



Qi-Yao

Selected works 2017-2023



2023

Video (color, sound)

16:9

07'30"

In this video, a yoga practitioner is unexpectedly accompanied by a series of robotic vacuums. The machines' systematic cleaning disrupts and interacts with the yoga poses, creating a dynamic dance of chaos and control.

This interaction transforms the session into a quasi-religious ritual, where the pursuit of health and technology merge, all wrapped in the rhythmic sound of breathing.

Spirit

<https://youtu.be/grGzu49StLk>



In this work, yoga is not just a physical practice rooted in religion but also a symbol of humanity's pursuit of health and spirituality. Meanwhile, robotic vacuum cleaners, as part of the smart home trend, embody modern society's obsession with technology. These two globally popular phenomena converge in the same space, creating a layered metaphor.

The yoga sequence incorporates the classic "**Sun Salutation**" from Hindu sun worship rituals.

The robotic vacuum cleaners, acting as "disruptors of order," introduce a dynamic interplay of conflict and adaptation.

As the robots' chaotic trajectories gradually become more orderly, the practitioner's movements adapt, evolving into a subtle collaboration between human and machine.



*Script for *Spirit*



Exhibition View

The "breathing" of humans and robots symbolizes a merging of life force and machine logic. These two distinct "**spirits**" transition from dissonance to harmony, reflecting the evolution from conflict to collaboration. In the final posture, the robotic vacuums encircle the practitioner, symbolizing reconciliation and lending the interaction a ritualistic quality.

The fervor for health and technology resonates throughout, with the sacred and the mechanical coexisting in a way that blurs the line between who is taming whom, creating a ceremonial space that transcends binaries.

➔ Survival Frequencies

Tugging Crowded Closing
Chord Switch Charge

"Survival Frequencies" was created between 2021 and 2022 amidst the recurring COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns and restrictions in Mainland China. During this period, the pandemic profoundly impacted daily life and social interactions. Through a series of actions, I sought to discuss how individuals navigate and maintain their sense of self under strict pandemic measures and social constraints, exploring the complex effects of the pandemic on individual psychology, physical health, and lifestyle.



2022

Photography, giclee print

Variable Dimensions

Tugging

The piece features we visiting a popular tourist spot that is deserted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, using a 50-meter-long caution tape to play with and create patterns, reminiscent of cat's cradle.

*Co-created with Cao Wenqing, Wang yizhu, She Luyun





Using photo compositing techniques, four people created the illusion of a crowded scene at an otherwise empty tourist spot.

*Co-created with Cao Wenqing, Wang yizhu, She Luyun

2022

Photography, giclee print
Variable Dimensions

Crowded





2021

Video (color, sound)

16:9

00'52"

Dressed in pajamas, I sneaked into a villa and lay down on the keys of a grand piano, triggering a prolonged and dissonant sustain.

Chord

<https://youtu.be/-hjutzAsSvs>



2021

Video (color, sound)

16:9

Continuous Loop

The piece features me in a hallway, using the act of slapping my own palm to activate a sound-controlled light. After the light automatically turns off, I repeatedly perform this action.

Switch

https://youtu.be/nig-pTD_Xqc



2021

Video (color, sound)

16:9

00'23"

I blow a charge horn as the green light appears at a busy intersection, continuing until my breath runs out.

Charge

<https://youtu.be/jydOopnrd7Q>



2021

Video (color, sound)

16:9

Continuous Loop

I squatted in the blind spot of an infrared sensor door, intervening in the process of opening and closing the door with my body.

Closing

<https://youtu.be/jydOopnrd7Q>

➔ Mobile Sanctuaries

Insomnia

Jingzhe

Piloting



Cars are portrayed as "boxes" that not only provide physical protection but also symbolize freedom of movement within urban spaces. Each vehicle becomes a mobile sanctuary, allowing individuals to maintain a sense of control and autonomy amidst the uncertainties and restrictions of the outside world.

They served not merely as means of transportation but as crucial spaces of independence and privacy amid social isolation and a global health crisis.



2021

Video(color, sound)

16:9

00'55"

I lie heavily on the car hood in a sleeping position, triggering the car's anti-theft alarm lights and sounds. Once the alarm stops, I roll over to assume a different sleeping posture, triggering the alarm again.

