

# Yang Mushi

Vanishing into Thin Air

Exhibition in Beijing: 1.12.–3.3.2019

Opening: Saturday, January 12, 4–6.30pm

Galerie Urs Meile Beijing is pleased to announce *Vanishing into Thin Air* a solo exhibition of the young emerging Chinese artist Yang Mushi (\*1989). In his third solo presentation after *Illegitimate Production* and *Compulsory Execution*, during which the artist used various methods to grind found tools into an array of geometric shapes and textures, the artist furthers his meditations on such topics as urban development, evolution, and labor relations.

*Illuminating* (2018, white neon tube, iron sheet, stone-like coating, sizes varying from 87.5 × 161.9 × 18 cm to 163.6 × 114.5 × 18 cm), a series of neon light works, constitutes the main body of this exhibition. The neon light, a popular material once commonly used to convey advertisements and disseminate ideologies but now widely replaced by LED out of energy efficiency considerations, is generally fabricated through heating and twisting. Through the incandescent lighting and varying angles, the artist has turned the image to point at the individual in society being twisted by social rules or restrictions. As this defunct mode of production confronts the present and creates a new sense of loss on a large scale, a new “distortion” comes to fruition. Through a continual twisting motion, the artist screws together an unreasonable production, a backward production method, and the manufacturing work of consumption. The twisted light tubes emit a dazzling light into the space that is at once frivolous and pale.

The show also includes Yang Mushi’s *Dark* series (2016–2018, wood, lacquer, sizes varying from 164 × 41 × 19 cm to 244 × 121 × 9 cm) with their distinctive shape of strict aesthetics and a martial kind of beauty. These works in black are entitled with active verbs such as *Grinding*, *Subtracting*, *Cutting*, *Peeling*, *Eroding*, which seem to suggest that the actions are what cast the aura onto the objects in the process of working with sharp wooden pieces. The original form and function of the wooden materials are eliminated and thus new meanings emerged from the ordered formation and sharpened edges of the objects.

Looking at Yang Mushi’s “dark production,” we can imagine the thermal energy, carrying the sweat from laboring over the division of materials, dispersing into the air that eventually vanishes into the social realities Yang has conjured. This “vanishing” act further enhances the artist’s appropriation of neon lights for the *Illuminating* series. Light is visible, yet intangible. It emits thermal energy while conveying a burning pain. However, this time, surrounded by the subject of labor visualized through the wooden tools—we find the diligent artist becomes integrated with the sharp forms he produced as he continues to labor over an art practice he is passionate about. Perhaps, this is an analogy for Yang Mushi’s realization of sharpening tools since 2013—an intimate relationship between the self and the subject of his practice.

Yang Mushi was born in 1989 in Jiangxi Province, China and currently lives and works in Shanghai. In 2014 he graduated from the Sculpture Department at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing. He held his solo show *Compulsory Execution* at Galerie Urs Meile Lucerne and *Broken Torso* at The Chinese University of Hong Kong (Shenzhen) in 2018 and *Illegitimate Production* at Galerie Urs Meile Beijing in 2016. His most recent group exhibitions include: *Annual Arts Exhibition Between China and Portuguese-Speaking Countries - The Universe*, Ox Warehouse, Macau, China (2018); *Modern Time*, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China (2018); *The Dark Matters*, White Rabbit Gallery, Sydney, Australia (2017); *Visual Questions—Young Artists’ Visions and Experiences*, Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China (2017); *Everyday Legend*, Minsheng Art Museum, Shanghai, China (2016); *Turning Point: Contemporary Art in China Since 2000*, Minsheng Art Museum, Shanghai, China (2016); *Prudential Eye - Asia Contemporary Art*, Marina Bay Sands ArtScience Museum, Singapore (2016); *WE - A Community of Chinese Contemporary Artists*, chi K11 Art Museum, Shanghai, China (2016) and *No Holds Barred - Young Generation from China*, OpenART Biennial, Örebro County Museum, Örebro, Sweden (2015). Currently, he is participating in *HEIMAT - The 2018 Guang’an Field Art Biennale* and the group show *Transfinite - Shanghai Contemporary Sculpture Exhibition* held at SPSI Art Museum in Shanghai. Yang Mushi was nominated for Asian Contemporary Art as the “Best Emerging Artist Using Sculpture” (2016).