

Play and Loop V

Featured artists: Jiang Zhi, Li Shuang, Jen Liu, Andrew Luk, Angela Su, 楔 Xiē (Hao Jingban, Shen Xin, Yunyu "Ayo" Shih and Qu Chang), Yan Wai Yin and Chris Yuan Zhongtian

18 July – 26 August 2023

Opening Reception: 15 July 2023, Saturday, 4:00 – 6:30pm

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

Blindspot Gallery is pleased to present **Play and Loop V**, the fifth iteration of our summer video screening program, a unique platform dedicated to showcasing moving images by established and emerging artists. Running for a period of six weeks, the program this year will be divided into two thematic scenes, each lasting for a duration of three weeks. The gallery space will be divided into multiple screening rooms, each with an artist's film playing on loop. Throughout the entirety of the program, Angela Su's *This is Not a Game*, and works by Andrew Luk, comprising a new sculptural installation *Saudade Chandelier* and mixed-media works *Techno-Reliquary 1, 2*, will be on display in the gallery.

SCENE 1: The Floating Years | 18 July to 5 August 2023

Featured artists: Li Shuang, Jiang Zhi, and 楔 Xiē (Hao Jingban, Shen Xin, Yunyu "Ayo" Shih, and Qu Chang)

After the easing of China's zero-COVID policy at the end of 2022, long after the rest of the world had moved on from the virus, the long-awaited return to normalcy was finally within reach. However, the impacts of three years of isolation and displacement had taken a severe toll on people's mental and physical wellbeing, both within the mainland and overseas.

The first scene of *Play and Loop V*, titled **"The Floating Years"**, brings together artists, Li Shuang, Jiang Zhi, and the artist collective 楔 Xiē comprising members Hao Jingban, Shen Xin, Yunyu "Ayo" Shih, and Qu Chang.



Li Shuang, *Déjà Vu*, 2022, single-channel video (no sound), 15'55", Edition of 3 + AP
(Image courtesy of Peres Projects, Berlin, and Blindspot Gallery.)

Li Shuang's *Déjà Vu* (2022) playfully intermingles two videos from hidden camera footages, one from a camera mounted on a duck and the other from spying goggles worn by performers captured in one of Li's performances. *Déjà Vu* constructs an intimate interaction between two seemingly disparate yet closely knit worlds – the animal realm and human civilization. The film begins with a group of performers dressed identically, all adopting the persona of the artist Li Shuang. The focus soon shifts to a raft of ducks interacting with one another in an animal rescue center in Geneva where the artist was based when return to China was prohibited. The view interchanges repetitively between the perspective of the duck cam and the goggles. The artist narrates through the subtitles, speaking acutely of a void that is metaphoric of humans' inability in comprehending and coping with a pandemic world.

A stand-alone security checkpoint appears on a deserted seashore, setting the stage for **Jiang Zhi's *The Waves*** (2022). A man carrying a suitcase emerges from the sea and approaches the seashore, being subjected to a series of security checks. He is examined for whether he meets certain standards, even whether he is human. Security checks are undoubtedly an exemplification of social institutionalization and politicization. The physical contact in security screening is an expression of authority. The cognitive process seeks to gain knowledge on the subject, and is one that exerts dominance, revealing the lust for power and control. Over time, people have succumbed to security examinations. Their subconscious have been disciplined, moulding them into people who comply with "safety standards", rejecting those who do not conform. The film shows how physical contact between two bodies can become a catalyst, materialising the symbiotic relationship existent between them. The dynamic between the security guard and traveler dramatically transforms; as they interact, the power structure between them starts to collapse.

The name of the artist collective 楔 **Xiē** (Hao Jingban, Shen Xin, Yunyu "Ayo" Shih, and Qu Chang) is the Chinese character of a wedge, a tool used to keep two objects stable or to create a new space. 楔 Xiē embodies a collective response to an unprecedented and traumatic time, cultivating a space for new and meaningful collaborations during the global crisis. Filmed respectively in New York, Beijing, Shenzhen, and Taipei, 楔 Xiē's *What Makes a Home?* (2022) consolidates videos from its four members preparing a meal on an ordinary day amid the pandemic. While cooking, each individual reflects on the environmental cues that are subordinated to these four cities. The other video work by Xiē: *X learns to talk to the land on a frozen river; Y's thoughts are interrupted by exercising jets overhead; Chang finds webs woven with branches in the mountains; Ban says some are confined, and some knocked down the barriers.* (2022) consists of footages from 楔 Xiē and videos found on the internet. The film shifts from footages that show people's anger in response to prolonged lockdowns, and military aircrafts flying low over the city, to the tranquil calmness of the natural landscape, and serene aerial drone footages. The work intimately encapsulates the collective memories of trauma, illustrating people's experiences of the pandemic.