Insomnia

<https://youtu.be/GSXdkBCrbak>



2022

Photography, giclee print

15:9

Variable Dimensions

I use autonomous driving on a closed road while simultaneously releasing a kite through the car's sunroof.

Jingzhe





Jingzhe is one of the 24 solar terms in China, typically occurring between March 5th and 6th. This solar term marks the arrival of spring, when the weather begins to warm up and all living things start to awaken. The name "Jing" signifies the sound of thunder, indicating the arrival of spring thunder that awakens the insects and plants that have been dormant underground.

The meaning of *Jingzhe* reflects not only the changes in nature but also people's anticipation of spring and the preparation for agricultural activities. This solar term is associated with change, renewal, and growth in traditional culture.



2022

Video(color, sound)

16:9

01'11"

This tunnel has just been completed, but due to the pandemic closure, it is nearly deserted. As I drive through it, I set off fireworks out of the car window.

Piloting

<https://youtu.be/USBPM4zAaQw>

➡ Echoes of Memory

Canon in G

The Dog Whistle

These two artworks comprise my series exploring themes of collective memory and amnesia. Through this series, I aim to delve into and express how individual and collective memories interact during shared experiences and how these memories are shaped, preserved, or forgotten within socio-cultural contexts.

Together, these works constitute an examination of the endurance of collective memory, showcasing how individuals and collectives interact under varying circumstances and how these interactions influence our perception and retention of the past.

Canon in G

This video captures several Chinese individuals from diverse backgrounds and age groups singing the national anthem (*The March of the Volunteers* in G major) a cappella. Although many initially doubted whether they still remembered the lyrics, ultimately, regardless of any pauses, everyone completed the song in its entirety.

<https://youtu.be/uGMgdg6Vnzo>

2020

Single channel Video (color, sound)

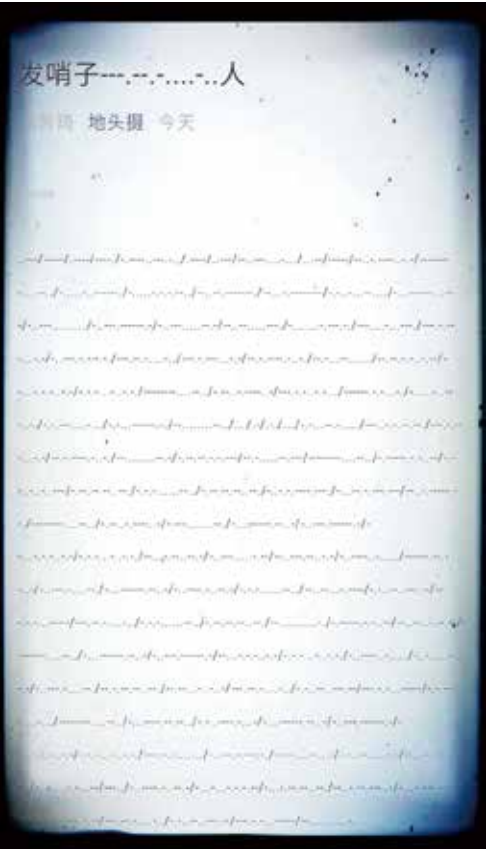
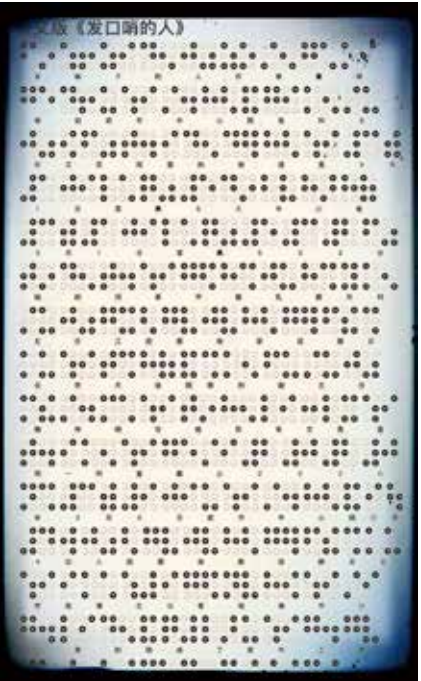
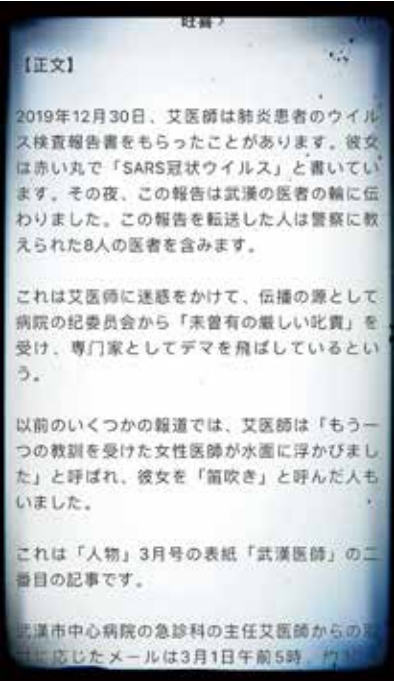
00'39"

