

Everlasting

Curator: Liu Ting

Artists: Alicia Eggert, Chen Zihao, George Ian McMahon, Kelley Donahue,
M.BenjaminHerndon, Michael Zelehoski, Stephanie McMahon

Opening: 4pm, 5th August, 2017

Duartion: 5th August – 16th September, 2017

Location: 2nd Gallery Space: B01, 798 Art District, No.2 Jiuxianqiao Road,
Chaoyang District, Beijing, China

Tang Contemporary Art's second Beijing space is proud to present "Everlasting," a group exhibition that will open on August 5, 2017. Curated by Liu Ting, the show will present the work of seven artists who live and work in the United States. The artists in this exhibition have created poetry and wonder through the diverse media of painting, sculpture, and installation; they have explored order through the transient, refined, and fragile details of their works.

By seeking order in chaos and finding randomness in order, this exhibition is situated within a conflicted cycle and a seemingly infinite context. Their material springs from remote antiquity and nature, conveying images, memories, feelings, loneliness, and self-exploration. Every one of these artists establishes a timeline and an airspace, drawing viewers into their distinctive systems. Their works are the results of self-discipline; whether the work features a curve made of countless silverpoint strokes, thousands of hand-shaped ceramic chips, or mottled starlight applied by paintbrush, these pieces delve deep into the artists' systems, finally seeking to reconcile the isolation of these exploratory journeys through creative methods.

Using different creative methods, these artists have responded to current cultural phenomena, revealing and re-interpreting the concept of cultural belonging—self-knowledge inspired by visual symbols. Michael Zelehoski has

reincorporated and compressed the forgotten objects in urban life, thereby inspiring viewers to consider their own localities. In Stephanie McMahon's abstract paintings, the layered right angles and blocks correspond to the window-based reading habits of the digital era. Kelley Donahue's sculptures recombine seemingly unrelated things, such as tribal totems and girls wearing headphones, thereby challenging rigid existing ideologies.

Chen Zihao's work constructs a palace permeated with traditional mysteries in which subtle spatial distortions, transmissions, codes, and information exchanges are brought together. A floating island is covered in the conductive pathways of an electrical system, and a palace comprised of geometric shapes and pyramids gathers light. The digital trails, reminiscent of a circuit diagram, reflect an exploration of the pictorial meaning of matrices. The details of the painting come together to depict energy; the repeated points of light, like neurons, carry codes and flow to create directional forms. The color scheme, with undertones of blue and purple, accentuates the hazy light and reveals energy exchange and the incredible order and chaos contained within. When the last point of light escapes from the haze of chaos, it quivers with the turbid atmosphere. Kelley Donahue's ceramic sculptures of varying sizes form a group in a strange, dream-like space, reflecting the mystical ambience of an ancient myth. An understanding of light can also be seen in the work of M. Benjamin Herndon. He focuses on material interactions and optical experience, and undulating silverpoint lines on linen and lead create flickering light in his pieces.

In the twelve days before the opening, George Ian McMahon will spend more than ten hours a day in the gallery space creating a massive site-specific plaster installation. The entire installation will weigh 2.5 tons and extend approximately 10 meters. Eggshell-thin hollow plaster is restrained within a metal structure, bulging in soft waves. The work can only be made in this space and can only exist in this space temporarily; collapse and disappearance are part of the work. In a dramatic, destructive moment that explores the essence of the material, McMahon challenges fixed impressions of the permanence of art and the

permanence of place. Every one of Kelley Donahue's handmade ceramic fragments have been shaped by her hands and are thus not entirely identical; these solitary pieces form a whole work. McMahon has precisely calculated and constructed a two-ton plaster sculpture that, when eventually broken, might shatter into a number of fragments similar to those in Donahue's piece. This might be an inspiring coincidence, but it also indicates their respective structures: do details really make up the whole, or does everything eventually dissolve into primal chaos? These directionally different processes represent these two artists' investments of time and energy; like laborers, they consider and invest in their processes.

The word "FOREVER" hovers over an island in Alicia Eggert's work. The definition of the word points to an existing concept, presenting the desire to see the eternal. George Ian McMahon's plaster installation challenges the viewer's ideas of material permanence; he creates a transient existence that highlights its own impending disappearance, presenting concepts of the past and transience that we inevitably come to understand. Both artists transform initial, obvious statements into meditative and philosophical investigations.

Within a limited period of time, the energy, emotion, and work we invest eventually manifests as pure, simple, and complete observation. As the title of the exhibition suggests, "Everlasting" is a performance that will never end; the artists' search for clues to order will continue amidst the chaos.

Text: Liu Ting