced as follows: "Xiao Lu (肖鲁) is regarded as an influential figure associated with the radical and experimental '85 New Wave movement – and is considered one of China's first feminist performance artists."

As an early influential female artist in China, she was selected with her work *Dialogue* for inclusion in *Great Women Artists* (PHAIDON, 2019), a book that includes 400 female artists from 50 countries, spanning 500 years of history. In September 2022, Xiao Lu's work *Open Fire!* was included in the exhibition "Empowerment – Kunst und Feminismen" at the Wolfsburg Kunstmuseum, Germany. This exhibition featured works by a selection of one hundred female artists from 50 countries. From 2022 to 2023, three of her works, *Dialogue*, *Polar* and *Coil* were included in "Stepping Out! – Female identities in Chinese Contemporary Art", a travelling exhibition featuring 26 female Chinese artists shown in Lillehammer Kunstmuseum, Norway; Kunstforeningen GL STRAND, Copenhagen; and Museum der Moderne Salzburg, Austria.

Xiao Lu's works are in important museums and private collections: Taikang Art Museum, Beijing; Qinghua University Art Museum, Beijing; Beijing Zhuzhong Art Museum; MoMA, New York; Tate Modern, London; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; White Rabbit Gallery, Sydney; Jack and Susy Wadsworth Collection, USA, and the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, Eugene, Oregon.

Xiao Lu's visual art includes works in various media such as performance, installation, photography, videoworks and painting. Her sensitivity lies in her intuitively authentic experiences and her cognitive stance. "Dignity of Memory" at MARS Gallery, Melbourne, presents the social morphology in her works. The exhibition features installations, videos and photographs taken by Xiao Lu during the demolitions and forced evictions of the "bottom population" in late 2017 in Beijing, and during the Anti-extradition protests in Hong Kong in 2019, and of her performance work *Skew* created in Hong Kong in 2019. From these works, we can see Xiao Lu's stance as a human being, and her artistic expression at these major junctures in history.

Dignity of Remembering (记忆的尊严)

Many events have been erased in modern Chinese history, and the truth is hidden within a web of distorted narratives. Here, I present fragments of history as I have experienced them to ensure they are not forgotten, and the dignity of history is upheld.

On December 1, 2017, The New York Times published an article titled "Beijing Razes Migrant Neighbourhood, Evicting Tens of Thousands," stating: "Tens of thousands have already been uprooted in the city's most aggressive drive against migrant neighbourhoods that people can recall..." ¹

On December 5, 2017, I visited Xinjian Village in Beijing's Daxing District. Amidst the ruins and debris, I captured the aftermath of this devastation. Over three days in the cold winter, over three hundred thousand non-locals were driven away. Mainstream media turned a blind eye, leaving only scattered information on social media platforms like WeChat.

These displaced people were referred to as the "low-end population". Some days later, on December 15, I went to Picun Village in the Chaoyang District, where I recorded the very last stage of the forcible razing of this village.

On June 4, 2019, I attended the "June 4" candlelight vigil at Victoria Park in Hong Kong for the first time. The persistence of Hong Kong people in upholding this candlelight vigil for thirty years moved and humbled me. The Hong Kong "Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill" mass protests, which began on June 9, 2019, awakened my conscience and courage. On September 12, I performed a performance titled "Skew" in Hong Kong, showing my unwavering support for the city. From then on, I joined Hong Kongers on the streets, resembling a war correspondent, holding a camera on footbridges, along the streets, and within the marching crowds. I remember being hit by tear gas, struggling to keep my eyes open, and running on the streets hand in hand with friends. In those unforgettable days, I stood with the people of Hong Kong.

Unexpectedly, the momentous "Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill" movement in Hong Kong saw a massive turnout of over two million people marching on the streets. Eventually, it was forcefully suppressed with the enactment of the "National Security Law."

The longstanding Victoria Park candlelight vigil commemorating the June 4 Incident, lasting for thirty years, was subsequently banned, and many Hong Kong people were arrested and imprisoned.

