

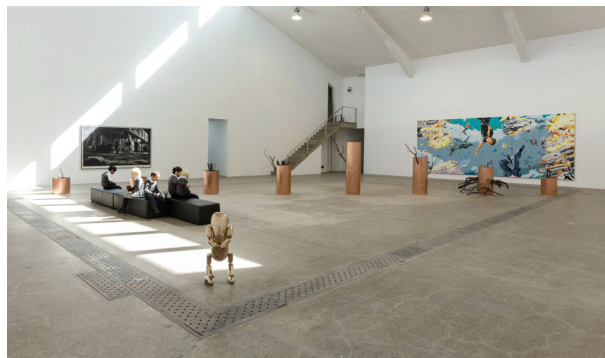
“As Life Begins to Return to Normal in Beijing, Tang Contemporary Art Kicks Off a Major Collaborative Exhibition,” Artnet.com, April 2, 2020

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As Life Begins to Return to Normal in Beijing, Tang Contemporary Art Kicks Off a Major Collaborative Exhibition

"WHO AM I," organized with Berlin's König Galerie, is one of the first new exhibitions to reopen in the city.

Artnet Gallery Network (<https://news.artnet.com/about/artnet-gallery-network-737>), April 2, 2020



Installation view "WHO AM I" 2020. Courtesy of Tang Contemporary Art, Beijing.

After weeks of closure due to health precautions, leading art space [Tang Contemporary Art](https://www.artnet.com/galleries/tang-contemporary-art) (<https://www.artnet.com/galleries/tang-contemporary-art>) has recently reopened their Beijing location with "WHO AM I" (<https://www.artnet.com/galleries/tang-contemporary-art/who-am-i>), a group show organized with Berlin's König Galerie, one of the first new exhibitions to open to the public since the outbreak of coronavirus in China.

Centering around symbols of the human figure, life, death, and vanitas, the exhibition brings together the works of leading contemporary artists who have rarely been shown in China, including Kathryn Andrews, Elmgreen & Dragset, Jeppe Hein, Alicja Kwade, and Erwin Wurm.

The collaborative exhibition had been planned long before the world went on lockdown, but its realization and scope feel like a sign of hope and a modicum of return to normalcy amid months of uncertainty and panic.



Jeppe Hein, *WHO AM I WHY AM I WHERE AM I GOING* (2017). Courtesy of Tang Contemporary Art.

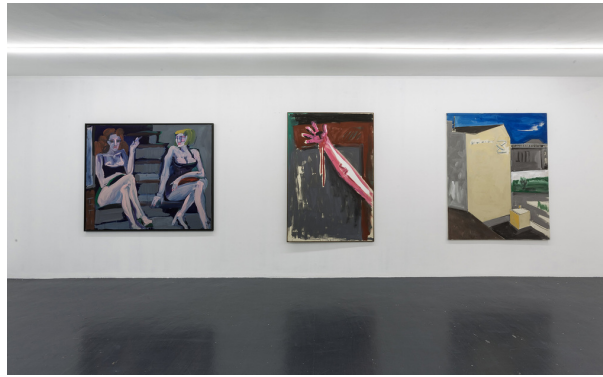
The exhibition itself is a timely questioning of cosmic and age-old ideas of the afterlife in relation to contemporary individuals' lived experiences. The show takes its name from Jeppe Hein's *WHO AM I WHY AM I WHERE AM I GOING*, a reflective box with these questions written out in neon. Elmgreen & Dragset's *Reversed Crucifix*, a centerpiece of the exhibition, transforms the image of the suffering Christ on the cross into that of an ordinary man whose body is suggestively tied to the cross backward, hinting at ideas of bondage and sexual role play. The crucifix appears again, in the form of a single hand nailed to wood, in a 1985 painting by Karl Horst Hödicke.

Meanwhile, John Sea's lush paintings of fruit bowls hint at the artifice, and perhaps impossibility, of perfection. The exhibition's central themes of death, religion, sexuality, and consumption prompt both personal contemplation and a much-needed sense of levity.

