

Xu Qu: Advent

Aug 26 — Oct 22, 2023 | Long Museum (West Bund), Shanghai, China

From August 26th to October 22nd, 2023, Long Museum (West Bund) will present artist Xu Qu's (b. 1978, China) first solo exhibition in museum Advent, curated by Sun Dongdong. The exhibition shares the same title as Xu Qu's new large-scale installation, Advent. Created in 2023, Advent will be showcased alongside multiple series of his recent large-scale paintings and installations in the exhibition

Advent, the large-scale installation, will create a scene reminiscent of an unknown extra-terrestrial descending onto a massive spacecraft. The mediums of this work are recycled components from eight discarded ATMs. After disassembling and flattening the machines, they will be arranged on a platform, with random shutdown screens displayed on their screens. Walking on the platform, visitors can envision the atmosphere in a vertical view. Amidst the digital transformation of currency transactions and the financial industry, the physical operating processes in bank transactions have been gradually changed, and application scenarios of money exchanges are simplified and upgraded. The ending of these discarded ATMs evokes emotions of abandonment or separation: these once perfect industrial design products foreshadow the advent of the last phase of human creation.

Another exhibited installation, *Touch*, contains three sets of two assembled mechanical arms with LCD screens displaying moving images of planets in the solar system. The two connected arms constantly collide and rub against each other repeatedly until they "turn into dust." This installation reveals humanity's current predicament: humans gradually lose the courage to discover the universe. People generally understand the universe through screens and are blocked in the cocoon of digital images and AI manufacturing.

In addition to the installation pieces, the exhibition will also showcase Xu Qu's paintings, including new works of the *Maze Series* created between 2022 and 2023. *Maze Series* is inspired by the question of "why humans are always fascinated by the meaning behind paintings and images." According to this series, the artist visualizes that the position of paintings is at the intersection of imagery and linguistic systems. Colors and lines can narrate the space, perception, and representation within appropriate painting contexts.

Among the displayed paintings are Xu Qu's triptychs from 2017-2018: *Dust* (Triptych), *Magnetic Field* (Triptych), and *Star Trails* (Triptych). Executed with acrylic and chemical fading agents, the artist depicts Earth landscapes imagined from a human spatial perspective, with the map shapes extracted by the artist from personal memories.