

Concrete Emptiness

New Possibilities for Sculpture in Contemporary China
— Sui Jianguo 隋建国 and His *Garden in Data Cloud: Forty
Instants* 《云中花园/40个瞬间》



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(Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts / SOAS)

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Room LG18 (Law Faculty, Sidgwick Site)

Abstract

"Sculpting Emptiness with Figuration" is an intriguing aspect of Chinese aesthetics and art. The incorporation of digital technology and traditional concepts by the artists in contemporary Chinese sculpture serves as the bedrock for their distinctive sculptural language. As a spacial three-dimensional art, sculpture strikes us with its material concreteness which is both visible and touchable. Playing against this conventional understanding of the art form of sculpture, Sui has provocatively named his exhibition 'Sculpting Emptiness' which took place in Qingdao, China, August 2021. How is it possible for the concrete art form of sculpture to represent its seeming opposite, emptiness? And in what way does Sui understand the notion of emptiness?

Speaker

Dr XIE Bo is an associate professor in the School of Arts and Humanities, Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts. This year she is a visiting scholar in the Department of the History of Arts and Archaeology, SOAS, University of London. Dr Xie is an art historian of Daoist art, especially Chinese landscape paintings by Daoist artists. Xie Bo received dual doctorate degree from Peking University and University of Pennsylvania, where she found interests in the history of Daoist art and the intellectual history of early medieval China, with a particular focus on the intellectual history as expressed in the symbolism of female from a religious perspective. Her approach emphasizes interdisciplinary perspectives. Through her collaboration with well-recognised Chinese artists in recent years, her research field has also expanded to issues in Chinese modern and contemporary sculptural art. She is the author of *The Visualization of Daoist Elysium: Huang Gongwang and his Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountain* 《画纸上的道境：黄公望和他的〈富春山居图〉》 (2018).



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