

Yuanyuan Zhou

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Portfolio



Red Buckets

Performance

2025, facade of BEAR, ArtEZ, Arnhem

Performance involving multiple performers positioned on different floors of a building. In this ephemeral action, each performer stands at a selected window on their respective floor. The performer on the top floor begins by pouring a bucket of water down to the floor below, where another performer catches it and passes it further down. This continues until the water reaches the performer on the bottom floor, who then runs to the top with the remaining water. Simultaneously, all other performers move one floor lower. The cycle repeats until the water is completely gone.

This performance is conceived as a continuous loop in which, paradoxically, the better each participant performs, the longer they must continue the action—creating a conflict between effort and self-interest. Their actions, however, lead to an outcome with neither winners nor losers.

I seek to observe how people navigate an ineffective system—whether they respond with confusion, surprise, frustration, self-indulgence, or sheer boredom—while still holding onto expectations.

Shrimp Project part I: ArmorBox

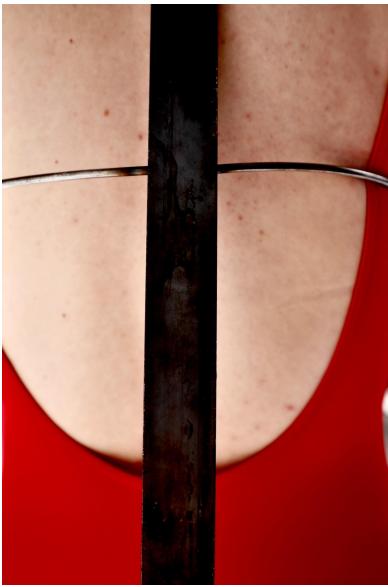
Materials: steel

Size: 200 x 50 x 200 cm

2025, Artez, Arnhem

A wearable sculpture that carries an aggressive potential for danger while simultaneously protecting the wearer. However, wearing it may also inflict pain and suffering on the carrier.

This is an ongoing project, ideally intended to be performed in various public spaces.





Nothing here is supposed to be on the beach: The abject baby

Materials: multi-glazed ceramic, oil painting

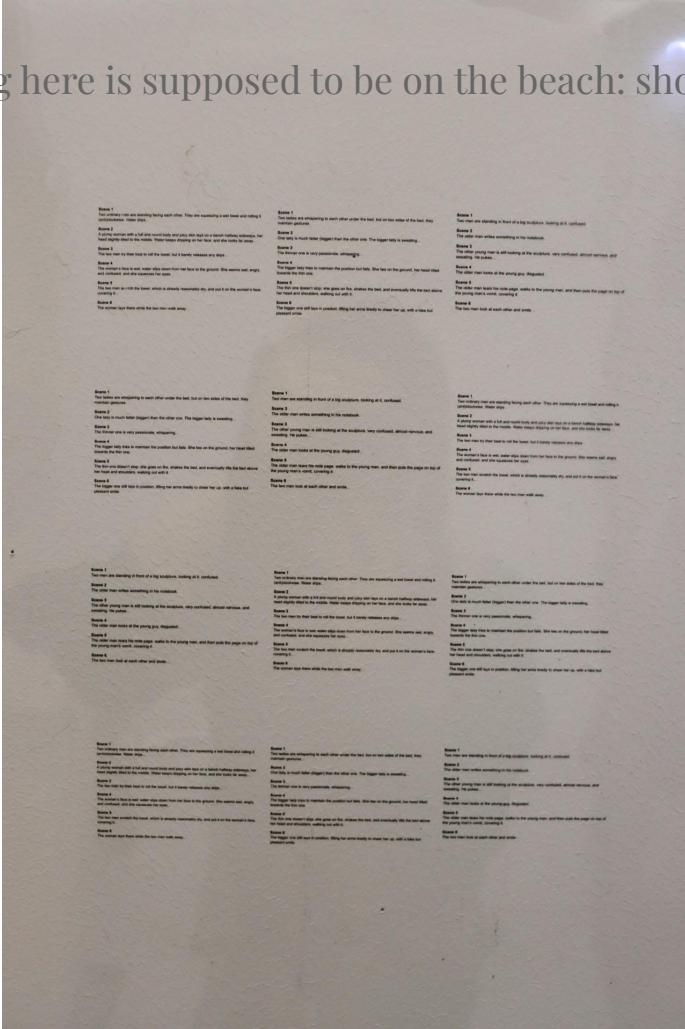
Size: 50-100cm (length flexible), 80 x 100 cm (painting)

2025, classroom of BEAR, Artez, Arnhem

The initial idea for this baby sculpture originates from the concept of "the birth of vomit." Contradictorily, I chose to use the traditional chubby baby figure from Chinese New Year prints—a symbol of an idealistic vision of future life. By playing with the combination of disgust and purity, I aim to provoke an unsettling feeling, a sense of something perpetually out of reach. This feeling lingers on the border between the self and the other, making it difficult to define the source of the abjection.

