

ATTENTION ART EDITORS
For Immediate Release

10 CHANCERY LANE GALLERY
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SKEW
Xiao Lu Solo Exhibition



Gunshot – 2004 – Photograph – 126 x 138 cm

Exhibition Period:

12 September – 5 October 2019

Opening Reception:

12 September 2019, 6 – 8 pm

Performance *SKEW*, 6:30 pm

Artist Talk

14 September, 3 pm

10 Chancery Lane Gallery, Central
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(Members of the press are invited to all the events above)

10 Chancery Lane Gallery is proud to present **SKEW**, a solo exhibition and new performance by **Xiao Lu**, one of China's most provocative artists. This will be Xiao Lu's first solo show in Hong Kong and will present an important survey of some of her most iconic performances. Xiao Lu's recent works explore ways to break through the uncertainty of individual challenges as well as the challenges of art in her life. Xiao Lu's latest performance **SKEW**, which will take place on September 12, has been created specifically for the Hong Kong environment. She will allow the unknown to guide the final outcome of the performance and embrace the unexpected events and risks that her performances embody, executed in her spontaneous and bold style.

Xiao Lu's seminal experimental installation work "Dialogue", exhibited at the National Art Museum of China's 1989 *China/Avant-Garde Exhibition*, included an impromptu performance where she fired a handgun at her own installation; an act that led to the temporary closure of the exhibition. Occurring just a few months prior to the Tiananmen incident, "Dialogue" is often referred to as "the first shot of Tiananmen." The *China/Avant-Garde Exhibition*, which provided a comprehensive view of the experimental works that emerged in Mainland China after 1985, was widely regarded as a pivotal moment in the history of contemporary Chinese art.

Xiao Lu is China's first female performance artist and her work represents issues concerning her generation as a woman in China. In 1989, "Dialogue" addressed her personal struggle with sexual abuse and relationships. "15 Gunshots...From 1989 to 2003" was her cathartic release after 15 years of silence after creating "Dialogue" and coincided with her autobiographical novel of the same title. In Xiao Lu's 2006 work, "Sperm" at which she invited donors to deposit their own sperm, was an effort to bring awareness to the fact that unmarried women in China are not allowed to undergo in-vitro fertilization, as well as to counter the psychological perception of men's dominance with respect to reproductive rights. Although she failed to collect any sperm, addressing this issue through her art performance was a bold stance for a woman in China. Xiao Lu's 2009 performance "Wedlock" served as her proxy wedding ceremony, where she emerged from a locked coffin and married herself; a seemingly absurd scene that questioned topics in relation to women such as relationships, marriage and issues of freedom. The feminist aspects raised in the works "Sperm" and "Wedlock" demonstrate how profoundly important this subject is to her as an artist.

Xiao Lu admits that she has a rebellious side to her character and that her performances are reliant on chance and spontaneity. In 2013, her performance "Purge" took place at a collateral event of the 55th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale Di Venezia, after her original performance was refused permission by the venue, the Museo Diocesano of Venice on the grounds that nudity is not allowed in church. In protest, she took off her clothes during the opening ceremony and jumped into the canal. She explains, "... when a crucial moment like that happens, I can be a rebel: the more you oppress me, the more I will fight back. This is something to do with my character."

Xiao Lu's performances often include the unexpected. In 2016, the performance "Polar" took a dangerous turn. Xiao Lu had herself lowered into a cell of ice blocks, with only a knife in hand as her only way out. As she slashed at the ice, her hand slipped and the knife left a deep gash across her palm. Xiao Lu continued to chip away at the relentless

ice, even as her wound bled profusely. Although unintended, the chance happening of her cutting herself only intensified and added to the extreme hardship and urgency of escaping the ice cells as she struggled for her freedom. She continued the performance for another 30 minutes until she was sent to the emergency room.

About Xiao Lu

Xiao Lu (born 1962, Hangzhou) works with performance and installation. She is a graduate of the Subsidiary School of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing and the Oil Painting Department of Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts (China Academy of Art), Hangzhou. Xiao Lu moved to Sydney, Australia in 1989 and returned to China 8 years later. She now lives and works in Beijing.

Her graduation work *Dialogue* was included in the *China/Avant-Garde exhibition* in Beijing in 1989 and became famous after she fired a gunshot at her work. Curator and writer Gao Minglu has written about Xiao Lu's book *Dialogue*, "Xiao Lu's *Dialogue* is written in the form of a novel, it is based on a true story. However it is not only the story of a single individual. At the same time it presents a particularly important event in the history of Chinese contemporary art." Published in Chinese and English by Hong Kong University Press in 2010, it revealed her personal history and those of women in contemporary China. Xiao Lu's work has been included in important international exhibitions, most recently *Impossible Dialogue*, 4A Centre Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney (2019), *Performer and Participant*, Tate, London (2018), *Her Kind*, Zhuzhong Art Museum, Beijing (2018) and *Art and China After 1989: Theatre of the World*, Guggenheim Museum, New York (2017); and are collected by public and private institutions including Tate, London; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Taikang Insurance Group Art Collection, Beijing; and among others.

ABOUT 10 CHANCERY LANE GALLERY

10 Chancery Lane Gallery is committed to playing a major role in documenting the development of art within the Asia Pacific region by consistently holding survey exhibitions by country or theme of emerging, mid-career and established artists, talks, forums and publishing books that bring together the individual historical context of the artists with the development of the arts within Asia. The gallery focuses on the Asia-Pacific, however, keeps its eye on international opportunities around the world, bringing international cultural appreciation to Hong Kong.

Katie de Tilly is President Emeritus and one of the founders of the Hong Kong Art Gallery Association.

For press enquiries and to arrange interviews, please contact Elsie Fong on elsie@10chancerylanegallery.com or +852 2810 0065.