On July 3, 2023, the Hong Kong police astonishingly offered a reward of one million Hong Kong dollars for each of the eight Hong Kong individuals overseas whom they sought to apprehend.

Amid historical upheavals, the opportunity to participate in and witness events firsthand has made me feel that my life is not just about mere survival.

In this exhibition, I hope to gather some debris and rubble, placing them on the gallery floor. I will also display photographs and videos I captured in Beijing and Hong Kong, along with records of the performance of Skew in Hong Kong, hanging them on the walls or laying them on the ground. Xiao Lu will execute on site the process of installation that normally precede an exhibition at the opening itself, thereby breaking up the usual ritual of an exhibition opening. The interaction between Xiao and the public produces a situational resonance.

Xiao Lu

26 November, 2023

¹ Quoted from "The New York Times" article by Chu Bailiang, 1 December 2017. "Beijing Razes Migrant Neighborhood, Evicting Tens of Thousands". <https://c.nytimes.com/china/20171201/china-beijing-migrants/dual/>



Skew 1
2019
Photographic Print on Baryta paper (framed)
image size: 130 x 78cm
Edition of 10 + 3AP



Skew 2
2019
Photographic Print on aluminium
image size: 130 x 78cm
Edition of 10 + 3AP



Skew 3
2019
Video of performance at 10 Chancery Lane Gallery, Hong Kong
Edition of 6



Protest
2019
Photographic Print on aluminium
130 x 86.6cm
Edition 2 of 10 + 2AP



Gathering
2019
Photographic Print on aluminium
130 x 86.6cm
Edition 1 of 10 + 2AP



Gangster Police
2019
Photographic Print on aluminium
130 x 86.6cm
Edition 1 of 10 +2AP



Vanishing Villages
2017
Photographic Print on aluminium
130 x 86.6cm
Edition 1 of 10 + 2AP



Evacuating the Low-End Population
2017
Photographic Print on aluminium
130 x 86.6cm
Edition 1 of 10 + 2AP



Falling Stones
2017
Photographic Print on aluminium
130 x 86.6cm
Edition 1 of 10 + 2AP



Forced Demolition
2017
Photographic Print on aluminium
130 x 86.6cm
Edition 1 of 10 + 2AP



One 1
2015
Photographic Print on Baryta paper (framed)
image size: 100 x 83cm
Edition 6 of 10 + 3AP



One 2
2015
Photographic Print on Baryta paper (framed)
image size: 100 x 83cm
Edition 6 of 10 + 3AP



Bound No.1
2023
Ink on rice paper (framed)
paper size: 50 x 75 cm



Bound No.2
2023
Ink on rice paper (framed)
paper size: 50 x 75 cm



Bound No.3
2023
Ink on rice paper (framed)
paper size: 50 x 75 cm



Play No.1
2023
Ink on rice paper (framed)
paper size: 50 x 75 cm



Play No.2
2023
Ink on rice paper (framed)
paper size: 50 x 75 cm



Play No.3
2023
Ink on rice paper (framed)
paper size: 50 x 75 cm

XIAO LU

Xiao Lu (肖鲁), born in 1962 in Hangzhou, China, graduated from the Department of Oil Painting at Hangzhou Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts (now China Academy of Art) in 1988. Currently, she resides in Sydney, Australia, where she continues to pursue her artistic endeavours.

Solo Shows

2019

"Skew" 10 Chancery Lane Gallery, Hong Kong.

"Xiao Lu: Impossible Dialogue" 4A Centre Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney, Australia.

2017

"Xiao Lu " Skovde Art Museum, Sweden.

2016

"Money Laundry Anti - Money Laundry" Hosane Space, Shanghai, China.

2006

"Open Fire" Ethan Cohen Fine Arts, New York, USA.

Project

2018

"Xiao Lu Studio Project: COIL" Skew House / Beijing Studio.