Variable Dimensions



The Dog Whistle

Amid the backdrop of COVID-19, I initiated an art project called "*The Dog Whistle*". On March 11, 2020, an article titled "*The Whistleblower*" about the coronavirus outbreak was fervently shared across Chinese social media platforms. The content, which involved undisclosed government actions that exacerbated the spread of the virus, appeared in various languages and was repeatedly censored and deleted by authorities.



*New versions of the article, in attempts to evade censors, have proliferated, from one partly written in emojis to another done in morse code, as well as pinyin, the romanisation system for Mandarin.



I recruited 182 volunteers, each memorizing and reciting a different line from an article to preserve the text as a collective memory. Each volunteer, masked, recorded their recitation on video. I collected all these videos and planned to play each one simultaneously in an exhibition space, hoping that the overlapping voices would create a marvelous harmony in a virtual environment. The differing lengths of sentences caused the overall volume to gradually diminish, becoming so faint that one would have to actively seek out its source. Unfortunately, due to the sensitive nature of the content, this work has never been exhibited offline.

The term "dog whistle" refers to sounds at frequencies typically undetectable by most human ears, often only heard by younger individuals. As social attributes intensify, people tend to ignore information at "specific frequencies," especially in the social context of China. Thus, the "dog whistle" is an ironic nod, and "The Dog Whistle" a romantic notion. Even under the most sensitive controls, language here is deconstructed yet preserved.