楔 **Xiē**, *What Makes a Home?*, 2022, single-channel video, 36'00", Edition of 5 + 2AP. Commissioned by daadgalerie, Berlin (Image courtesy of artist and Blindspot Gallery.)

Andrew Luk's *Saudade Chandelier* (2023) is a hauntological cipher for the city of Hong Kong as informed by its unique geography. Its coastal location, mountainous vistas, and proximity to water systems, form the basis of a cosmology derived from the elemental rhythms of water, air, and light. The two-meter tall sculptural installation is an assemblage of an up-cycled Taobao chandelier, oyster shells, temple pinwheels, and ancestral altar light bulbs. The work alludes to the primitive history of Hong Kong, when coastal and boat peoples thrived on the landscape, engaging in fishing, salt harvesting, and oyster farming. Much later, attracted by deep water ports and currents of wind and water making for advantageous oceanic trade routes, colonial occupation subsequently transformed Hong Kong from a regional outpost into an international trading hub.

Drop tear chandeliers were first introduced by the court of King Louis XIV of France, as a befitting display of wealth and power for the Sun King - a seemingly airy weightless entanglement of light and optics - a media phenomena. Initially, this up-cycled Taobao chandelier, resonates similarly as a signifier of class adopted from the West, but on closer inspection, its disrepair shows signs of cheap injection mould manufacturing. The chandelier in the piece hangs low, held up by disused bedside stands from the public healthcare system, allowing the chandelier to continue performing as media - reflecting harsh sterile beams of UV light off glass crystals like sun sparkle, and artificially animated pinwheels accumulating stockpiles of good fortune, the red lights being associated with ancestor worship. With hindsight, *Saudade Chandelier* embodies a melancholic nostalgia for a bygone era, yet when looking forward it shows suspicion in the continuity of various systems.

SCREENING SCHEDULE 放映時間表

SCENE 1 The Floating Years 漂浮歲月			
第一幕	Jiang Zhi 蔣志	<i>The Waves</i> 《海浪》, 2022	12'57"
18.7-5.8	Li Shuang 李爽	<i>Déjà Vu</i> , 2022	15'55"
	楔 Xiē	<i>What Makes a Home?</i> 《何以為家?》, 2022	36'00"
	Hao Jingban 郝敬班 Shen Xin 沈莘 Yunyu "Ayo" Shih 施約佑 Qu Chang 龔暢	<i>X learns to talk to the land on a frozen river; Y's thoughts are interrupted by exercising jets overhead; Chang finds webs woven with branches in the mountains; Ban says some are confined, and some knocked down the barriers.</i> 《華在冬天的冰河上學著與土地對話，佑的思緒被天空中的軍演打斷，暢在山中遇見樹枝織成的網，班說這裡有人被圍著有人推倒了牆。》，2022	22'02"
SCENE 2 Unspecific Dimension 異樣維度			
第二幕	Jen Liu	<i>Pink Slime Caesar Shift: Electropore</i> , 2021-2022	11'00"
8-26.8	Yan Wai Yin 忻慧妍	<i>Localized Blindness</i> 《局部失明》, 2019	20'00"
	Chris Zhongtian Yuan 袁中天	<i>All Trace Is Gone, No Clamour for a Kiss</i> 《吻別暗處》, 2021-2022	21'52"
18.7-26.8	Andrew Luk 陸浩明	<i>Saudade Chandelier</i> , 2023 <i>Techno-Reliquary 1</i> 《科技聖龕 1》, 2023 <i>Techno-Reliquary 2</i> 《科技聖龕 2》, 2023	-
	Angela Su 徐世琪	<i>This is Not a Game</i> 《這不是一個遊戲》, 2021	11'15"

Angela Su's *This is Not a Game* (2021) speculates the history and future of gaming through interweaving film, personal narratives, and fabulation. Using excerpts of films from the 1920s, Su reveals to her audience the politics of board games whereby rivalry between different nations are materialized on a chess platform, functioning as a miniature of what happens on battlefields. Gaming progresses to prompt the development of AI technology. In 1996, the chess-playing system Deep Blue outplayed a world champion during a chess tournament, eerily revealing the capability of machines in outsmarting human intelligence. *This is Not a Game* provocatively forms a conjecture on the year 2029—as the title suggests, it imagines a future where a new genre of games become a rebel replication, blurring the boundary between real-life and virtual reality, infusing social conflicts into the gaming realm.

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.

For enquiries and media interviews, please contact Ms. Helena Halim at +852 2517 6238 or by email helena@blindspotgallery.com