

Zhang Yunyao



1985, Shanghai, China
Currently working and living in Paris, France

Zhang Yunyao was born in Shanghai in 1985 where he lived and worked until 2020. He graduated from the Department of Oil Painting at the Academy of Fine Arts at Shanghai Normal University in 2007.

In the beginning of 2020 he visited Europe and couldn't return in time to China due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Since that moment he is based in Paris. In this period during which it was impossible to travel. This forced him to grieve from a distance and in a different cultural environment than his upbringing. Technology has been the gateway to mimic the closest human connection and interaction as much as possible.

During his education in China there was a strong focus on the history of Western Art, with a firm interest in Italian and Greek Antiquities. What fascinated the artist in particular, was the depiction of the human body, erotics, sensuality, emotions and drama. Many of these themes were not common in the visual historical art language in his homeland. Even today, certain themes and subjects are less present in contemporary art exposed in China.

Sensuality and eroticism is not only present thematically or subject-wise, but also from a point of matter and tactility. While observing black roman marbles sculptures amongst other ancient artefacts, he would contemplate the surface and its interaction with the light. The idea of skin and touch, the tissue that opens up for a variety of sensations and memories fascinates him. It is the physical border of the location of a human being or an object, that defines the space and the volume it inhabits in a bigger field.

Since 2010 he started drawing on felt which brings a very different tactility to his images compared to his works on paper. In many of his works there is no room for failure or erasure.

With an Asian philosophical perspective, he reduces the materials he needs to create his images. It mainly comes down to graphite, felt, paper, pencil, gum, his hand and time.

He creates images of a photographic quality that are often inspired by places, artworks and spaces he visited. Felt evokes the idea of a hairy skin and something touchable. Often it comes with a desire to touch or to be touched but comes with all kinds of obstructions, social and cultural codes. Through his artistic practice he researches themes related to art history, memory, loss, desire, eroticism, power, anger, destruction and the condition humaine, beyond cultural and contemporary taboos.

In some of his works he challenges the relation between different time zones and places. On some rare occasions, he integrates self-portraits in those poetic fields where once again the game of looking and being looked at is exposed.

Group exhibitions

“Home is where the haunt is—X Museum Triennial”, X Museum, Beijing (CN)	2023	Glenfiddich Artists in Residence Exhibition, Keith, Scotland (UK)	2013
Cicatrices, mor charpentier, Paris (FR)		+Follow, Museum of Contemporary Art, Shanghai (CN)	
Rooms of Resonance, The Frédéric de Goldschmidt Collection Cloud		Polyphony – 21 Kinds of State, Art Museum of Nanjing University of	
Seven, Brussels (BE)		the Arts, Nanjing (CN)	
The postcard party, Cc strombeek, Brussels (BE)			
Sous le regard de Méduse, Museum of Fine Arts, Caen (FR)		Outdated, Don Gallery, Shanghai (CN)	2012
		The Halo Effect, VArt Center, Shanghai (CN)	
16th Biennale de Lyon Contemporary Art: Manifesto of Fragility, Lyon (FR)	2022		
OFF ROAD II, Zeno X Gallery (BE)	2021	We Are Here, Don Gallery, Shanghai (CN)	2011
RUNNING, Qingdao Art Museum (CN)		Daily, Qinghe Contemporary Art Museum, Nanjing (CN)	
Watou Arts Festival, Watou (BE)		SH Contemporary, Shanghai Exhibition Center, Shanghai (CN)	
IDOLS: The Art of the Cyclades and Anatolia in the Bronze Age, Musée		If..., Don Gallery, Shanghai (CN)	
Fenaille (FR)		+Follow, Museum of Contemporary Art, Shanghai (CN)	
RA Summer Exhibition 2020, Royal Academy of Arts, London (UK) 2020		Xinzhuang - the Stories of Five Youths, Don Gallery, Shanghai (CN)	
		Contemporary China, Wandesford Quay Gallery, Cork (IE)	
Epithet Portrayed, Qiao Space, Shanghai (CN)	2019		
Swallow it! Summer × Bacchanal, Don Gallery, Shanghai (CN)		Chorus - 4 Artists’ Show, Don Gallery, Shanghai (CN)	2010
		‘TORA TORA TORA’ Chinese New Video Exhibition, Beijing (CN)	
Steadfastly Raise the Standards in Nonproductive Construction, Don Gallery	2018		
Shanghai (CN)			
Shanghai Dandy, Don Gallery, Shanghai (CN)	2017	12... 4BERLINER TREFFEN 8 CHINESEN, NOTHINGART, Berlin (DE)	2009
We, chi K11 art museum, Shanghai (CN)	2016		
OBSERVER - CREATOR The Reality Representation of Chinese Young Art,	2015		
The Second ‘CAFAM Future’ Exhibition”, CAFA, Beijing (CN)			
Moments, Don Gallery, Shanghai (CN)			
Present – Ing Recital Louder than Paint, Shanghai Gallery of Art, Shanghai	2014		