➡ Dialogue

Martyr

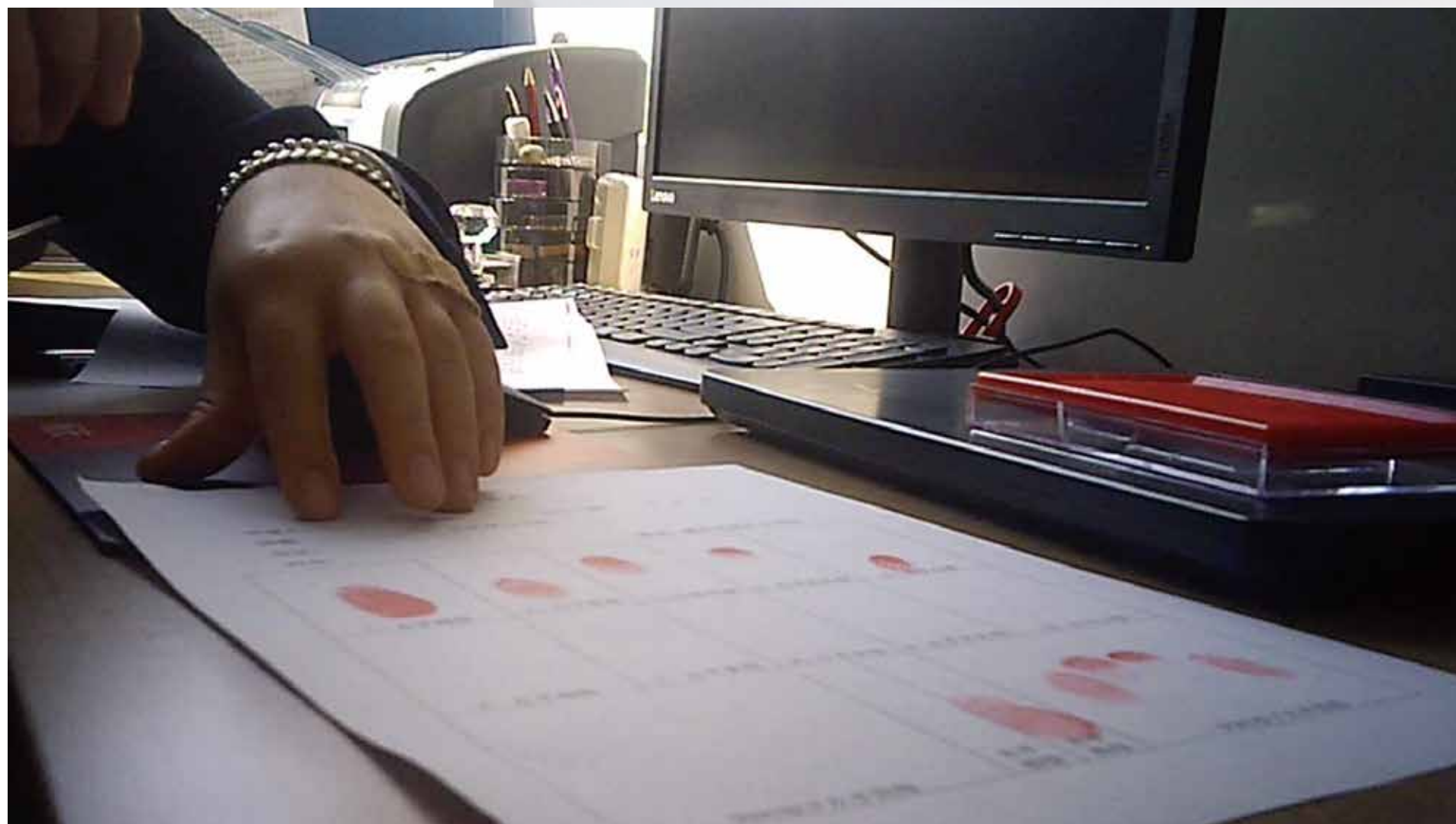
Suite No.2 For Body

1500 Grit

Buddha Jumps
Over the Wall

Dialogue is an art series consisting of four works. Through a series of experimental performances involving sound, installation, and video, I engage in a dialogue between the self, society, and the body. Starting from an investigation into individual identity and the physical characteristics of the human body, the series creates a passage where sensory experiences and conceptual ideas coexist. It invites reflection on how the body is deconstructed and reshaped under social norms.

(This series was created as my undergraduate graduation project.)



Martyr

Martyr is a social-engaged performance art piece that explores the legal definition of individual "existence" and its relationship with the system through an investigation of the notarization process. Two days before Easter, I used a forged death certificate to successfully obtain a "death notarization." On Easter Sunday, I attempted to obtain a "life notarization" but failed because the notary office was closed. I ultimately succeeded the day after Easter.

* Filming with a pinhole camera

我能在周五死去，
却不能在周日活过来。

因为我不是耶稣，
而且公证处周日不上班。

2019

Paper documents,
acrylic panels

Variable Dimensions



The work is presented as an installation, displaying the notarized document along with the text:

"I can die on Friday, but I cannot come back to life on Sunday. Because I am not Jesus, and the notary office is closed on Sunday."

This piece draws a parallel to Jesus's resurrection, borrowing religious references to express not only a sense of irony but also a profound questioning of "existence" within the legal system.

1500 Grit



The video records in close-up the process of repeatedly sanding my right thumb on 1500 grit sandpaper, accompanied by the sensation of nerve-ending pain. Slow motion captures the details of the skin gradually wearing away.

Through the physical act of sanding, I question the construction of identity behind the unique biological feature of fingerprints, as well as the fragility of identity.

<https://youtu.be/hyncm9kqoN8>

2019

Video (color, sound)

16:9

38'00"

Suite No.2 For Body



2019
9-channel Video (color, sound)
00'03"
Variable Dimensions

<https://youtu.be/3a-HKrJ6Py4>

I manipulate my body into various contorted positions to produce popping sounds from the joints, which are recorded and tightly edited together into a nine-screen video installation. The sound shifts from left to right along with the videos, creating a fleeting and "violent" auditory experience reminiscent of firecrackers.

In exhibitions, audience walk through the corridor following the sounds. The popping of the joints and the resulting sounds interact with the audience's visual and auditory senses in the gallery space, emphasizing that the scale of all sounds is inherently “bodily”.