Group Shows

2023

"IV Festival De Artist As Chinas 2023" Cuernavaca Morelos Theater, Mexico

"Half the sky: Women in Chinese Art" Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, USA

"Engaging with the World: Modern and Contemporary Chinese Art Since the Dawn of the 20th Century"

Taikang Art Museum, Beijing

"China the new frontier of Art" Cultural & Institutional Center, Milan, Italy

"Stepping Out ! Female Identities in Chinese Contemporary Art" Museum der Moderne Salzburg, Austria

"Framing the Revolution" Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, USA

2022

"Strpping Out ! Female Identities in Chinese Contemporary Art" Kunstforeningen GI Strand Copenhagen, Denmark

"China – The Past is Present" National Gallery of VIC, Australia

"Sensitive Content" Unit London, UK

"Empowerment" Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Germany

"20th-Century Galleries Collection 1960s-2000" Art Gallery of NSW, Australia

"Bald Girls- Chain Reaction" KUH Art Space, Dusseldorf, Germany

"Stepping Out ! Female Identities in Chinese Contemporary Art" Lillehammer Art Museum, Norway.

"ARRA Video Art Project 2 " ARRA Bar, Melbourne, Australia.

"Our Journeys / Our stories" Hurstville Museum + Gallery, NSW, Australia.

2021

"Love in the Dream" 10 Chancery Lane Gallery, Hong Kong.

"The Realm of Existence: An exhibition of Chinese Contemporary Art", Tsinghua University Art Museum, Beijing, China.

"Dis-Continuing Traditions", Long Gallery/Salamanca Arts Centre, Hobart, Australia.

"China: Contemporary art exhibition", Queretaro City Museum, Queretaro, Mexico.

"Screening of the 3° Chinese Female Videoartists Festival", Queretaro City Museum, Queretaro, Mexico.

2020

2019

"Collection Galleries: 1970s - Present" MoMA, NY, USA

"Beyond the Fragrance of Books: China Contemporary Art Exhibition" China Cultural Center in Stockholm, Sweden.

"180 Years of Photography in China" MOCA, Yinchuan, China.

"Thousand-Armed Guanyin" Red Brick Art Museum, Beijing, China.

"Crossing the bridge between Mexico and China: Contemporary art exhibition" Chancellery Museum, Mexico City, Mexico.

"Step" 9 Art Museum, Beijing, China

"Hot Blood" White Rabbit Gallery, Sydney, Australia.

2018

"The Three Objects: The Root Structure of Artistic Creation" Helf Image, Shanghai, China.

"Art and China After 1989: Theater of the World" SFMOMA, San Francisco, USA.

"Her Kind" Zhuzhong Art Museum, Beijing, China

"Collection Displays: Performer and Participant" TATE Modern, London, UK

"capital@Art.international" IO Cultural Network e, V & Oststern, Frankfurt, Germany.

"Sworn Sisters" Vermilion Gallery, Sydney, Australia.

"Art and China After 1989: Theater of the World" Guggenheim Museums, Bilbao, Spain.

"The Fuck off Generation: Chinese Art in the Pao-Mao Era" Ethan Cohen Fine Arts, New York, USA.

2017

"15-Artists Art Exhibition of Zhejiang Academy of Art" Ding Yuan International Arts Center, Beijing.

"In the Mood for Love" Poly Culture Art center, Vancouver, Canada.

"Art and China After 1989: Theater of the World" Guggenheim Museums, NY, USA.

"The Exhibition of Annual of Contemporary Art of China 2016 " Beijing Minsheng Art Museum,. JiangSu Contemporary Art Museum. Art Museum of Sichuan Fine Arts Institute.

" Venice Live 4 " Piazza San Marco, Venice, Italy.

"Vioences XX-Elles" Union des Artistes d'Asie en France, Paris, France.

2016

"Feminine Power: New Perspective" Daqian Contemporary Art Centre, Beijing, China.

"Rising East: Classic Paintings from the Republican Period" Zhongshan Exhibition Center, Guangzhou, China.

"Wen Pulin Archive of Chinese Avant-Garde Art" Red Brick Art Museum, Beijing, China.

"Thirty Years of Body and Performance Happening Project" Beijing Minsheng Art Museum,

"Singapore Biennale 2016 - An Atlas of Mirrors" MoCA, Singapore

"Parabiosis - International Contemporary Art Exhibition 2016" Changjiang Contemporary Art Museum, Chongqing, China.

