



Stacey CHAN Lok Heng: Placebo

25 September – 30 October, 2021

Opening: Saturday, 25 September 2021, 2 - 5 pm

Gallery EXIT presents “Placebo”, the first solo exhibition by Stacey Chan Lok Heng. The exhibition runs from 25 September to 30 October, 2021. An opening will be held on Saturday, 25 September at 2-5pm.

In this exhibition, Chan continues to delve into the material of pharmaceuticals, conferring on it a new form and imagination, so as to explore the meanings and associations of medical cure in terms of individual psychology, beliefs and social customs. The works deconstruct the physical manifestation and inherent symbolism of western pharmaceuticals as a kind of everyday object, reflect on the relationship between contemporary art, medical cure and religion as a commercial item.

“Placebo” is Latin for “I shall be pleasing.” In western medical treatment, placebo is adopted as a substitute for medicine and an alternative therapy. While placebo is “any sham medication or procedure designed to be void of any known therapeutic value”, the patients, believing in the therapeutic value of the placebo, psychologically perceive the relief and even cure of the illness. In this exhibition, “placebo” refers to the audience’s expectations of the art exhibition and the artworks. From where she sees it, when the audiences encounter art, they often expect to be “healed” or “redeemed” spiritually, and the artist is often deified.

In the past when Western science had not yet become popular, medicine, religion, and art were regarded as one and the same. In *Role Playing A Doctor*, Chan takes inspiration from the Chinese doctor’s handwritten prescription and creates a series of abstract paintings that resemble scribbles. If Western medicine represented scientific rationality, then handwritten prescriptions are like hand-drawn runes in religious rituals, endowed with a sacred and mysterious power, for those who believe in their healing power shall be healed.

Since 2017, Chan has been creating conceptual works that involve the use of pharmaceuticals such as repairing cracks in an empty room with powdered antidepressants, and sculptures in the form of Buddha statue casted by Prozac. Here in this exhibition, the artist applies for the first time this material as a colour pigment in her paintings. The three square pastel paintings are made with powdered pills in different colours applied on the canvas. Delicately and in the most minimal of manners, the works are painted over repeatedly, the gesture of which is not only a repetitive daily practice for the artist, but there is also this sacredness of the religious ritual. Three types of symbols recur in the three paintings: The fence, the cross and the horizontal line, corresponding to the relationship between disease and confinement, healing and religion, medicine and mental

state. In *Dosage*, Chan tries to express a kind of repressed, disoriented yet calm mental state under prolonged use of psychotropic drugs from the perspective of a patient.

Redemption II combines religious symbols with pharmaceuticals, by casting the powdered pills, cast into heads of Buddha and sold in bottles. The work raises a question: In the context of modern commercial marketing, are religion and art also commodities? The artist evokes the dual symbolism of the elevation of medical science to the religion of the new era on the one hand, and the degradation of religion into a commercial accessory on the other.

In *The Placebo*, the artist combines the "hand" motif and the form of the pill, creating identical miniature pills in the form of palms, which are arranged neatly together. The relationship between the saviour and the saved exists in the worlds of art, religion and medicine. From her observation of the Buddha's mudra, the artist associates a variety of extended meanings, such as the Buddha's mudra representing salvation, the patient's hand receiving the pills, the waving hand of the drowning man, the gesturing raised hand and the hand signal for "stop".

The Utmost Normality expresses the contemporaries' obsessive pursuit of the so-called "normality". Its concept is to provide a kind of medical treatment for "normal people". The pill is composed of half-stimulant and half-stabiliser, a new medicine product designed to make "normal people" more normal. The work poses a question of what exactly is normal under social expectations and norms.

陳樂珩《安慰劑》

2021 年 9 月 25 日至 10 月 30 日

開幕：9 月 25 日（星期六），下午 2 時至 5 時

安全口畫廊呈獻陳樂珩首個個展《安慰劑》，展期為 2021 年 9 月 25 日至 10 月 30 日。開幕將於 9 月 25 日星期六下午 2 時至 5 時舉行。

陳樂珩於是次展覽繼續以藥物為主要媒介，賦予藥一種嶄新的形態和聯想，從而探索醫療在個人心理、信仰及社會風俗層面上的意義和聯繫。作品打破西藥作為一種日常現成物的物理呈現和固有符號象徵，透過介入商業畫廊的空間，反思當代藝術、醫療及信仰作為一件商業產品的概念。

「安慰劑」一字來自拉丁文「*placebo*」，意指「我將受到安慰」。在醫學治療上，安慰劑作為藥物的替代品和另類治療方式，雖然是一種「非藥物」治療，然而病人相信了安慰劑的功效，從而得到舒緩甚至痊癒的心理反應。是次展覽中，「安慰劑」喻意為觀眾對藝術展覽和藝術品的期望。對陳氏而言，觀眾在接觸藝術的同時，往往期望心靈或精神上能有被「治癒」或「救贖」的效果，藝術家的身分亦被神聖化。

在西方科學還未盛行的年代，醫術、宗教及藝術曾經被視為一體。平面作品《*Role Playing A Doctor*》中，陳氏從診所醫生的淺草手寫藥方取得靈感，創作了一系列有如潦草文字線條般的抽象畫作。如果西醫代表科學理性，手寫藥方就如宗教儀式的手繪符咒，兼備一種神聖及神祕的力量，使相信其治療能力的受眾得以治癒。

陳氏從 2017 年起便對藥物作為物料進行研究和實驗，如以抗抑鬱藥的粉末修補房間裂縫的概念作品以及以藥粉倒模以成的佛像形態雕塑作品。是次展覽中，藝術家首次使用藥粉作為畫作的繪畫顏料。三幅方形的粉色畫作均以不同顏色的藥丸打碎成粉末再繪塗在畫布上。作品細膩地以極簡的表現手法進行反覆繪畫，重覆的繪畫動作對藝術家而言除了是一種周而復始的日常練習，更帶有一種宗教儀式的神聖感——三幅畫作分別重複呈現三種符號：欄柵、十字架、橫線，對應著疾病與禁閉、治癒與宗教、藥物與精神狀態的關係。而在《*Dosage*》中，陳氏試圖從一個病者的角度，表達一種長期服用精神藥物下的抑壓迷離但鎮靜的精神狀態。

《*Redemption II*》把宗教符號與藥粉融合，由藥丸磨碎而成的藥粉倒模製成佛像頭部，放置在藥丸瓶裡出售。作品提出在現代商業買賣的語境中，信仰和藝術精神是否也是一種可供買賣的商品？於此，藝術家提出了將醫學升格成為新時代的信仰機制，或信仰被降格成為商業附屬品的雙重意象。

藝術家在作品《The Placebo》中，以「手」作為一種符號，結合藥丸的形態，製作出一顆顆一式一樣，排列整齊的微型手掌浮雕。藝術、宗教和醫藥世界中有著種種施救者和獲救者的關係。從對佛陀手印姿勢的觀察中，藝術家聯想到多種引申的意涵—如代表救贖的佛像手印、病人承接藥丸時的手勢、遇溺者求救掙扎時揮動的手、舉手示意以及示意停止的手勢。

作品《The Utmost Normality》則表達了現代人對所謂「正常」的過份執著和追求，概念是幻想對「正常人」施行的「治療」。藥丸結合半顆現成亢奮劑及半顆現成穩定劑，使之變成一種能讓「正常人」變得更正常的新醫療產品。作品提出社會期望規範的氛圍中到底何謂正常的詰問。