Buddha Jumps Over the Wall



2019
4-channel Video (color, sound)
01'00"
Variable Dimensions



"Buddha Jumps Over the Wall" presents the act of eating in a novel way through a video installation, with large screens showing wild chewing and deep swallowing, while the corresponding sounds create an exaggerated audio-visual impact as they shift with the rhythm.

"Buddha Jumps Over the Wall" is a renowned dish from my hometown in Fujian, featuring a variety of ingredients. I filmed close-ups of myself eating voraciously and used contact microphones to capture the sounds of chewing and swallowing transmitted through bone conduction.

<https://youtu.be/SXSNIoQfhb4>

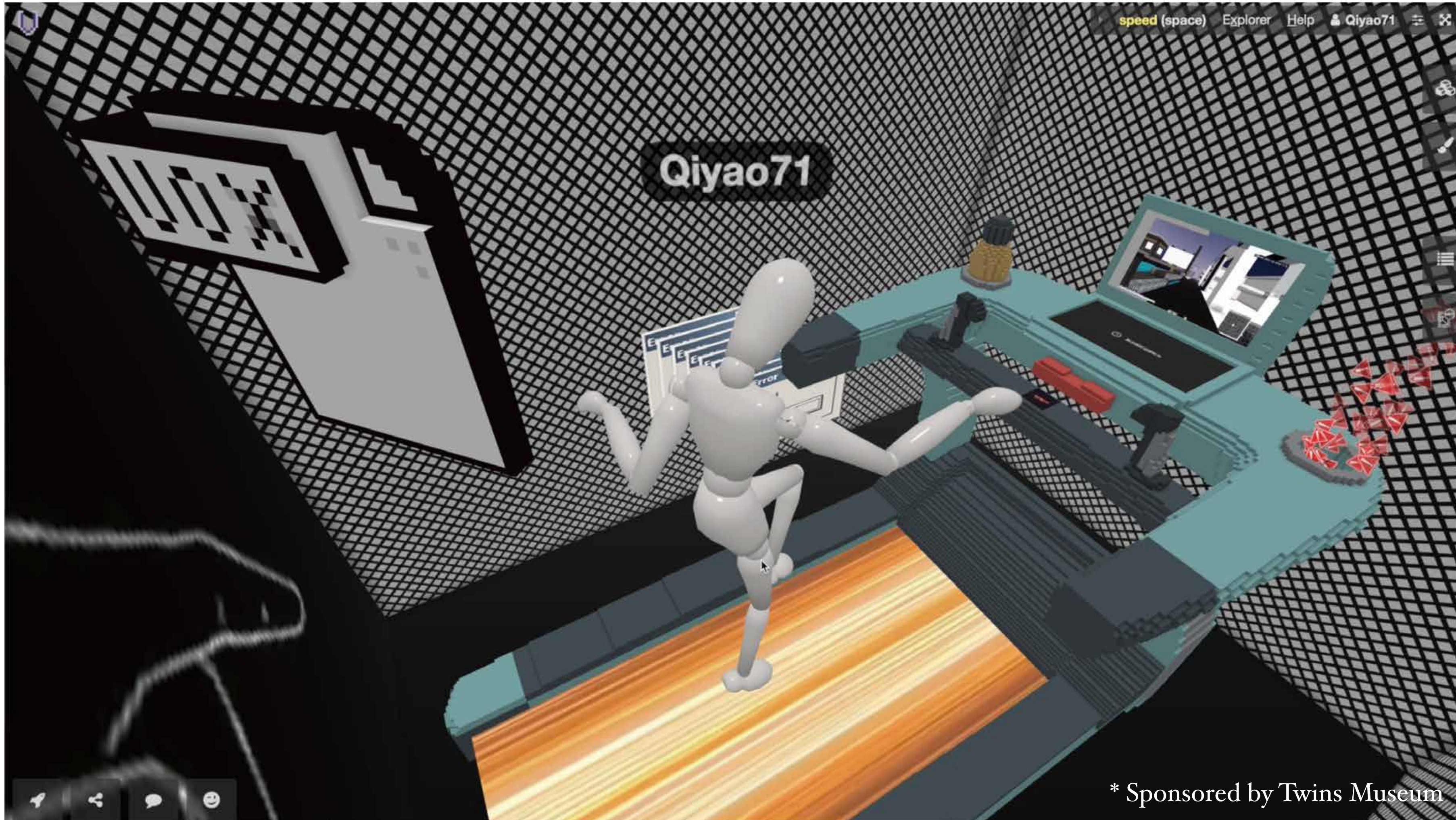
➡ Residency Projects

33.27Mbps

Hello, Welcome

Sound Ashes

Sponsored by various institutions and organizations, these works are either site-specific or aligned with designated themes. Each residency provides an opportunity to deeply engage with the local environment and cultural context, allowing me to tailor my artistic response to reflect the unique settings and themes provided by the sponsors. This approach fosters a dialogue between my artistic expression and the local narratives, creating a meaningful exploration of place and identity within the broader spectrum of contemporary challenges.