"Beijing Live " Denmark Cultural Centre, Beijing, China.

"Arctic Action" Pyramiden, Longyerabyen, Svalbard, Norway.

"She" Long Art Museum", Shanghai, China.

"Beijing 798 Genesis (2002-2006)" Song Art Museum, Beijing, China.

"Half the Sky: An Exhibition and book launch" Red Gate Gallery, Beijing, China.

"Xi Shan Yin" Qiao House Gallery, Beijing, China.

"Phoenix Satellite Television's 20th Anniversary-An Exhibition of Phoenix" Phoenix Satellite Television, Beijing, China.

"Hesitation: The artist collection exhibition" CAFA International, Beijing, China.

"international Female Visual Arts exhibition (Xian), DAHUA.1935, Xian, China.

"Vulnerability: Art and Human Rights in China and the EU" EU delegation to China, Beijing, China.

"Cold Light Source- Perforce to the 1st Exhibition for Installation of Hefei_2016" ,

"Beyond Action" KCCA, Beijing, China.

"Inclusive:The Closing Celebration of China-UK Year of Cultural Exchange in London" Phoenix Art,

2015

"Rape: Gender Violence Cultural Codes - 2015 Chinese Contemporary Art Exhibition" Jingge Art Club, Beijing, China.

"The Experimental Zone:The Discussion Project about Art- Nanjing International Art Exhibition"

2014

"Gender Dialogue - GuangzhouLive 5" YouYou Contemporary Art Centre, Guangzhou, China.
"Bald Girls" Fundacion LIA, Bogota, Colombia.
"Bald Girls" Frauen Museum, Bonn, Germany.
"Body Plasticity" Art Now Live, Beijing, China.

2013

"Digitalize" YouYou Contemporary Art Centre, Guangzhou, China.
"Why Not ? The First Auction Biennale" Expo Museum, Shanghai, China.
"The Grand Canal" Museo Diocesana di Venezia, The 55th Biennale Arte 2013, Italy.
"Art & Women" Primd Piano Living Gallery, Italy
"On the way home – 2102 the 9th Shanghai Biennale Special Project" Pudong Airport, Shanghai, China.

2012

"Carrying Tigers Over Mountains No.4" Permanence Gallery, Beijing, China.
"Dust from the heart" Pearl Lam Galleries, Hong Kong.
"ImmediaRelease" Primd Piano Living Gallery, Italy
"Physiognomies" Primd Piano Living Gallery, Italy
"Traditional and Avant-garde" YiAn Art Gallery, Singapore.
"Bald Girls" Iberia Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China.

2011

"Forces"10 Chancery lane gallery, Hong Kong.
"Half The Sky-Women in the New Art of China" Leonard Pearlstein Gallery, Drexel University, USA.
"Image History Existence" National Art Museum, Beijing, China.
"Red "10 Chancery lane gallery, Hong Kong.
"Love and hope" Iberia Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China.
"Heart Outside Body-Exhibition of Oversea Chinese Artists" Times Art Museum, Beijing, China.
"ShiDai JingShen", The Main Gallery of Florida Gulf Coast University, USA.

2010

"Back to the essence", Da Xing Art space, Taiwan.
"Green Attitude – ARFT Fashion Art Exhibition 2010" Sanlitun Village, Beijing, China.

2009

"Warm Winter Programme", ZhengYang Art zone, Beijing, China.
"A selecyion of Talkang Art Collection", Talkang Space, Beijing, China.
"Women and performance", La Bellone, Bruseel, Belgium.
"City of Women 2009", Stara Elektrarna, Ljubljana, The Republic of Slovenia.
"The Art Achievement Exhibition in commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China"Grand Ballroom of the Beijing Hotel, China.
"Art - Look or Listen? ", SooBin Art Int'L, Singapore.
"IN the 1980s – Wen Pulin archive of Chinese Avant-garde Art Exhibition Shanghai Duolun Museum of Modern Art, China.
"The White Rabbit First Collection Show", White Rabbit Gallery, Sydney, Australia.
"Yi Pai – Century Thinking", Today Art Museum, Beijing, China.
"Coming Home" Cooperate with Archibald McKenzie , Linda Gallery, Beijing, China.
"Reflective", West Lake Art Museum, Hangzhou, Wall Art Museum, Beijing, China.
"Twenty-year Anniversary of China/Avant-Garde Exhibition 'Documentary Exhibition'", Wall Art Museum, Beijing, China.
"Twenty-year Anniversary of China/Avant-Garde Exhibition 'Seven Sins'" Today Art Museum, Beijing, China.

