

# THE RESIDENCE GALLERY

Meitao Qu: *Adventures in Fact*  
13 May – 26 June 2022

**Borrowing the title of a Walt Disney Parade book, *Adventures in Fact* brings together sculpture, augmented reality, and a publication to explore the interplay between ideologies and realities.**

Architecture, like a city's costume, plays a fundamental role in the production of national images. Grand airports, neon skylines, and glimmering high-rises, these symbols have become synonymous with the narrative of progress and good life fantasies. From instant cities to private paradises, how is the built environment constructed to reflect dominant value systems? What kind of worlds are produced by the subsequent processes of imaging and imagining?

*Enter the Fortress: Play well, Eat well, Sleep well* is a three-part sculptural installation whose title refers to a colloquial Chinese phrase describing the fundamental components of a happy life. From the commercial to the residential, individual scenes explore the different sectors of the urban-industrial complex. Comprised of ready-mades and assembly kits, the models are pushed beyond their intended functionality to unravel the ways in which they attain their meaning.

Displayed in a linear formation, the relationship between the parts operates on the principle of 'borrowed scenery', a framing device in Chinese garden design which incorporates external landscapes into interior compositions. As a parallel to the proliferation of foreign landmarks and 'themed' residences in Chinese cities, the work considers how architectural styles become signifiers of cosmopolitanism and class, as the politics of taste in a geopolitical framework embodies the power relations of transnational capital.

*Guān* experiments with telling a story from varying perspectives. Weaving autobiography and academic text, the publication is structured around entering and exiting personal and national borders. Juxtaposing the private and the public, the micro and the macro, the book plays with the visual and textual vocabulary of official representations to foreground the messy complexities of lived experiences.

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Meitao Qu lives and works in London and Beijing. She holds an MFA from the Ruskin School of Art (2021), funded by the Oxford-Kaifeng Graduate Scholarship, and an MA from the Courtauld Institute (2020). Recent residencies and programmes include AMPlify, Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge (2022); and Open Space, The Photographer's Gallery, London (2022). She is an associate member of the Collective Studio, The Newbridge Project, Newcastle (2021-2022).

## List of works

*Enter the Fortress: Play well, Eat well, Sleep well*, sculpture installation, 2021

*Guān*, publication, 2022

*High House of the Clam Monster in the City of the Sea*, sculpture, 2022, (series of 4)

*Happy Birthday*, augmented reality, 2022 <sup>i</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> Credits: this work is based on Modern House 06 by Dreaming Dogg; Candleholder by ZoeChuiYan; Gorillaz Plastic Beach Floating Island by RamenPablo; licensed under CC by 4.0.