2022

Video (color, sound)

16:9

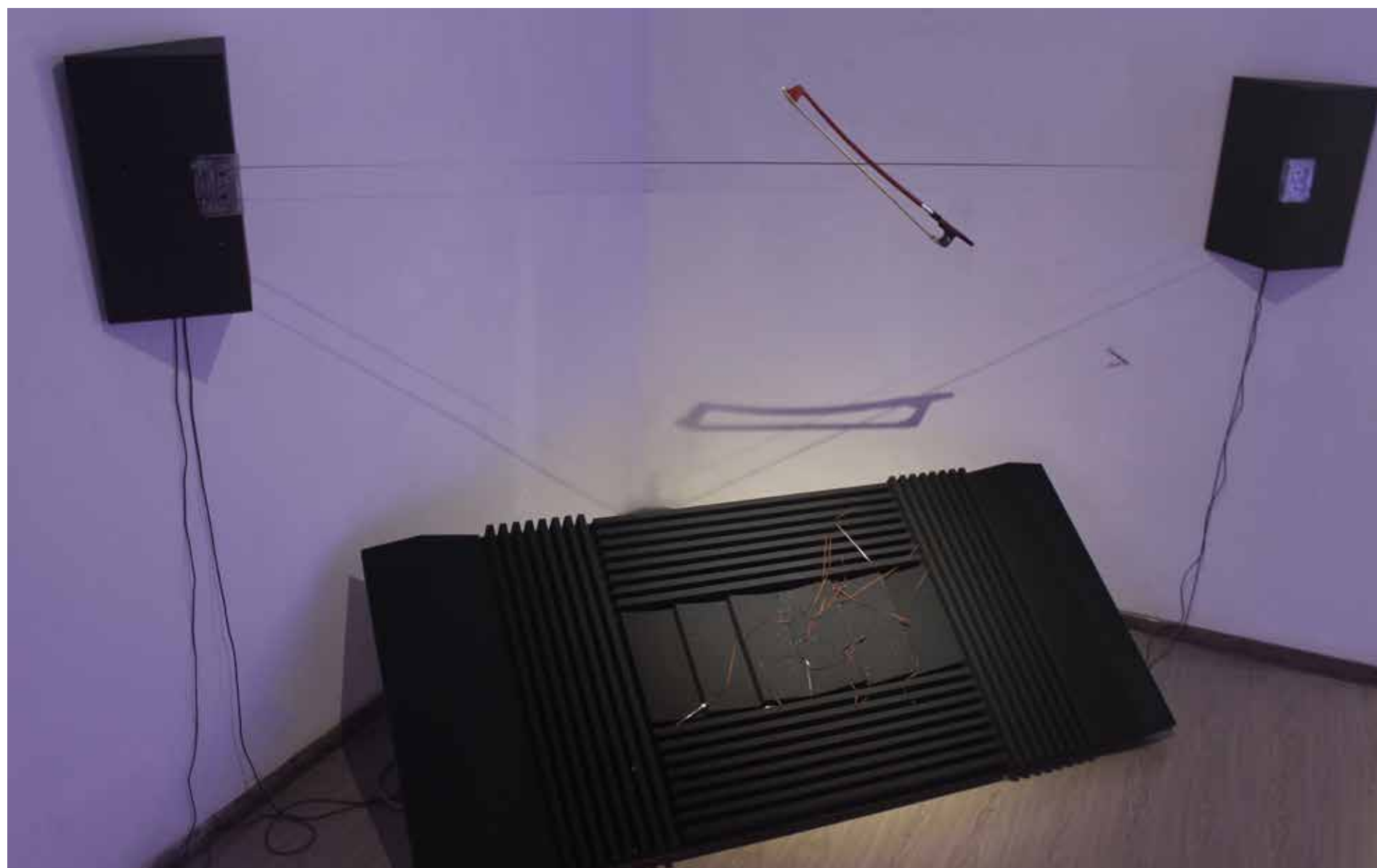
1'21"

The work is filmed in *Cryptovoxels* with a network speed of 33.27 Mbps.

