

---

**"Psychic Apparatus"**

**Participating Artists:** [Felix Beyreuther](#), [Bing Bing](#), [Cai Duobao](#), [Matt Carols](#), [Thomas Charvériat](#), [Marianne Csaky](#), [Roland Darjes](#), [Li Lingxi](#), [Liu Dao](#), [Chaim Gebber](#), [Nick Hersey](#), [Zane Mellupe](#), [Rose Tang](#), [Wang Dongma](#), [Yang Longhai](#), [Zhang Deli](#)

**Curation:** [Thomas Charvériat](#)

**Writer:** [Kristen Delaney](#)

**Exhibition:** From May 8th 2010 to June 23rd 2010

**Vernissage:** May 8th 2010 - 8pm

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

---

**"Psychic Apparatus"** by [Kristen Delaney](#)

The fifth and commencing [Liu Dao](#) exhibition, shaped by the artistic hands of island6, seeks to explore with soul and consider discerningly, the energy and form between known and unknown, conscious and subconscious behavior. Over the course of a year, the display has shown a progressive movement in the divulging of human activity and has opened the doors to the public exploration of "self", shedding light on the phenomena of the human mind and its multiple layers within. In this final display, ["Psychic Apparatus"](#) will lead you down a visual narrative into the great abyss of subjective experience, exploring constructs such as: wakefulness, imaginings, involuntary behavior, influential forces, and subliminal processes. The exhibit will further illuminate the collective and mysterious Liu Dao (multiple artists working in unison, under the pen name). Preceding exhibitions of this kind including: ["Synesthesia"](#), "Placebo", "Fakirs", and "Libido Mortido", have each chronicled private connections on the human composition, constructing images on what the group believes to be concealed human elements and have created rich and lurid interpretations for these. Additionally, the exploration on the concept of consciousness as a whole, as a collective identity, and in the latest showing, "Libido Mortido" (March 2010), as the subject of irrevocable morbidity, are equally addressed. "Psychic Apparatus" opens a very large window into the self, and is an epiphany trapped in the individual soul of all humanity. The insinuation of subconscious activity is remarkable within the great domain of human life, and correspondingly, has been explored across cultures and defined in an array of written documents throughout historical times. Engraved records citing subconscious activity were perhaps first evidenced in the Vedas (Hindu texts), dating back as early as 2500 B.C. Additionally, the term "subconscious," was initially coined by the German philosopher Sir Christopher Riegel, and later recorded into English by the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Consider the writings of Shakespeare, Spinoza, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche. These theorists, among others, have had a significant influence on man's contemporary understanding of personality. Though undoubtedly championing this cause was the master of psychoanalysis himself, Sigmund Freud, particularly, in his writings on the: id, ego, and Super-ego. In the quest for illumination on the construction of self, one must understand the collective Liu Dao's pursuit, and therefore, one must begin with Freud's written accounts on the matter. In Freud's pursuit to define what so many before him had left submerged, he argued that the unconscious mind is incontrovertibly represented in its tranquil state of dreaming. He additionally held that the mind is explored through the memories of childhood, and in brief flashes of insight, or moments of awakening—also known as epiphanies. The mind he argued is the very heart of the human drive. In Freud's fervent passion to uncover the inner-weaving yet simultaneously individual layers of human awareness, the construct of "Psychic Apparatus" was born. The term psychic apparatus has been given multiple meanings, and its prevalence has been defined in sources of media, literature, film, photography, and in other creative outlets. Psychic Apparatus however, can appropriately be defined as a collection of non-tangible instruments developed with the purpose of measuring, interpreting, and making sense of the concrete world in which we live. This term has also been deemed "mental apparatus" and "psychical apparatus," though both expressions reflect similar theories on objective and subjective facets of reality.

Freud's early analysis employed a theoretical model of conscious behavior, and was ultimately entitled, "The first Topography." It was first introduced in the manuscript, "The Interpretation of Dreams," (Freud 1900). Considering this notion, the term topography is further divided into three realms: id, ego, and super-ego, or the processes of the conscious, unconscious, and preconscious. Originally, entitled (es, ich and uber-ich). These terms were later Latinized revealing a surge of interest in subconscious activity among the general public around the early 20th century. According to the model, the lowest level and most primitive instinctual drive is known as the id. Its more responsible and organized element is represented as the ego. And, its moral compass, guider, and protector is the Super-ego. It is important to note however, that although Freud described the model in terms of "apparatus," it is indeed a characteristic of the mind, rather than the physical body. The id is a facet of unconscious activity and dwells in the dark and hidden component of the mind. The id contains the basic human drive for pleasure, known as the "pleasure principle." Seeking to avoid pain, and embracing reckless impulsivity, the id pursues instinctual satisfaction ignoring any and all costs along the way. The unconscious id motivates the inner-self, seeking instant gratification and drives the self to pursue pleasure, wholly. In stark contrast to the id stands his older, more mature brother, the ego, who acts as a mediator in dividing reality from subconscious activity. The ego is defined as organized, defensive, perceptual, intellectual, and continually aware. He performs as the triangular negotiator between the id, and the Super-ego, and is their only link to the external world. Upon any appearance of danger, the ego's