Solo exhibitions

Drawing Room, Paris Asian Art Fair, Paris (FR) ZHANG YUNYAO, Galerie Marguo, Paris, (FR)	2020
Palace of Extasy, Qiao Space, Shanghai (CN)	2019
Skin Gesture Body, Don Gallery, Shanghai (CN) NEC SPE, NEC METU, Perrotin, Hong Kong (CN)	2017
After Evensong, Don Gallery, Shanghai (CN)	2015
Touch Point, 01100001 Gallery, Beijing (CN) MIRAGE, Don Gallery, Shanghai (CN)	2013
My Dark Life – A Story of a King and His Clown, Art Stage Singapore (SG)	2012
Paradbox – A Solo Show by Zhang Yunyao, Don Gallery, Shanghai (CN)	2011

Works in (semi-) public collections

Pinault Collection (FR)
FPT-Art Collection (BE)
Kollitsch Collection (AT)
CMS Collection (FR)
Yan Du Collection Asymmetry Art Foundation (UK)
Lorin Gu, Recharge Foundation (USA)
Frédéric de Goldschmidt Collection (BE)



R IV, ZHANG Yunyao 张云焱, 2022. Graphite pencil on felt stretched on panel, 45 × 56 cm



R III, ZHANG Yunyao 张云垚, 2019. Graphite on felt 石墨毛毡, 39 × 33 cm



Gv, ZHANG Yunyao 张云垚, 2019. Graphite on felt 石石墨墨毛毛毡, 51.5 × 41 cm



V, ZHANG Yunyao 张云焱, 2020. Graphite on felt 石墨毛毡, 35 x 50cm



M, ZHANG Yunyao 张云垚, 2020. Graphite on felt 石墨毛毡, 40 × 30cm



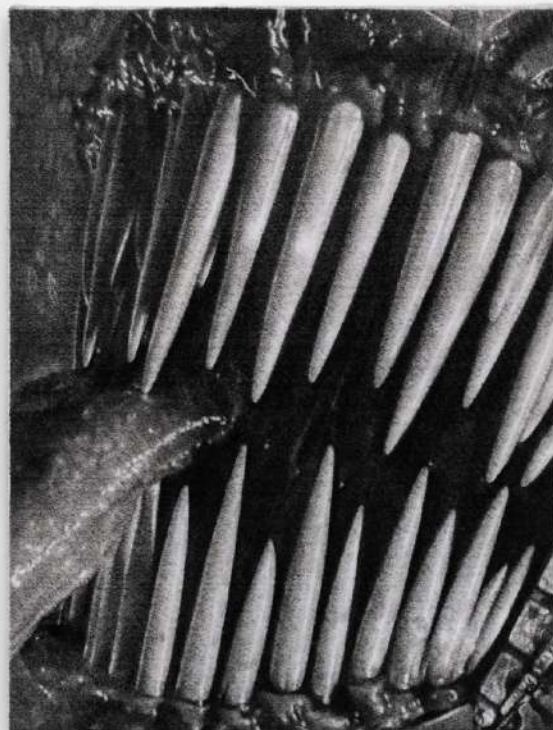
Seal 封, ZHANG Yunyao 张云垚, 2022. Graphite pencil on felt stretched on panel, 37 × 48 cm



Seal II 封 II, ZHANG Yunyao 张云焄, 2022. Graphite pencil on felt stretched on panel, 28 × 36 cm



Two Figures 两个形体, ZHANG Yunyao 张云焱, 2022. Graphite pencil on felt stretched on panel, 48 × 46.5 cm



