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**"Libido Mortido"**

**Participating Artists:** Iñigo Bilbao Lopategui, Bing Bing 兵冰, Cai Duobao 蔡多宝, Kong Mosha 孔墨沙, Li Lingxi 李翎溪, Liu Dao 六岛, Nick Hersey, Rose Tang 罗丝唐, Matt Carols, Thomas Charvériat, Kai-lan Chau 周凯兰, David Estes, Tom Lee Pettersen, Wang Dongma 王东马, Wu Yandan 吴艳丹, Zane Melleupe, Zhang Deli 张德丽

**Curator:** Thomas Charvériat, Zane Melleupe

**Writer:** Rajath Suri

**Exhibition:** From March 6<sup>th</sup> 2010 to April 30<sup>th</sup> 2010

**Vernissage:** 8:00 P.M., March 13<sup>th</sup> 2010

**Venue:** island6 Arts Center, 50 Moganshan Rd, bldg #6, 2F, Shanghai 200060, P.R.C.

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**"Libido Mortido"** by Rajath Suri

The fourth exhibition orchestrated by **island6** as an extenuation of themes related to the substrata of conscious/subconscious determinants and according manifestations within the creative process, Libido/Mortido hones upon the impulses of creative liberty and individuation and an oppositional disintegration or withdrawal in resistance to life and growth.

Whereas with the precursor exhibitions have sought to distinguish specific aspects in the question of catharsis (individual or collective) within the creative sphere of the societal consciousness by way of titles directly derivative of focal extrapolations upon given titles, this current exploration has instigated a more profound examination of the psyche itself. The scientific or psychoanalytic examination of art once directly engaged in contemporary artistic practice initiates a plethora of "hydra", in this specific search into the domains of "libido" and "mortido", we need recall the crucial aspect which they embodied in modern psychology. First espoused by Paul Federn, a student of Freud, this psychoanalytic theory of two fundamental drives, lying at the core of the human personality, "libido" being essentially creative and "mortido" destructive, was later investigated as distinct psychological phenomena in itself by successive theorists of the Freudian and Jungian schools. These predominant machinations of desire may then assist in the stratification and understanding of the artistic impulse of the individual artist or collective endeavour. In this context, while the hydra produces an infinite number of new heads, the source of growth remains identical, indelibly defined within two psycho-automatic spheres.

The collective efforts of numerous artists whom have sought to participate in the process of the experiment have, essentially, had to call on their own individual perceptions, deconstruct and reinvent predominant preconceptions and replace them with an active vocabulary due to the curatorial stance and central premise of the exhibition.

Given the unequivocal result of each individual whom has delved inwards to challenge their own psychical or psychological predetermining factors, the "trait" has been assumed by the "trace", indicators or perhaps, better stated, signifiers of a conduit of mistrial and oscillation of the "self" in face of a collective refraction of unconscious systems: the same apparition of the mind which acts as a core mechanism which Island 6 has sought to fathom and, eventually, diffuse by way of the series of investigations.

Amongst the prominent artists in the collective exists those whom have managed to transcend their usual practice and render a subversive altercation of their "self". Active members of the Liu Dao collective whom in the past have acclaimed a certain renown for their continual experiments with electronic medium and interdisciplinary approach appear capable of further transmutations in their creative objective under the guidance of Thomas Charveriat, founder, and Zane Melleupe, artistic director, towards the consolidation of this sojourn into parapsychology, phenomena-especially where perception is in question, and prove able to relate new imperatives behind predetermined strategies believed to be commonplace.

While highly abstract in its inception, the exhibition affords an acute insight into the question of individual boundaries of the consciousness and avoids stereotypical assumptions of what is socially definitive. The framework is more one of absorption than absolution, hence, the artistic collective is predominant and the individual psyche is relegated to a lesser tier- the movement is effluvious and shared, and the "I" or that which extends from the individual ego of lesser purport, while not being absolved of altogether. The game of interpretation is conducted at a subtle level and that is there the exhibitions cohesion exists. The accurate depiction of conscious or subconscious movements being simultaneously held as beyond an importance given to either individual title or personal acclaim alone. Distinctive traces are found within obscure pageantry, phantasmagoric illusion, hyper-realistic creations and surreal projections are the resulting echo in the actual works. It is important to bear in mind that the interdisciplinary approach is an active methodology which breathes life into newly born static and non-static artworks, yet, also into the limbs of active dancers, performance artists and subsequent documentation in diverse LED and video technologies. The site hosts a plethora of in-situ creations which dilate the sense of the audience, dynamic, manufactured, proportionate only in reference to the force

which has been ascribed as being that “latent to the subconscious” and reduced by way of deconstruction in face of the dualistic premise of the curatorial pre-selection.

