



DEJI A M

“IN THE LINE OF FLIGHT, FOR POSSIBLE WORLDS”, GROUNDBREAKING NEW MEDIA ART EXHIBITION TO INAUGURATE DEJI ART MUSEUM’S SPECIAL EXHIBITION HALL FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

With a dynamic range of works, Deji Art Museum’s inaugural contemporary art exhibition provides viewers with solace during times of peril, offering hope and possibilities for the future.

“From the beginning, what I have wanted to express is that in the special times we are living in, with the pandemic, international conflicts, and ecological imbalances, the line of flight offers an escape to people. The escape is not meant in a negative sense. It does not mean retreat. It is a way for people to detach for a while and to rethink their relationship with the world in order to advance forward into the future.”

—Zhang Ga



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Opening a new chapter of contemporary art for Deji Art Museum, the renowned media art curator Zhang Ga presents a group of socially relevant and innovative artworks, featuring 15 international artists and artist collectives, most of whom have never been shown in Nanjing. Grouped together to give viewers a multi-sensory experience, the exhibition surveys current social issues, offering a vision of the future with endless possibilities.

Set in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, a historic city which served as China's capital throughout several dynasties, Deji Art Museum is a vital addition to the city's "museum mile" on Changjiang Road. With provincial museums such as Jiangsu Art Museum (formerly National Gallery) and the Nanjing Presidential Palace, Deji Art Museum marks a distinctive new contribution that aims to merge the old and the new, creating exhibitions and programming at the crossroads of art, culture, and history.

After two years of preparation, Deji Art Museum presented brand new exhibition spaces, concepts, and programming in October 2021, exploring both ancient, modern, and contemporary arts with a forward-looking perspective. Uniquely located in one of the busiest commercial centers in China, with over a hundred thousand people walking through Deji Plaza every day, the museum is like a city of its own. The urban environment echoes the diversity of collections and exhibitions that Deji Art Museum offers.

With the rich history of Nanjing behind it and a vibrant urban environment surrounding it, Deji Art Museum is beginning a new phase of exploring contemporary art. It aims to rethink how contemporary art can reflect the world around us, combining culture and technology. In the newly dedicated Special Exhibition Hall for Contemporary Art, Deji Art Museum is pleased to present its inaugural exhibition titled "In the Line of Flight, for Possible Worlds", featuring artists who are among the pioneers and leading practitioners in the realm of new media art globally—Alex Da Corte & Jayson Musson, Arthur Ganson, Dorian Gaudin & Zachary White, Pierre Huyghe, Jakob Kudsk Steensen, Lin Ke, Lu Yang, Tomás Saraceno, Christa Sommerer & Laurent Mignonneau, Hito Steyerl, Zhang Peili, and Zhou Xiaohu. The exhibition will be on view from July 21 until November 06, 2022.



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In perilous times when wars break loose, plagues run rampant, markets melt down and ecospheres are crumbling, a line of flight furnishes us with the resilience necessary to avoid despair. But a line of flight is much more than a path of retreat or a roundabout or even a defensive formation. Just as much, it is a front of engagement and advance, an initiative that inspires nomadic excursions, an opportunity to disrupt and realign, and an opportunity to probe what is emerging.

Pandemics and scourges, capital's greed and ecological calamities, loves and hate, the wisdoms of artificial intelligence, and the follies of human beings are but assemblages, according to French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. For the 1970s duo, these phenomena can be seen as a machinic becoming that consists of parts and fragments, aggregates and relationships, with which they exchange with other assemblages to sustain operations and obtain functions. They work according to thermodynamic principles and are susceptible to psychic innuendos. As such, they are as porous and impenetrable, stiffened yet supple, and thus open clearings for potentials and changes, and the formulation of worlds of other sorts.

Moral contemplation on the global outlook leads to contentious conclusions. Leibniz extolled our world as the 'best of all possible worlds,' whereas Schopenhauer dishearteningly concluded that our world was almost the worst of all possible worlds. For us, both seem a bit extreme, and many directions are available; possible worlds are manifold, multiplicities of visions and aspirations, which artists are experts in forging and marching on with. They may bring us to uncanny dwellings or imaginary utopias. These worlds provide solace and sanctuary, but at the same time are vulnerable to disruptions and provocations, perceptible by way of sensations and premonitions, and evocative of yet more possibilities.