Fragility 易碎性, ZHANG Yunyao 张云垚, 2022. Graphite pencil on felt stretched on panel, 41 × 31 cm



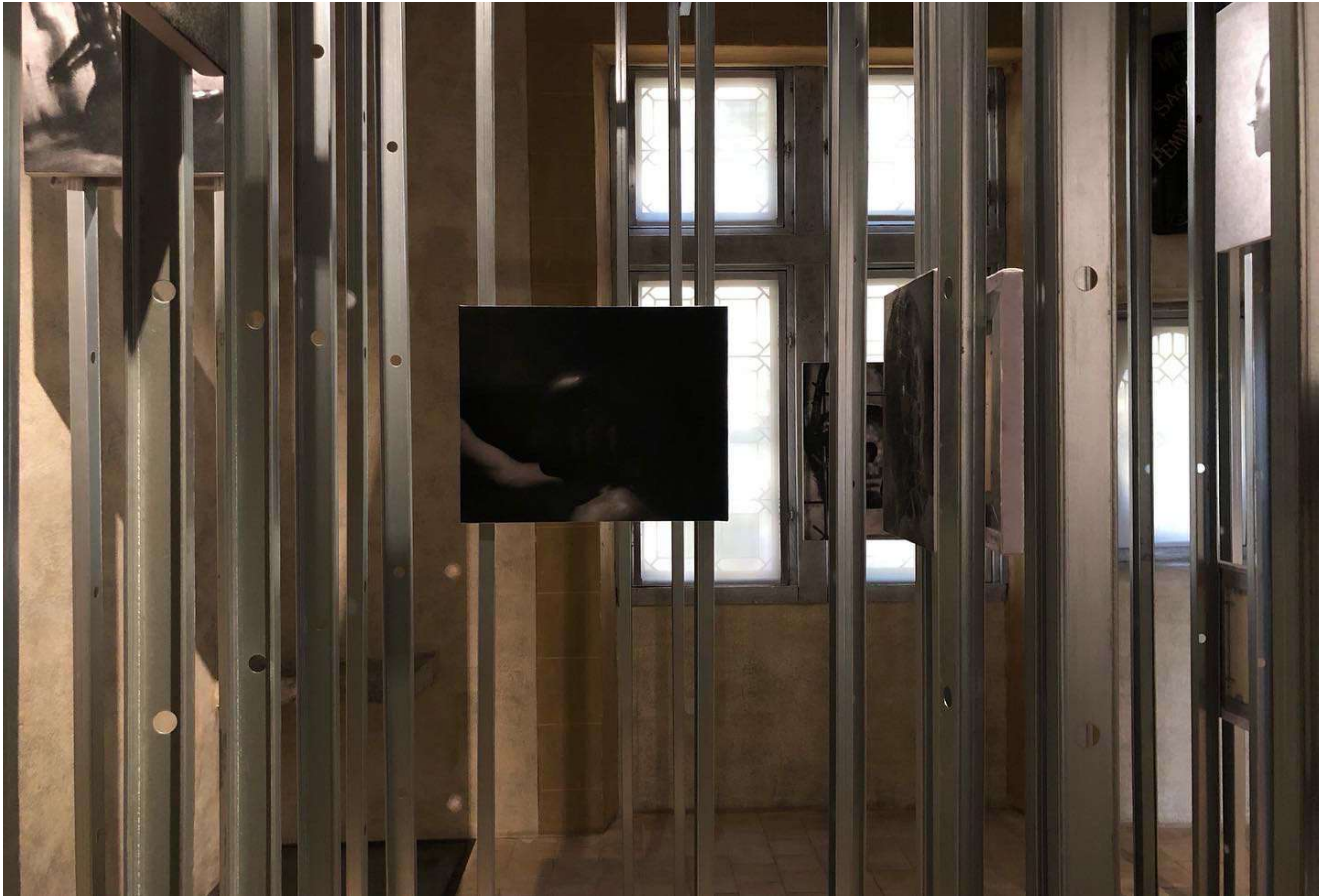
Contour 轮廓, ZHANG Yunyao 张云垚, 2022. Graphite pencil on felt stretched on panel, 65 × 52 cm



