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Happy and Glorious

Happy and Glorious is the first full-scale exhibition by Cai Yuan and Ji Xi, presenting a series of new and existing works.

The title 'Happy and Glorious' taken from the National Anthem, evokes the upbeat patriotic language of Maoist China, revealing an unexpected affinity between Maoist and British imperialist rhetoric.

Central to the exhibition is the enactment of citizenship as leisure spectacle in their new performances. Using the Union Jack as a symbolic device, the artists reveal how class culture is obliged to remain performative in the context of cultural differences and national identity. Their performance intervenes in the continuity of British tradition and also points to the cultural ambiguity which occurs during the process of 'Foreigner' becoming British.

In the gallery, a selection of Cai and Ji's previous interventions in art institutions and in the public domain are shown on video and photographic documentation. These interventions test the boundaries of cultural and artistic conventions.

A glass coffin disrupts the gallery space, containing an ironic display suggesting artistic and cultural disorientation. Here, the art is ironically ordered in line against the legal attack of the establishment. It represents the 'death of art' in institutions and the cultural ritual of the art object as fixed object. Outside the coffin, their performance on video documents the external context of the real world and circulates the work beyond the necessary, fleeting experience.

For more information on the artists, please visit www.nandforum.com

Happy and Glorious is jointly owned with Katie Hill.

IDENTIFIER

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ARTIST

Xi, Jian Jun, (b. 1962), artist; Chinese Arts Centre, 1989-2013; Hill, Katie, curator; Cai, Yuan, artist