defense mechanisms spring into action protecting the very core of the subconscious reality, (or the weaker self). In a progressive society the ego is considered brave, pompous, proud, and a significant value to its corresponding social arena. Nonetheless, the ego fundamentally represents the key to understanding the "self." Like a slave, the ego serves to please both master's: the id, and the Super-ego. In a paradigm, a young woman torn by her longing for the material world as well as her understanding of the already significant dent in her pocketbook might find herself staring long and hard upon a shiny red-leather purse in the display window of a luxury goods store. As teenager, she might have been more inclined to wander into the store without thought, and purchase the purse (the id). But, through the construct of the reality principle, she now several years matured, glances at the purse perhaps occupied with calculating its cost and continues upon her stroll. Her want is still present though she ignores her impulse to buy on demand and remains more or less satisfied (Super-ego). Notably, the Super-ego both composed of conscious and subconscious facets is often painted as the father figure in a family unit. It is his task to regulate all household activities and nothing gets past the Super-ego, nor is any decision by him made lightly. The Super-ego is socially appropriate, well-mannered, spiritual, and the conscious reality which drives away instinctual response, feeling, emotion, imagination, and desire. Spiritually, the Super-ego prohibits acts judged as self-serving, and carries no qualms in exercising the bullet of guilt when deemed necessary-which of course is often. What followed Freud's construction of the "self" and its corresponding elements: id, ego, and Super-ego, was an incredibly essential unleashing of freedoms. The expression of identity once considered unquestionable was suddenly transformed into a kind of norm or a certain awareness of what society once was and where it was going. Essentially, the realization that humans were more than mind and matter, did in fact matter, and led visual artists, poets, art theorists, graphic designers and performers to the social movement of Surrealism. Art has long held an interest in the creation of visual images, and has stood as a symbolic window for subjects left unexplained by language. Thus historically, the art group most closely fascinated with the Freudian framework is undoubtedly, Surrealism. This civil faction emerged in the nineteen-twenties and became popular for its visual manifestation of surprise, and juxtaposition. It was during WWI when the central movement developed, later becoming popular for its Dada activities (a rejection of the customary standards in art, deliberating from a political up rise in gatherings, demonstrations, and public displays). Centrally popularized in Paris, Surrealism ultimately was obsessed with free association, dream analysis, and the liberation of the mind. The group however, piecemealed together specific unconscious belief systems which heavily focused on individual behaviors known as idiosyncrasies, and strikingly, rejected the overlapping and darker aspects of Freudian psychoanalysis. Surrealism, along with the influence of Freudian processes, eventually spread throughout the world in the manifestation of artistic illustrations of every kind and later even became a political and social theory. In response to the theory of psychic apparatus, to its expression in and across cultures, its colorful use in the arts and media, and its ultimate movement known as Surrealism, the collective Liu Dao gathers together once more, transcending traditional views on the world of art and its assumed persistence in society. Instead, Island6 aims to explore a clear and visual representation of subconscious reality. Of course, each artist (upon their primary and succeeding compositions) was each asked to forego their own personal artistic cravings for creating something of themselves, out of the images made. Like a family, the images on display reveal a weaving together of wide-ranging thoughts, addressing the psyche. The artists were asked to avoid personal privilege in exchange for the collective realization of unity and what this deconstruction of "mine" brings to the table an essential release of the ego, and a brave embracing of its counter-parts, the id, and his ever powerful Super-ego. This being said, Island6 has been loyal to their mission (collectively bringing life to the psychology of art). The artists of Liu Dao have eloquently embraced the group's creative sense in images such as, "[Slurp](#)", where the viewer is offered a front row seat at the drive-in of irresistibility. LED lights convey a couple "in lust" (The ego). This passionate and evoking image aims to demonstrate that love is a process; where some couples find each other with relative ease, other relationships take time. In "[Waiting for Godot](#)", you will be entertained by a rather uncanny screening of what some people do to pass the time. This interactive video instillation exposes images of fashionably dressed individuals waiting, unknowingly, in the middle of a road, tinkering with the irony of life's monotony (ego) while viewers from another space and time are able to look in on the behavior of men and presume their own judgments (Super-ego). "Psychic Apparatus", is indeed a deeper look into the identity of man, his soul's wandering counter-parts, and the battle for unity that drives impulsivity towards consideration.

### **About island6**

*island6 Arts Center is an artist-founded, artist-run, "art first" not-for-profit organization founded in Shanghai in 2006. The center is dedicated to identifying emerging artists and encouraging them through risk-taking programs that explore new curatorial models and innovative projects. island6's mission is to provide a forum and support for contemporary artists whose works examine timely and timeless 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, under the artistic direction of Thomas Charvériat & Zane Mellupe, island6 Arts Center established Liu Dao-- a research group including artists, engineers, and technicians devoted to developing technological platforms for the Arts. Liu Dao explores the cultural ramifications of the convergence of art, technology, and science and strives to influence the aesthetic trajectory of the global artist community. Every "art forward" island6 exhibition is the product of multi-disciplined, collaborative in-house workshops.*