By holding Shift+W, I control the character to sprint through the virtual world. The speed of movement causes buildings and landscapes along the way to fail to load, resulting in glitches such as the avatar clipping through objects. In this piece, the virtual character races against internet speed, ultimately sinking into a partially loaded ocean surface.

33.27Mbps

<https://youtu.be/km3HovofIUc>



2023

Acoustic foam, tape recorders, cassette tapes,
double bass bow

Variable Dimensions

00'30" (sound)

Sound Ashes

The installation consists of sound-absorbing cotton, a double bass bow, two tape recorders, and a 6-meter-long tape. The tape recorders play whale songs accompanied by a composed score. The looped tape continuously passes over the tightly stretched bow hair, gradually rubbing off the rosin particles. Over time, the tape wears down, distorting the recorded sound. Eventually, as the tape becomes severely damaged, it will break, jamming the machine and causing the sound to cease.

The acoustic foam and slanted acoustic panels used to hold the tape recorders are products developed by humans to improve acoustic environments. In this work, they become fixed components, or ash container.

* Sponsored by Nordic Contemporary Art Center



2017

Proximity sensors
Variable Dimensions

The work was created and exhibited at Dock No. 1 in Red Steel, Wuhan, which is undergoing demolition. An engineering ship had just sunk, forcing the workers who lived on board to relocate, as the area is set to be transformed into a riverside commercial street.

I aimed to intervene in this space with a rather primitive commercial sound—installing thirty inexpensive proximity sensors in the abandoned riverside area that trigger the phrase "Hello, welcome." whenever someone passes by.

Hello, Welcome

* Sponsored by Dimensions Art Center



Installation View



Qi-Yao (b. 1996, Fujian) is an artist-researcher.

Through performative practice, she critically explores the entanglements between the body, social structures, and systems of control across performance, sound, video, and installation. Her engagement with embodied experience and individual agency results in acute attention to both the conceptual and the material, the provocative as well as the uncanny, positioning the body as a site of interference capable of unsettling normative logics within contemporary societies.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2024

Valhalla Unconstrained, Mix Art Lab, Beijing, CN
Citywalk Together, Entrance Space, Zhengzhou, CN

2023

The Stone of Her Mountain, Guardian Art Centre, Beijing, CN
Great Compassion Cosmos, Beginning Gallery, Guizhou, CN
Blue Dream, Nordic Contemporary Art Centre, Xiamen, CN
Groups as Methods, Central Academy of Fine Arts Art Museum, Beijing, CN
Youth Today, 798 Art Centre, Beijing, CN

2022

Material Girl, China Culture Centre, Sydney, AU
Accessible Art Program, Cre8ive Academy of Fine Art, Beijing, CN

2021

2021 Art Nova 100 Annual Exhibition, Guardian Art Center, Beijing, CN
Hereditary Territory, Powerlong Museum, Shanghai, CN
Without MOI in Future, Nine Art Museum, Beijing, CN
Hyper Hospital, Vis Art Center, Beijing, CN
Fried Tomatoes & Tomatoes, Hubei Institute of Fine Arts, Wuhan, CN
Boredom is the beginning of every authentic act, SIMULACRA, Beijing, CN
Close Your Eyes, Night Owl Stores, Beijing, CN

2019

Zeng Zhushao Sculpture Exhibition, China Sculpture Museum, Datong, CN
Golden Age III, Star Art Space, Wuhan, CN
Resonance for 99 Years, Hubei Institute of Fine Arts, Wuhan, CN

2018

The Train Art Festival, Triangle Road of Jiulongpo Railway, Chongqing, CN

2017

The 3rd Hubei Youth Sculpture Biennale, Wanlin Art Museum, Wuhan, CN
Considerable Elites, Chinese Art Palace, CN
Memorial for a Boat, Pier 1 at Redsteel City, Wuhan, CN

2016

The Dream of Cyan, Chinese Sculpture Research Institute, Qingdao, CN

COLLECTIONS

Central Academy of Fine Arts Art Museum
Twins Museum
Hubei Institute of Fine Arts

Thank you for your time.

CONTACTS

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