2008

"Seven Sins" Yan Nan Art, Hangzhou, China.
"China Action" Groninger Museum, HerLand.

2007

"Long March Project 5 Year Retrospective" Long March Space Beijing, China.
"New Wave: The Birth of Chinese Contemporary Art" UCCA, Beijing, China.
"Seven Sins" Beijing Art now Gallery, Shanghai, China.
"Dragon's Evolution" China Square, New York, USA
"New Curator Project-The Story of Hair" TSI Contemporary Art Center, Beijing, China.
"China's Performance Art photography" Inter Art Center & Gallery, Beijing, China.
"Wen Pulin Archive of Chinese Avant-Garde Art-Wang Deren, Xiao Lu, Zan Nian" Zero Field, Beijing, China.
"Long March Project - Yan An" Long March Space Beijing, China.

2006
"Women in a society of double-sexuality" Tang Contemporary Art - Bangkok, Thailand
"Size Decides Attitude" First 7x5' Picture-taking Biennale Project, Pingyao" The Ancient City of Pingyao, Shanxi, China. TSI Contemporary Art Center, Beijing, Chin.
"Cold Energy" PYO Gallery, Beijing, China.
"Long March Project - Yan An" Yan An kangda Hotel, China.

2005
"Inward Gazes – Documentaries of Chinese Performance Arts" Museu de Arte de Macau, Macau.

2004
"Transborder Language 2004 - Volume Control" The Spaciousness of 798, Beijing, China.

2003
"China Contempo 2, Urban Illusions and Perceptions"(Cooperate with Tang Song) "Art Seasons", Singapore.

2002
"The Long March - A Working Visual Display" (Cooperate with Shen Meng) New York, USA.

1998-2001
"Inside Out - New Chinese Art" Exhibition around New York, San Francisco, Seattle in USA. Sydney in Australia. Mexico. Hong Kong.

1998-2000
"Origin of the Point: Global Conceptualism 1950 - 1980" Exhibition around New York, Boston, Chicago, Miami in USA. Europe.

1993
"Six Contemporary Chinese Artists", Space YZ, University of Western Sydney, Australia.

1992
"Emperor New Clothes". Irving Gallery, Sydney, Australia.

1991
"Twelve Contemporary Chinese Artists". University of Sydney Club, Sydney, Australia.

1989
"China/Avant-Garde". National Art Museum, Beijing, China.

Collection show

2023

Dialogue showed at "Half the sky: Women in Chinese Art", Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, USA
Dialogue showed at "Engaging with the World: Modern and Contemporary Chinese Art Since the Dawn of the 20th Century", Taikang Art Museum, Beijing, China, Dialogue showed at "Framing the Revolution", Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, USA.

2022

One showed at "China – The Past is Present", National Gallery of VIC, Australia.
15 Gunshots...From 1989 to 2003 showed at "20th-Century Galleries Collection 1960s-2000", Art Gallery of NSW, Australia.

2020

Dialogue showed at "Democracies" TATE Liverpool, UK.

2019

Dialogue showed at "Collection Galleries: 1970s - Present", MoMA, NY, USA.
Sperm showed at "Hot Blood" White Rabbit Gallery, Sydney, Australia.

2018

Dialogue showed at "Collection Displays: Performer and Participant", TATE Modern, London, UK.

2011

Dialogue showed at "Image History Existence", Taikang Life/ National Art Museum, Beijing, China.

2009

Sperm showed at "The White Rabbit First Collection Show", White Rabbit Gallery, Sydney, Australia.

[MARS]

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