View of "Palace of Extasy," 2019, Qiao Space, Shanghai



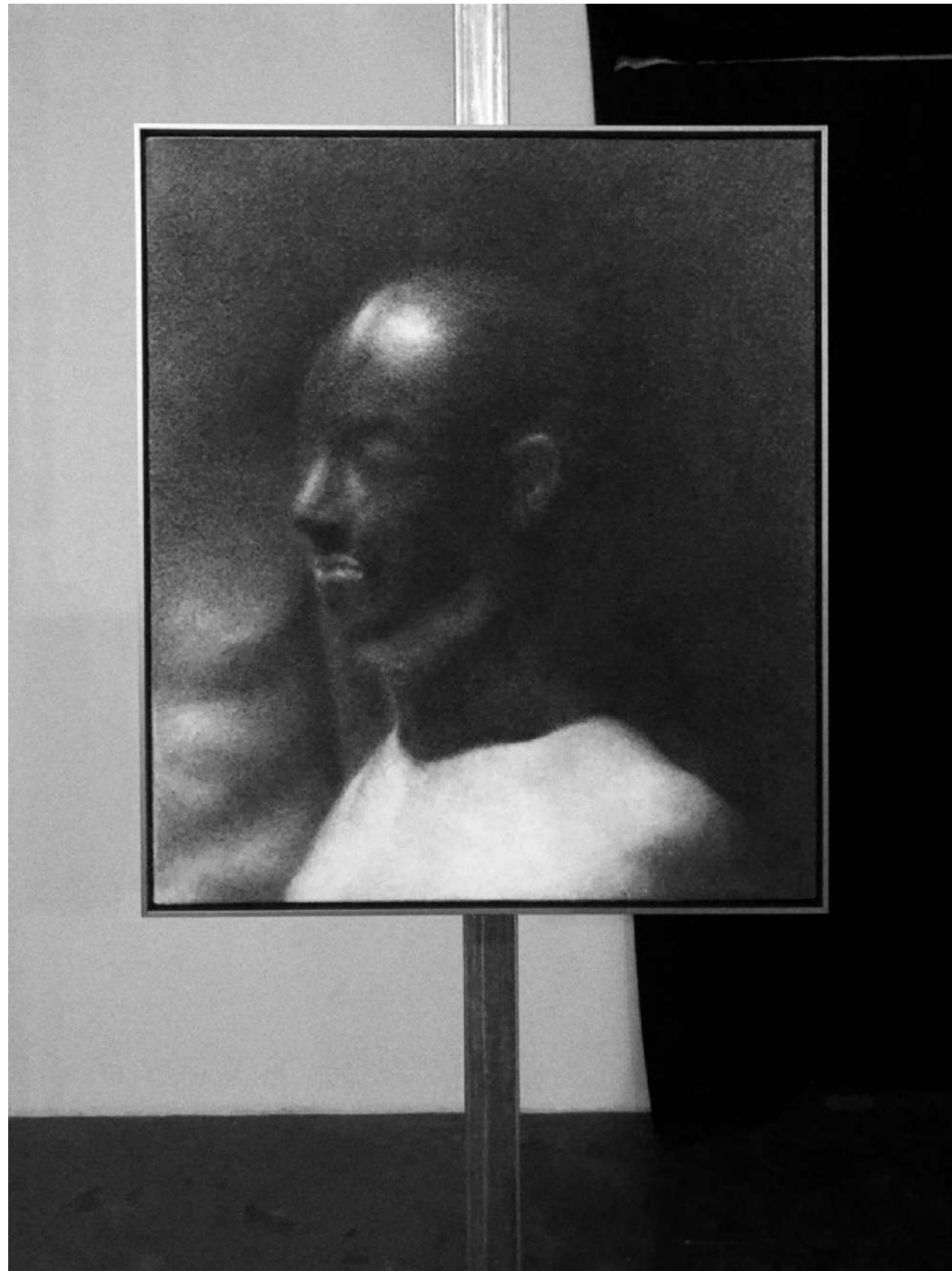
View of 16th Biennale de Lyon Contemporary Art: Manifesto of Fragility, 2022, Lyon



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View of “Special oder for the birthday girl” 2023, After Hours, Paris



View of "Palace of Extasy," 2019, Qiao Space, Shanghai



View of “Palace of Extasy,” 2019, Qiao Space, Shanghai