

Liu Langqing: *Shell*

刘浪清：器

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ZIAN Gallery

20-2 Chekengwu, Yuhang District, Hangzhou, China

“In my work, a single arc can serve as a metaphor for space.” — Liu Langqing

ZIAN Gallery is pleased to present Hangzhou-based artist Liu Langqing's solo project at the gallery. Featuring a new body of ceramic sculptures and large-scale vessels, the exhibition showcases the a central discipline that shape his artistic practice.

At the heart of the exhibition are several series of ceramic vessels that Liu has been developing for nearly three decades. Through the intense heat of the kiln, moist and malleable clay undergoes a profound transformation, emerging as a delicate yet resilient, jade-like porcelain. These works embody a series of quiet dualities: inside and outside, fragility and resilience, presence and decay.

Standing alone at the centre of the exhibition space is *Birth and Decay*, in which Liu has woven strands of metal around a piece of driftwood collected during one of his many walks, forming a rigid sculptural shell around the organic matter. The driftwood which is already “dead” when the artist discovered it, will gradually deteriorate and disintegrate as the sculpture remains exposed to the elements. Meanwhile, the metal shell slowly shifts in colour over time. The stable, hardened metal takes the imprint of the soft organic form beneath it, becoming a relic of living matter. His new series, *Tide*, explores the interplay between porcelain and clay. The earthy, raw, and highly malleable clay intertwines and grows with the refined, pure porcelain through processes of pulling, stretching, and natural flow. The resulting forms leave traces reminiscent of a natural ecosystem, winding across the walls and extending into the architectural space, entering into a state of symbiosis with it. Through this expansion of the “shell,” Liu blurs the boundary between material form and its physical environment, allowing the space to acquire a quiet yet persistent vitality that seems to unfold outward. In the *Untitled* series of ceramic jars in varying scales, Liu shifts the perspective back to the intimate scale of human existence. The mottled surfaces of the hardened shells record the slow workings of nature, while the intentional finger-pressed indentations left at the base of each vessel appear almost as wounds or organs. These subtle marks become evidence of the artist's intervention—an imprint of the individual body within the material.

For Liu Langqing, the act of making ceramics itself is an arduous ritual. Rejecting the precise measuring tools of industrial production, he instead relies on the intuition of his hands and body. Each work emerges through an improvisational and often explosive process of labour, in which the artist channels his internal energy directly into the clay. In this highly intimate negotiation, the arc becomes a cut that links the material surface with space, while the “shell” serves as the foundation that sustains everything.

Press

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