

## Rekindle: Experiential Fusion of Contemporary Urban Art

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Precarious art, as defined by Anna Dezeuze in her 2017 publication *Almost Nothing*, typically consist of “daily activities, banal objects and situations ... to the point of sometimes disappearing completely into the very fabric of the viewer’s every day.” Precarity derives from the root Latin *precarius*, meaning *that which is obtained through prayer*. Within an artistic framework, Dezeuze writes that precarity “designates a temporary state whose existence and duration are subject to repeal; it is at the mercy of another.” Precarious art practice entirely responds to the consequences of human influence—from its compulsions to its follies.

Today we experience tumult, uncertainty, and above all precarious situations in the world around us. This exhibition has been organized in response to the contemporary moment through which we are living. Titled *Rekindle*, this exhibition aims to link and empower various mediums through re-energizing art, fashion, life, entertainment, and creative elements, releasing a heated energy of sorts that aligns with modern aesthetic tastes. To rekindle is to revive something on the brink of oblivion. It is often a precarious process—fraught with the possibility of annihilation. *Rekindle* aims to "ignite" art into everyday life by engaging with the unifying, precarious position the world currently finds itself in. Indeed, *Rekindle* brings together a diverse array of contemporary art objects and connecting themes - whether whimsical, serious, or allegorical – charting various contemporary, urban, provisional art practices.

Works included in *Rekindle* speak to a distinctly Chinese aesthetic sensibility in dialogue with global influences. The entry to *Rekindle* is marked by high-temperature kiln-fired Blanc de Chine Dehua white porcelain Qilin sculptures. Within the exhibition, Several artists evoke themes of neo-Pop Art—including Ou Yangru and CJ Zhang—through their use of illustration, animation, and cartoons.

Zhang's work speaks to a global, millennial sensibility, evoking the paintings of Qui Xiaofei in its fantasy and the cartoons of British illustrator Jamie Hewitt. In terms of an art historical bent, Keke Zhang's work reconfigures the legacy of Roy Lichtenstein for today. There are also chromatic, glossy objects by Nanfang gesturing to the sculptures of KAWS, and the work Wang Yan, whose sculptures suggest the whale bone sculptures of Gabriel Orozco and preserved animals of Damian Hirst. Taken as a whole, these works gesture towards a refiguring and a reconceptualizing of art history for the Millennial generation.

History is indeed cyclical, especially for artists. A survey of Chinese history provides a way of understanding our contemporary situation through the lens of the past. During the height of the Song Dynasty, the unprecedentedly open "agriculture and commerce" policy led to economic prosperity and commercial success, breaking the long-standing monopoly of the scholar class. The resulting cultural and educational accessibility brought significant changes to the cultural and artistic fields, where art objects began to be commodified, and literary works gradually became cultural spiritual consumer goods. Merchant and commoner figures appeared in literary works and became the main consumers. The art of living reflected the desire and pursuit of higher-level aesthetic objects externalized by all social classes after achieving prosperity.

Compared to the previous dynasties' collective aesthetic tastes, the Millennial generation, amidst global cross-cultural collisions and the rapid development and intervention of emerging technologies, shows greater openness, diversity, and self-awareness in art consumption, reflecting disparate sensibilities, affects, and ways of being. *Rekindle* brings together contemporary urban art to harness the poetic precarity of the current moment, reigniting our time-tested need to experience art and culture through a range of disciplines.