As Kristeva writes, *"Abjection preserves what existed in the archaism of pre-objectal relationship, in the immemorial violence with which a body becomes separated from another body in order to be."*

Nothing here is supposed to be on the beach: short scripts



Scene 1

Two men are standing in front of a big sculpture, looking at it, confused.

Scene 2

The older man writes something in his notebook.

Scene 3

The other young man is still looking at the sculpture, very confused, almost nervous, and sweating. He pukes...

Scene 4

The older man looks at the young guy, disgusted...

Scene 5

The older man tears his note page, walks to the young man, and then puts the page on top of the young man's vomit, covering it.

Scene 6

The two men look at each other and smile...

Nothing here is supposed to be on the beach: The Basketball hoop on shrimp trap

Materials: matal, plywood, nylon thread

Size: (230-330) x 30 x 70cm (basketball hoop), 70 x 70 x 35 cm (fish trap)

2025, classroom of BEAR, Artez, Arnhem

The base is inspired by a shrimp trap. I was fascinated by the idea that when shrimps encounter a container or an enclosed space with an entrance, they enter it naturally, yet they don't know how to escape—even though the entrance remains unchanged. This led me to question: *What if entering the space isn't the end? Where should they go next?*

The basketball hoop is an image that feels unreachable to me, a memory from when I was young and small. I remember looking up at it with both desire and fear, intimidated by its towering size. The metal ball nut here is key—it allows the height to be adjusted, making the hoop seem approachable. Yet, the answer to the first question may remain unanswered. Instead, another question arises: *Does it have an exit?*



Nothing here is supposed on the beach : The potatoes and shame

Materials: multi-glazed ceramic, cotton thread, pastel on crumpled paper

Size: 3cm (shame); 5-10 cm (roots); 40cm X 35cm X 35cm (potatoes); 200cm x 250 cm (pastel painting)

2025, classroom of BEAR, Artez, Arnhem

Will a silent potato feel ashamed? The lost roots of potatoes are scattered randomly around the room, forming a geographical path that guides viewers as they enter. The movement of the viewers contrasts sharply with the stillness and quietness of the large-sized potatoes, prompting them to question whether the scene is orderly or controlled. Somewhere in the middle of the room lies a tiny letter labeled "SHAME," which most viewers do not notice at first glance. I invite the viewers to interact with the objects in the room, confronting their own sense of risk and danger toward the objects. This interaction forces them to restrain their speed, while questions may begin to rupture in their minds.

The pastel paintings in the room reflect the title of the exhibition. The displacement of these coexisting objects and complex emotions is justified by accepting them as shadows of hope—though hope remains ambiguous. The tension between moving forward and staying still blurs the line between reality and illusion.



Box trap I: Destination

Materials: wood, steel, wool thread

Size: 35 x 35cm (box), 55 x 90cm (cone)

2024

I kept the plainness of wood and metal as an aesthetic choice, reflecting the concept of undressed, original (human) beings. This minimal approach emphasizes the construction—or deconstruction—of the two sculptures. Later, I exhibited them together in a shared space, with one sculpture reaching toward the ceiling and the other standing firmly on the ground. The connecting point between these two sculptures is left open for viewers to interpret and explore.

The metal cone is designed so that the closer your eyes move toward its open hole, the less you can see, as the light gradually decreases. The missing part of the wooden box, the mystery of what lies inside the metal cone, and the connection between the two objects are questions that viewers may carry with them...



Box trap II; Force

Materials: wood, steel, resin

Size: 35 x 50cm (box), 1.6 x 100cm (steel)

2024

A box with an effect of overflowing black resin is fastened to the wall by a long, hollow steel tube that presses it firmly against the surface.

I aim to disrupt the viewer's initial logic and create a sense of wonder, leaving space for them to fill in their own answers.



Box trap III: baby cradle



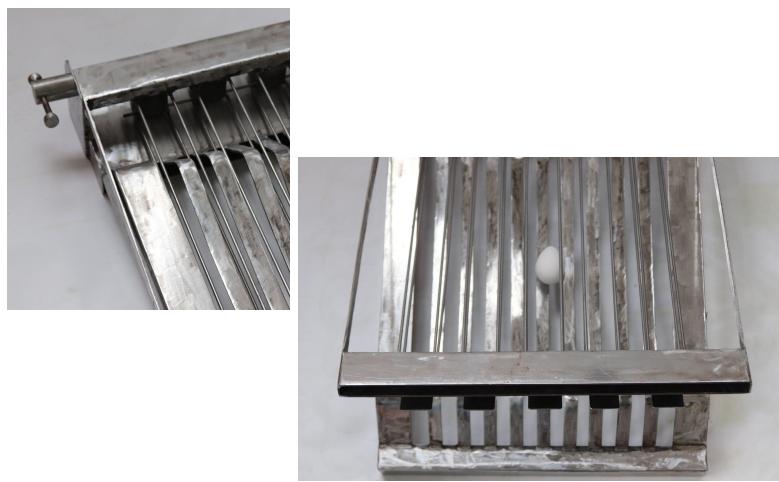
Materials: wood, steel

Size: 120 x 40 x 70 cm (cradle)

