

KATE MACGARRY

Chou Yu-Cheng

16 September - 22 October 2022

Kate MacGarry is pleased to announce Chou Yu-Cheng's first solo exhibition at the gallery.

Each painting in Chou's *Origami* series begins with a piece of paper. Layered with subtle gradations of colour and cut into shapes the paper evolves, very slowly, into a new form. Soft becomes strong, a flat surface becomes like a sculpture within a painting that appears so flawless it can't truly be handmade can it?

With the application of colour, paper shapes become three-dimensional in their appearance. Chou's colours are inspired by rivers, not only the shades found in nature but the toxic shades of river pollution. The movement of a river runs through each painting. Mineral and organic (inorganic) pigments are mixed to settle like a river's sediment into gradients of colour. Sometimes as heavy and dense as the floor of the river bed, in other moments the pigment becomes transparent and fluid as though echoing the flow of water. The tones are kept low and quiet. For the artist, this atmosphere evokes the sadness of the recent pandemic, when the world came to a standstill with entire countries shut away behind closed doors. Shades of grey and brown become sepulchral like a mourning for so much lost.

Once coloured, the paper is carefully cut by hand into forms that are balanced and arranged to appear as a single complete structure within the finished painting: as in the ancient art of origami, when a sheet of paper evolves into an object, be it a butterfly, hat or dog. The techniques in origami are so versatile that they have become revolutionary technology: used to create NASA's gadgets which unfurl like blooming flowers in outer space.

Chou is known for making paintings, objects and performances that question society and the place of art within it. His minimal aesthetic makes for subtle yet potent interventions. In 2010, ceiling lights placed by Chou within the Hong-Gah Museum in Taipei were sponsored by the TOA Lighting company. This installation questioned the relationship between private enterprise and contemporary culture; how these potentially Faustian relationships cannot be avoided if institutions are to get the support they need. In 2019, Chou's *Wiping, Perception, Touching, Infection, Disinfection, Education, New Habit*, presciently displayed a series of lemon-scented face flannels (lemon is traditionally antiseptic) then invited the audience to take one when the air temperature reached 24 Celsius - the temperature at which infection spreads more fluidly. The work explored society's reaction to contagious diseases and the fear around new infections - just months before the Covid-19 pandemic set in.

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Chou Yu-Cheng, born in 1976, lives and works in Taipei, Taiwan. Recent group exhibitions include Performa 19 Biennial, New York (2019); Biennale de Lyon (2019); Liverpool Biennial (2018); Museum of Contemporary Art and Design (MCAD), Manila (2018); New Museum, New York (2015); Asian Art Biennial, Taichung (2015); Queens Museum, New York (2013); Taipei Biennial, Taipei (2012). Solo exhibitions include *Refresh, Sacrifice, New Hygiene, Infection, Clean, Robot, Air, Housekeeping, jackercleaning .com, Cigarette, Dyson, Modern People III*, TKG+ Projects, Taipei (2018) and Edouard Malingue Gallery, Shanghai (2017); Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin (2015); Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, Kaohsiung (2015); Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taipei (2014); Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts, Taipei (2011); Museum of Contemporary Art Denver, Colorado (2008). Chou held a residency at the Centre For Chinese Contemporary Arts (CFCCA), Manchester in 2013 and received the Taipei Art Award, Taiwan in 2012 as well as the Taishin Visual Arts Award, Taiwan in 2011.