

Ruoru Mou

Leftover Linings

2 Feb - 23 Mar 2024

PV: Thurs 1 Feb, 6-8pm

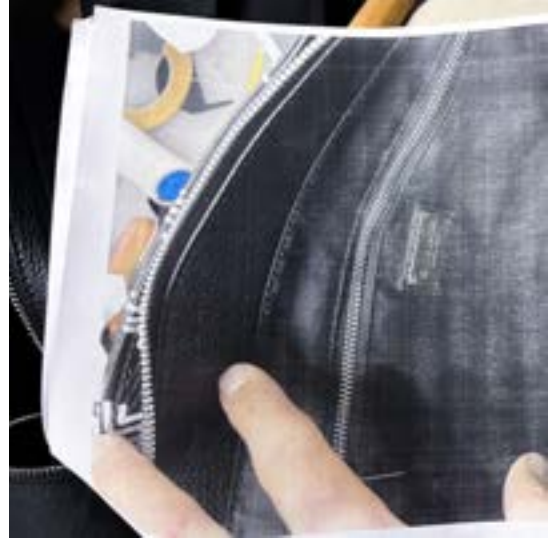


Image credit: Ruoru Mou, production image, 2023.
Courtesy of the artist.

San Mei Gallery presents *Leftover Linings*, a solo exhibition by London, Amsterdam and Florence-based artist Ruoru Mou.

Incorporating sculpture, installation and sound works, Mou's exhibition is inspired by the evolving material culture of the Chinese diaspora communities in Florence, Italy where she grew up. Using artisanal materials such as leather, wood, glass and ceramics, this series of works explores the relationship between material, power and displaced labour.

At the centre of the exhibition sits a large-scale sculptural installation and percussive instrument, *Songs from the tract (pentatonic crossing)*, 2024, representing the internal volume of a boat. Influenced by the aesthetics of classical Japanese cinema, this sculpture directly references the set design of *Ugetsu* (1953), a fantasy film by Kenji Mizoguchi. Mou reimagines a scene in the film in which a potter and his family flee their home, trying to rescue as many ceramics as possible. Part sculpture and part musical instrument, porcelain slats line the surface of the sculpture, which is intended to be collectively played by many people.

Mou is interested in how the forms of both boats and clay hold or carry sound, stories, labour and lived experiences. Drawing on philosopher Édouard Glissant's description of the boat as a 'womb abyss' or 'belly' in his book *Poetics of Relation* (1990), this instrument functions as a vessel for sound. The ghost-like shape of the belly appears throughout the exhibition, alluding to the linings of stomachs and bags. How and why we carry objects, what we choose to rescue and what we digest and discard are questions that linger in the materials that comprise Mou's works: smeared restaurant grease, leather offcuts, and her grandfather's carpentry tools.

This new direction of material investigation draws from the artist's research into the history of industrialisation and labour processes of Chinese workers in the peripheral towns near Florence. The luxury goods produced by famous Italian fashion houses in this region may bear the prestigious moniker 'Made in Italy', but are in fact made by the hands of migrant workers. Addressing the uncanny circulation of materials, Mou's work disrupts the relationship between the hierarchies of production, modes of display, and material orders of power.

For exhibition tours and artist tours contact: rufus@sanmeigallery.co.uk.

Notes to editors

For high resolution images and further information please contact:

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Artist biography

Ruoru Mou (b. Florence, Italy) lives and works between London and Amsterdam. Her recent enquiry concerns the complex relationship between labour and international trade marked by her own experiences with migration. Drawing on her continued interest in material culture in relation to transnational movement, place-making and industrial modernity. The sculpture and installations are made through a close observation at the social structures under which Chinese workers have toiled in restaurant businesses and leather factories in Florence, Italy. Mou graduated from Central Saint Martins with a BA in Fine Art in 2021 and is currently in residence at De Ateliers in Amsterdam. Recent exhibitions include *Cozzie Livi* (2023) at Des Bains, London, UK; *Lateworks: Preparations* (2023) at Cafe OTO, London, UK; *No More (Cruel) Optimism* (2023) at SZN Gallery, London, UK and *you can't discourse without disco* (2022) at Gallery Nova, Zagreb, Croatia.

Listings information:

San Mei Gallery

Free admission

Open Weds-Sat, 11am-6pm

www.sanmeigallery.co.uk

39a Loughborough Road, London SW9 7TB

Instagram / Facebook / Twitter: @sanmeigallery

About San Mei Gallery

San Mei Gallery is an independent non-profit space for contemporary art in South London, committed to research-led, educational and collaborative exchanges. Operating with an artist-led approach, we support artists and curators to experiment with new ideas.