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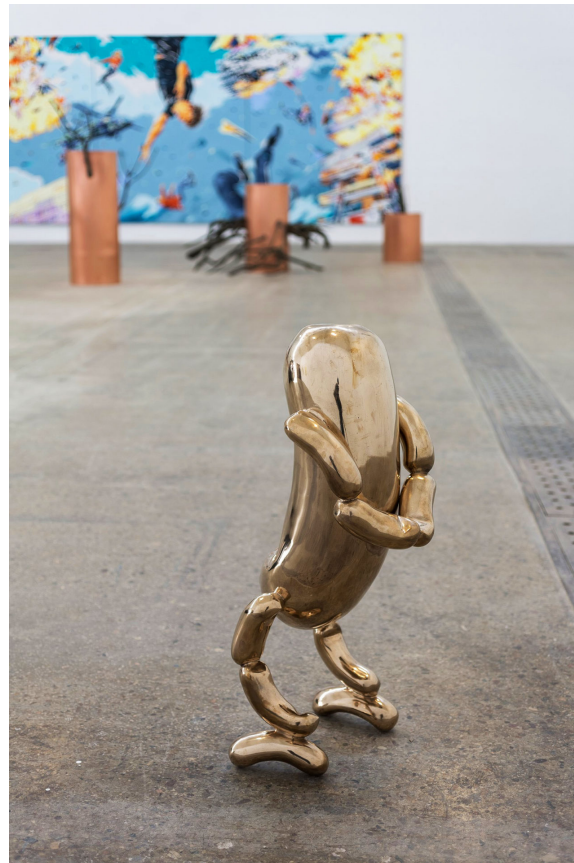


Installation view "Who Am I?" 2020. Courtesy of Tang Contemporary Art, Beijing.

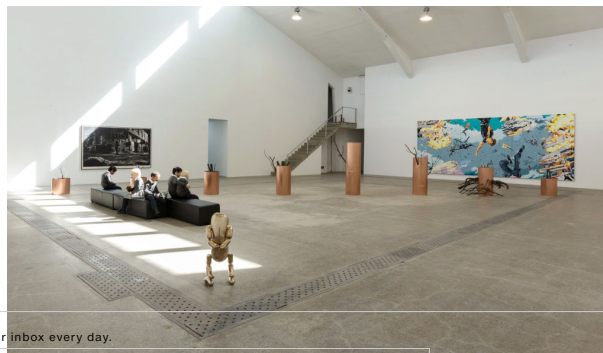
The gallery sees the exhibition as a chance to reflect on how each person is changing through the unprecedented, and yet globally experienced, traumas of this year—hopefully, for the better. "In these unprecedented times, the world is unifying. No doubt the identity of each individual will be tremendously different from who they were in the past," the gallery wrote. "Everyone is affected by the ever-changing situation on a daily basis, and therefore undertakes constant contemplation of the relationship between self and the others, by and large, the society, environment, and the entire world."

Considering its changing role as the crisis eases in Asia, the gallery added, "We also want to become more publicly involved and responsible. We want to help alleviate the negativity and anxiety caused by the epidemic. Art itself translates hope to humans."

See images of the exhibition below.



Installation view "WHO AM I" 2020. Courtesy of Tang Contemporary Art, Beijing.

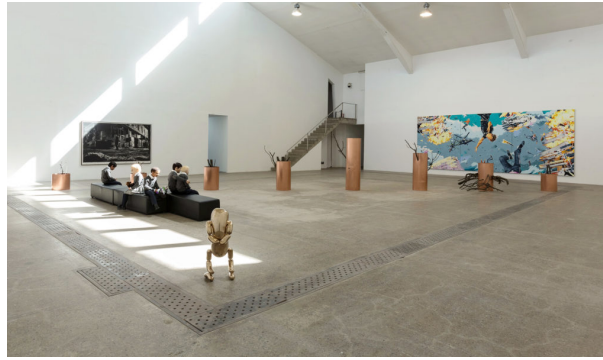


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"WHO AM I" (<https://www.artnet.com/galleries/tang-contemporary-art/who-am-i/>) is on view at Tang Contemporary Art, Beijing, through April 30, 2020.

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