Certain artists have experienced a transitive change in manner, others, form. Rose Tang, one of the eldest and most active artists of the Liu Dao collective since its inception, has delivered a fresh series which near abandons her/his former misnomer of androgynous performance and photographic records in light of illusionist works which play on the imagination and where we find the artifice of the perceived real manifest with photographic replica of magical performances. The disappearance of the Urban Planning Center or the National Theatre, images drawn from any number of contemporary Chinese Diva or emblems of fashion consciousness in China today and equally unfamiliar depictions of sleight of hand charlatans denotes the importance of a trend shared by other participants. Chiefly, a demarcation of a departure from their own prior conceptions, perspectives and limitations as the exhibition insists upon a penetration of the psyche towards a psychical re-constitution of its definition, its own deviance and perhaps, even so far as to render intelligible to what extent subversion is prevalent, possible or definitive in contemporary artistic practice.

A specific and satirical non-narrative allegorical has then substituted Rose Tang’s fascination with transgender portrayal and stereotypical depictions of the former with a derisive, philosophically Occidental, retort against Chinese society. Levitation and telepathic force replace sexual dichotomies, iconography of the image and inherent, and further yet, the ignorant complacency of the Chinese personae – “the man within the mountain whom cannot see the mountain”- in the torrential force of savage consumerism, mass media and other key sentinels of blind societal impetus acting of an invisible accord. New interpretations of and the eventual transmutation of the artists’ expressive force contrast heavily with the invective of the economic liberation of the PRC and facile rhetoric of corporate nationalism, to an extreme where cynical artistry appear as a cognitive reasoning with the absurd dialectical drama of the actual societal stage. As the exhibition intends to include the participating audience in a collective hypnosis on the occasion of the opening, Libido/Mortido further acts as a public concession of experience with the actual site of Island 6 as the stage for a drama less imagined than real. The situation of the artist in the context of the exhibition again acts to denote the phenomena of a correlative which enacts within the collective psyche rather than that of the individual alone: we could extend the analysis to an extreme where the individual is questioned in value to the collective process and that, equally, being a constituent of the current experience of the mainland of China where the reversal from predominantly collective approaches have been replaced by more highly individualistic practices and social evaluations from the foremost rhetoric of the politically elect to the actual motivations of the nations people.

If attributed qualities may be given as an indicator of the latent promise of artistic instigations which manage to surpass or break precedent with the status quo of society or artistic institutions, they have been determined throughout this century by evidence of subordinate humour, the subversion of conceptual and formal aspects of artistic creation and penetrating insight upon the societal condition of whatever site or social environment. Libido Mortido serves not only as a mirror of the societal yet one which reflects the inner dynamics and sublime strategies which contemporary theorists, alarmists and reactionary commentators converge upon in a disarming unison: a psyche which bears the fruits of didactic materialism, consumerist vacuity and which rarely affords a vision beyond the real.

#### **About island6**

Founded in 2006, **island6 Arts Center** is an artist-founded, artist-run organization based in Shanghai.

**island6 Arts Center** operates on a non-profit basis and is governed by voluntary staff.

**island6** is dedicated to the support of emerging artists and to the constant initiation of site-specific projects. **island6’s** mission is to provide a forum for contemporary artists whose works explore social, aesthetic, and philosophical issues. Since April 2006, **island6 Arts Center** has shown 198 artists from 21 different countries, sponsored 110 resident artists, organized 37 exhibitions and helped in the creation of 1900 art projects. In 2007 **island6 Arts Center**, under the artistic direction of Thomas Charvériat & Zane Mellepe, founded Liu Dao, a collective of emerging Chinese and international artists. Liu Dao explores the cultural potential in the convergence of art, technology and science, and their discoveries are applied to the development of the artist community.