2024

A fully sealed wooden box tightly and aggressively occupies the space inside a metal cradle frame, even exceeding the frame's boundaries with varying levels of expansion. I explore the idea of how to fill or seal a cradle's space, rendering it nonfunctional.

The cradle is movable on customized wheels, but it produces an overwhelmingly loud sound when moved.



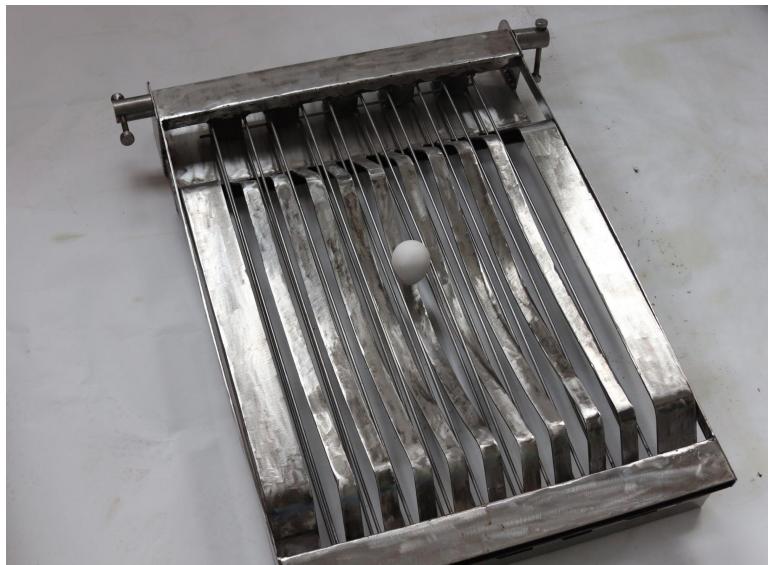
Slicer

Materials: steel

Size: 60 x 50 cm

2023

The “Massive” slicer is entirely handmade, crafted from metal strips and wires that are welded and polished. The bolt and nut are custom-made, allowing the slicer’s movement to be controlled and locked at any moment or height. This design places viewers in a position where they must question: *Am I the egg, or am I the slicer?*





A way out

Materials: safety pins (non glue/tape)

Size: 30cm x30cm

Amount: 2000-3000

Experimental play with safety pins uses the structure of safety pins to connect themselves, which eventually by different directions of pulling, the whole thing begins to be stiff and tight.

I went through the whole bottom base as an image of mass to figure out how to make the tube structure. Meanwhile, I have only 30ish pins left in my hand, I finally find out the trick of doing the loop.

Tooth battle

Materials: ceramic, thread, sugar, steel

Size: varies

2022

Tooth represents different periods of my life struggles, to eat tooth as a dish it is like swallowing down your grief and pain after fighting against.





Shrimp I

Materials: glazed ceramic

Size: 30cm (Plate), 20cm x 10cm (bowl)

Grey shrimps are displayed on plate as a sort of art of plating, the body of shrimp as well is turned into a functional bowl container.

Yellow shrimp weapons are from a shrimp story that I am developing. A narcissistic shrimp wants to fight, but he doesn't know who is he fighting against or for.



