

# Lí Wei: Fairy Tale

Opening: 2020.9.5 4pm

Duration: 2020.9.5 - 10.18

Venue: Tang Contemporary Art, Beijing 1st Space

---

Tang Contemporary Art is proud to present the latest solo exhibition of Lí Wei, "Fairy Tale," from September 5 to 18 October, 2020 in the gallery's first space in Beijing, with an opening reception at 4pm, 5 September.

Fairy tales are narratives, but they are also allegories. Fairy tales have their roots in medieval legends, but as people told these stories, the bloodiness, absurdity, and sensuality of the originals were replaced with calming, pleasant rhetoric, transforming them into stories that everyone could accept and pass on. However, in modern society, if circumstances were to change, people could, at any time, return to those primitive instincts, like the massacres, invasions, and struggles hidden in fairytales. Even the children, who appear to know nothing, would be no exception.

"Humanity is a battlefield. Whether it is through the consumption of oneself or the resistance and reluctant acceptance of the outside world, fairy tales are the bugle call to war, while also used to kill time or to temporarily cover-up problems. From a primitive perspective, a seven-year-old human is already a person in every aspect. The concept of childhood is a modern invention, but people can, at any time, return to a primitive way of being." (Lí Wei)

*As I write this from my home in Hong Kong, I am left to imagine the exhibition at a distance due to the events of the recent pandemic. Though I have heard Lí Wei explaining his thinking behind each work, even having seen some of the works individually with insight to what they aim to illuminate and express, I am still left only to my imagination.*

*I'm imagining the audience arriving to the gallery with new installations, from that moment onward, we are confronted with the concept of 'distance'. If the doll-like figurines really are the figures we all assume them to be, then what are they doing at this very moment? It is obvious that they are playing games, just as they would once they grow up. And the games that they will play in the future will likely impact the lives of many people, possibly even causing countless casualties. Fortunately, the only thing we need to worry about now is not being hit by the bumper cars in the gallery. Let's not forget, our identity today is that of an audience. In fact, it is no different from usual, we are forever the audience viewing the games from a distance. Even if you wish to escape to a further distance, you still can't get too far, as their games will always inevitably involve bystanders.*

*I have a strong hunch that a real incident occurred here, that something had just happened, but I am not absolutely sure what the incident is. What actually happened here? I imagine that it is ambiguous in nature, with immense contradictions and tension at the core. This really is an important juncture of the entire exhibition, a most fitting finishing touch. But I know that there is another room yet to explore, that room should now be closer to us than ever, as it is not a fictional story, but a real event.*

*I'm imagining us passing through the narrow gateway, exiting onto the vibrant streets of 798 district, returning to the sun-lit cityscape of Beijing, perhaps we have become more aware of the concept of 'distance'. I'm drawn to reference the oft-used adage "distance is the soul of beauty". As it turns out, we are all willing to distance ourselves from the truth, from reality, and from our memories; not because it is more beautiful, but simply as a tactic for our survival.*

Excerpt from "The Distance of Imagination" by Mr. Leung Manto

Lí Wei was born in 1981, Beijing, China. He acquired the Master of Art from the third studio of the sculpture department of Central Academy of Fine Art, China. He currently lives and works in Beijing.

He has held solo shows in many museums and galleries over the world, such as "Fairy Tale" (Tang Contemporary Art, Beijing, China, 2020), "Hearsay"&"Spring" (Residency, Pro Helvetia, Villa Sträuli, Winterthur, Switzerland, 2017), "Cellar and Garret" (Klein Sun Gallery, New York, 2017), "Secure for Now", Tour Exhibition (Studio9 & X Gallery, HK, China - F2 Gallery, Paris, France - Primo Marella Gallery, Milan, Italy, 2016), "Still Nobody Cares" (A2Z Art Gallery, Paris, France, 2015), "Nobody Cares" (Red Brick Art Museum, Beijing, China, 2015), "Peace" (Primo Marella Gallery, Milan, Italy, 2014), "Thank God" (Gallery Yang, Beijing, China, 2013), "Confessional" (A2Z Art Gallery, Paris, France, 2013), "Hero", Today Art Museum, Beijing, China, 2011), "Unpeaceful Christmas Eve -A Block Of Cake" (Copy Café, Beijing, China, 2010), "The Hollow Men" (Hanmo Art Gallery, Beijing, China, 2009).

His works have been exhibited in "Asia Triennial Manchester" (Manchester Cathedral, Manchester), "The 4th Guangzhou Triennial" (Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou), Rietberg Museum (Zürich), Mulheim Museum (Mulheim), Lille Art Center (Lille France), Rockbund Art Museum (Shanghai), Today Art Museum (Beijing), PACE Beijing, etc.

His artworks have been collected by numerous institutions including the DSL Collection (Paris), White Rabbit Collection (Sydney), Louis Vuitton Foundation (Paris), Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo (Turin), etc.