

For Immediate Release**Wang Tuo: *The Second Interrogation***

21 March - 6 May, 2023

Opening Reception: Saturday 18 March 2023, 4:00 – 6:30pm

Artist Talk, Wang Tuo in conversation with Anthony Yung: Saturday 18 March, 5:00 – 6:00pm

Venue: Blindspot Gallery (15/F, Po Chai Industrial Building, 28 Wong Chuk Hang Road, Wong Chuk Hang, Hong Kong)

Opening Hours: Tuesday to Saturday, 10:30am to 6:30pm (Sunday and Monday, by appointment only); closed on public holidays



Wang Tuo, *The Second Interrogation*, 2023, Three-channel video installation (color, sound, 4K).
(Image courtesy of artist and Blindspot Gallery.)

Blindspot Gallery is pleased to present “The Second Interrogation”, Wang Tuo’s first solo exhibition in Hong Kong. *The Second Interrogation*, the titular film of the exhibition, is a three-channel video installation based on the artist’s observations and reflections on cultural censorship in the art world in China in recent years. Accompanied by paintings, drawings, and other visual research materials, *The Second Interrogation* stages the dramatic encounter of the fraught friendship between an artist and a censor, as well as the creeping tension in their exchanges. Together and in reversing roles, they ask fundamental and existential questions about the arts, testifying to the uncertainties they share about the purpose of art in society: what is the role of an artist in an authoritarian state? How could art bring about social change?

The titular work is a sequel to Wang’s preceding piece, *The Interrogation* (2017), which depicts the psychological methods of conducting interviews by a local commissioner for Discipline Inspection, who was himself once put into the position of an interviewee years ago. In the 2023 rendition of *The Second Interrogation*, the artist envisions this dialectic in two extreme yet grounded positions where the artist becomes the censor, and the censor becomes the artist. Provoked by their different conjectures on the future developments of China, the censor and artist both begin a conscious shift in their identities: after a series of private dialogues and confrontations, the artist slowly becomes a covert surveillant examining the ideological problems of the art world for the government, whereas the censor seems to have grasped the true essence of art in a totalitarian state. The focal point of their discussion is notably the re-examining of the seven astounding performances (known as the “Seven Sins”) at the 1989 China/Avant-Garde Exhibition in Beijing, which triggered great stir in the Chinese art community and faced severe scrutiny by the authorities. During the artist’s subsequent restaging of the Seven Sins performance, the censor intervenes and transforms the entire piece. The two figures demonstrate the enduring legacy of Chinese art history from thirty years ago, and the salient reality where our action is the link between the past, the present, and the future of the nation.

Wang Tuo introduces *Weapons*, a new series of oil paintings depicting portraits of anonymous individuals who are part of the underground art and culture circle, working within the margins of China's art scene. Painted from self-portraits taken by the subjects illustrated, these images are banal yet intimate. Inspired by the book *Weapons of The Weak* by James C. Scott, trivial acts of uncooperativeness are used as an everyday form of resistance by the exploited and powerless in a system of inequality. The exhibition will also feature his new drawings derived from *The Second Interrogation* and archival images of people's campaigns.



Wang Tuo, *Study for Hunger Strike from Patrick Zachmann*, 2023, Charcoal on paper, 54.5 x 79 cm.
(Image courtesy of artist and Blindspot Gallery.)

During the opening reception of "The Second Interrogation" (18 March), Wang Tuo will be in conversation with Asia Art Archive Senior Researcher Anthony Yung to discuss Wang's new series of works, particularly *The Second Interrogation*. Anthony Yung specializes in the history of contemporary art in the Chinese regions and coordinated AAA's research project *Materials of the Future: Documenting Contemporary Chinese Art from 1980–1990*. Blindspot Gallery will also present Wang Tuo's *The Interrogation* (2017), prequel to *The Second Interrogation* (2023), at this year's Art Basel **Film program** (venue: Hong Kong Arts Centre).

About Wang Tuo

Wang Tuo (b. 1984, Changchun, China) interweaves Chinese modern history, cultural archives, fiction and mythology into speculative narratives. Equating his practice to novel writing, he stages an intervention in historical literary texts and cultural archives to formulate stories that blur the boundaries of time and space, facts and imagination. His work spans across film, performative elements, painting and drawing. The multidimensional chronologies he constructs, interspersed with conspicuous and hidden clues, expose the underlying historical and cultural forces at work within society. Embracing a uniquely Chinese hauntology, Wang proposes "pan-shamanization" as an entry point to unravel the suppressed and untreated memories of 20th century China. Through historical inquiry, Wang's works, often unsettling and dramatic, disentangle collective unconsciousness and historical traumas. His more recent work critiques contemporary conditions of censorship, more specifically the tensions within the push and pull between artist and authority. Wang currently lives and works in Beijing.

About Anthony Yung (Speaker)

Anthony Yung is Senior Researcher at Asia Art Archive, specializing in the history of contemporary art in the Chinese regions. He is the awardee of "The Fourth Yishu Awards for Critical Writing on Contemporary Chinese Art" (2014), and had curated "Don't Kill Me, I'm In Love! A Tribute to Huang Xiaopeng" at Times Museum, Guangzhou (2021), "Learning What Can't be Taught" at Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong (2020), and "A Hundred Years of Shame – Songs of Resistance and Scenarios for Chinese Nations" at Para Site, Hong Kong (2015). Yung is the co-founder of Observation Society, an independent art space that was previously in Guangzhou. Yung currently lives and works in Hong Kong.

About Blindspot Gallery

Set up in 2010, Blindspot Gallery is a Hong Kong-based contemporary art gallery. The gallery began with a primary focus on contemporary photography and image-based art, and has evolved to include diverse media in contemporary art. The gallery represents both emerging and established artists, mainly from Hong Kong and the region but also beyond.

Interviews with the artists are welcome and can be arranged, please contact Ms. Helena Halim at 2517 6238 or by email helena@blindspotgallery.com