Shrimp II

Materials: Transparent plastic

Size: 5 - 8 cm

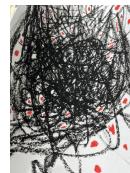
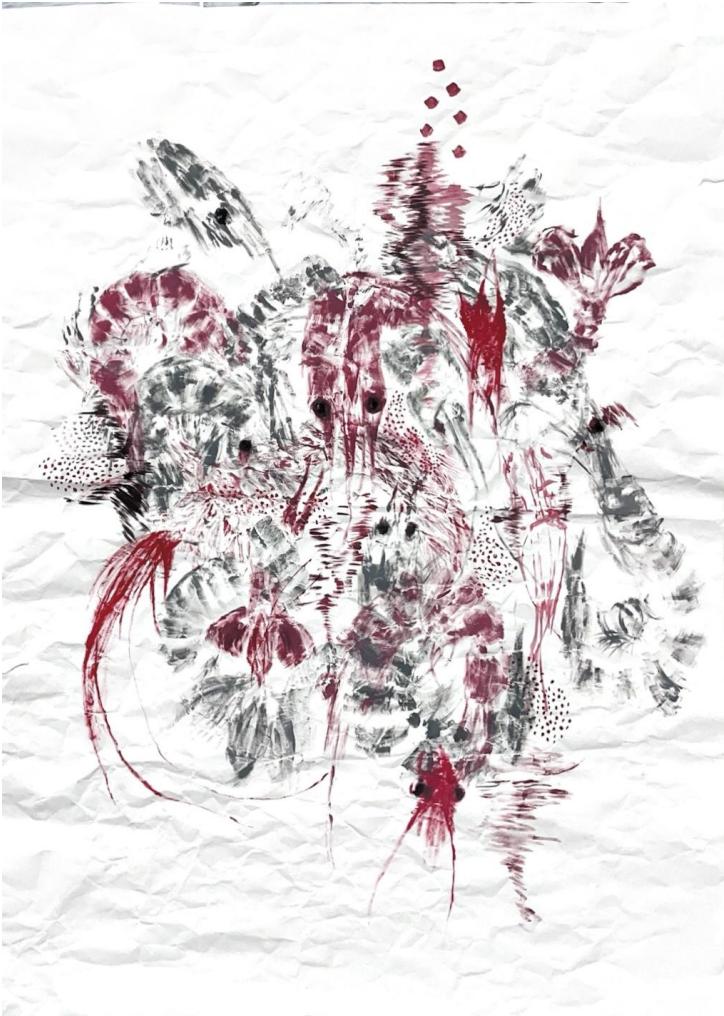
Amount: couple of hundreds

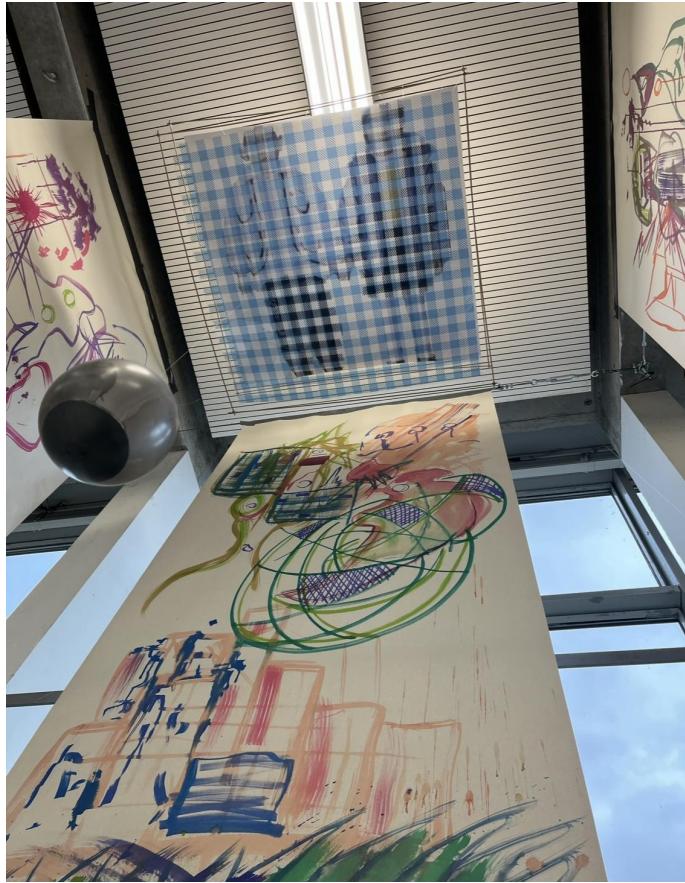
They are meant to resemble the skin of shrimp. Those skins imply the rebirth (moult) and death (being eaten) at same time.





Shrimp drawings





"When you were five years old, your father passed away, and your mother put you in foster care at your grandmother's house. It was a town that appeared calm on the surface but was actually full of bloodshed. At that time, humans had degenerated to the point of being like animals, not needing to walk or read, or even exert any physical or mental effort. But people would fight, constantly fighting. You saw it with your own eyes. You and a group of aunts stood behind the window on the second floor, watching a territorial dispute between a man and a woman. The man smashed the woman's mechanical device to pieces, and the woman knelt and begged for mercy..."



Paintings



Spaces contain delusion of hopeness

Oil paintings on Canvas





Will memories will
recycle or decay?

Material: soil and water, recycle plastic bags

Photographic installation with live material
performance





Grass: Embody performance in public

Material: grass from a public park

2023, Sonsbeek Park, Arnhem



Left-behind Bike : Embody performance in public

Materials: bike tire and textile filled chin

2022, publicspace, Arnhem