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Beyond the gallery spaces of the museum, Deji Art Museum also presents a collection of artworks on view in the public space on the 8th floor of Deji Plaza, with 11 installations and sculptures by 7 world-renowned artists such as Yayoi Kusama, Yoshitomo Nara, KAWS and more. The exhibition is the start of a series of diverse programming to further advance its endeavors in contemporary art. In the coming months, curator Sun Dongdong will also present the first season of Co-here, a digital art program using the mega LED screen outside Deji Plaza. In the atrium, a special installation—“Artificial Moon” by Wang Yuyang—will inaugurate the Atrium Artist Project, which will continue to feature groundbreaking installation works or commissions.

The second location of Deji Art Museum, spanning acres in the forest of Nanjing’s Xianlin District, the sub-city center, is being designed by world-renowned Japanese architect Kengo Kuma. Xianlin is among one of the most important campus cities with top Chinese universities, including Nanjing University (formerly National Central University). Just a few miles from the universities, the museum is set among a forest, aiming to echo its surroundings and provide an ideal location to enjoy art, architecture, and culture. Kuma’s design is inspired by the Jinling Folding Fan, an intangible cultural heritage of Nanjing. The intricate red roof design offers a contemporary approach to traditional oriental culture. The programming is being planned specially for this unique location.

“Without exaggeration, Deji Art Museum is an ‘atypical museum’ compared to many in the country, even in the world. We are excited to start a new chapter and communicate our thinking, our perspectives, and our imaginations through the diversity of spaces and programs we are creating. We see Deji Art Museum as a vital part of the existing constellation of art venues in the Yangtze Delta area and we look forward to collaborating with more pioneering artists and organizations to bring us to the future,” said Museum Director Ai Lin.

In the Line of Flight, for Possible Worlds is curated by ZHANG Ga and organized in collaboration with the Institute of Sci-Tech Arts, Central Academy of Fine Arts, China.



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About the Curator

ZHANG Ga is a media art curator. He is Distinguished Professor and Vice Dean of the Institute of Sci-Tech Arts, Central Academy of Fine Arts, China. He has curated numerous exhibitions including Beijing International New Media Art Exhibition and Symposium (2004- 2006) and three editions of the Media Art Triennial (National Art Museum of China, 2008-2014). His recent curatorial projects include Topologies of the Real: Techne Shenzhen 2022 (Shenzhen Museum of Contemporary Art and Urban Planning, 2022), We=link series of online programs (2020-2021), The 6th Guangzhou Triennial (co-curator, Guangzhou, 2018), Machines Are Not Alone (Zagreb Contemporary Art Museum, 2018), unREAL: The Algorithmic Present (co-curator, HeK Basel, 2017), Datumsoria: The Return of the Real (ZKM, 2017) and Wrap around the Time (co-curator, Nam June Paik Art Center, 2016). ZHANG Ga has lectured on media art and culture around the world and published essays and edited books with the MIT Press, October, Flash Art International, Liverpool University Press, among others. Since 2015, he directs Chronus Art Center in Shanghai and currently is also co-curator of the KM | Hong Media Art collection.

About the Institute of Sci-Tech Arts, Central Academy of Fine Arts, China

CAFA Institute of Sci-Tech Arts aims to integrate Arts, humanities and science and technology into collaborative research and development, and become a new interdisciplinary and cross-sector teaching and research and innovation base integrating teaching, research, and creation. To develop advanced culture development to appeal to the creation of digital media art as an opportunity, through domestic and international artists, cultural scholars, scientists and technical workers collaborative research model to promote new ideas and new ways of thinking, so as to promote the central academy of fine arts in the art of imagination and technology research in catalytic new creativity.



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About Deji Art Museum

A museum presenting arts across cultures and eras

Deji Art Museum is located in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, a prominent center of Chinese history and culture which is renowned as one of the “Four Major Ancient Capitals of China”, and is an important pole for commerce and trade in Eastern China.

With a collection focusing on both Chinese antiquities and international modern and contemporary arts, Deji Art Museum explores the transformations in art-historical, cultural and philosophical movements across cultures and eras, at its multiple galleries and public spaces.

The museum also comprises a thematic “Jinling” Collection—“Jinling” being an old name of Nanjing. The museum seeks to preserve and reinvent the rich treasures reflective of the distinctive regional culture of this ancient capital over 2500 years of history.

Empowered by technology, through continual scholarly, curatorial and educational programs with an emphasis on contemporary relevance and global vision, the museum aims to become a cultural leader and platform that engages the wider public regionally, nationally and globally in relation to discourses on art and human development.

Located in Xinjiekou—“China’s No.1 Business Circle”—the museum’s first exhibition space sits at the core of the commercial and cultural centers of Nanjing and Eastern China. Deji Art Museum will open its second space, designed by the internationally renowned architect Kengo Kuma, in Xianlin, Nanjing.