

Art Museum
University of Toronto
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Justina M. Barnicke Gallery
University of Toronto Art Centre

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artmuseum.utoronto.ca

Art Museum

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Art Museum at University of Toronto presents *Miao Ying: A Field Guide to Ideology*

Toronto, ON (February 2, 2022)—The Art Museum at the University of Toronto presents *Miao Ying: A Field Guide to Ideology* (苗颖: 精神实用宝典), the artist’s first gallery presentation in Canada. The exhibition features two of Miao Ying’s recent “Internet Installations”—browser-based online projects expanded into multimedia viewing stations—that constitute a physical experience mediated by digital rhetoric and counterfeit ideology. Together, they render a caricature of contemporary internet censorship technologies—China’s “Great Firewall” juxtaposed against “Filter Bubbles” generated by social media platforms in the West—and Miao’s dialectical attachment to the phenomenon. *Miao Ying: A Field Guide to Ideology* (苗颖: 精神实用宝典) is curated by Yan Wu and is on view at the Art Museum from **February 8 to April 2, 2022**.

Part of the first generation of internet artists in China, **Miao Ying** is a dual netizen of the Chinternet (the restricted Chinese internet, a.k.a. the “Great Firewall”) and the World Wide Web. She calls her relationship with China’s hyper-regulated online sphere a form of “Stockholm Syndrome.” In *A Field Guide to Ideology*, Miao humorously unpacks the architecture of this paradoxical condition by presenting two fictional strategies:

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Chinternet Plus (亲特网+, commissioned by the New Museum in 2016 as part of *First Look: New Art Online*) and *Hardcore Digital Detox* (硬核数据排毒, commissioned by M+ Museum in Hong Kong in 2018 for the M+ stories online platform).

Commenting on a recent Chinese economic strategy, “Internet Plus”—involving the rebooting of traditional industries through cloud computing, big data, and lifestyle branding—Miao’s *Chinternet Plus* is a parodic and critical take on the cultivation of a new, counterfeit ideology complete with media elements. The work invites viewers to peek into a drywall-enclosed room plastered with wallpaper, a counterfeit logo, and different-sized monitors playing an eternal loop of viral videos, seductive imagery, GIFs, popular memes, and stock photos sourced online and refashioned by the artist.

Its companion piece, *Hardcore Digital Detox (HDD)*, is packaged as a caricature of the Western commodification of “well-being.” *HDD* offers an illogical online retreat from the digital world, transporting viewers into a faux-natural island complete with cookie-eating fantasy animals—stand-ins for computer cookies that reveal users’ online activities and unicorn companies that collect and prey on users’ data.

Through these two projects, *A Field Guide to Ideology* exposes the internet as a complex space of hyper-connectivity where individual ingenuity provides a path of resistance against its

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pervasive corporate branding, global capitalism, political propaganda, and information censorship.

Miao Ying: A Field Guide to Ideology is a Core Exhibition of the Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival.

Miao Ying: A Field Guide to Ideology

苗穎: 精神实用宝典

Curated by Yan Wu

February 8–April 2, 2022

Justina M. Barnicke Gallery

artmuseum.utoronto.ca/exhibition/miao-ying-a-field-guide-to-ideology

Public Programs

Curatorial Tour with Yan Wu

Saturday, February 12, 2pm

Justina M. Barnicke Gallery

Register: artmuseum.utoronto.ca/program/curatorial-tour-with-yan-wu/

Artist Talk with Miao Ying (In-person and online)

Tuesday, March 8, 6pm ET

Daniels Building, University of Toronto

1 Spadina Crescent

Presented in partnership with the John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design

Register: artmuseum.utoronto.ca/program/artist-talk-with-miao-ying/

Gallery Tour with Miao Ying and Yan Wu

Wednesday, March 9, 2pm–5pm

Justina M. Barnicke Gallery

Register: artmuseum.utoronto.ca/program/gallery-tour-with-miao-ying-and-yan-wu/

About Miao Ying

Miao Ying is part of the first generation of Chinese contemporary artists who grew up with the internet, one-child policy, and Chinese economic reform, and who were educated in both China and the West. She is best known for her projects and writings around Chinese online culture and her Stockholm Syndrome in relation to authoritarianism. Her practice juxtaposes Western technology and ideologies with contemporary China, highlighting the new modes of politics, aesthetics, and consciousness created by the representation of reality through technology. Her works inhabit multiple forms including websites, machine learning software, VR, installations, and paintings. She is based in New York and Shanghai.

Miao's most recent solo exhibitions include *Pilgrimage into Walden XII* (OVR: Pioneers, Art Basel, 2021), *Hardcore Digital Detox* (M+ Museum, Hong Kong, 2018), *Miao Ying: Chinternet Plus* (New Museum, New York, 2016), and *Holding a Kitchen Knife to Cut the Internet Cable* (Chinese Pavilion, Venice

Biennale, 2015). Her works have also been part of various group exhibitions including *Facing the collector* (Castello di Rivoli, Turin, Italy, 2020), *The Art Happens Here: Net Art's Archival Poetics* (New Museum, New York, 2019), *The 12th Gwangju Biennale* (Gwangju, South Korea, 2018), *.com/.cn* (MoMA PS1, New York; KAF, Beirut, Lebanon; 2017), *The New Normal—Art and China in 2017* (UCCA For Contemporary Art, Beijing, 2017), and *Secret Surface* (Kunst-Werke Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, 2016). She is the 2018–2019 winner of Porsche Young Chinese Artist of the Year.

About the Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival

CONTACT is the largest annual photography festival globally, and a major cultural experience in Canada, with over 250 exhibitions and programs from May 1–31 in the Greater Toronto Area. CONTACT 2022 will showcase an outstanding selection of Canadian and international lens-based artists. The Festival's Core Program comprises collaborations with major museums, galleries, and artist-run centres, as well as site-specific public art projects. These are cultivated through partnerships and commissions, and frame the cultural, social, and political events of our times. The Open Call Exhibitions present a range of works by local and international artists at leading galleries and alternative spaces across the city. The Festival also includes a wide range of programs including a book fair, a symposium, lectures, talks, panels, and workshops.

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About the Art Museum at University of Toronto

The Art Museum is one of the largest gallery spaces for visual art exhibitions and programming in Toronto. The Art Museum originates and organizes an intensive year-round program of exhibitions and events that foster—at a local, regional, and international level—innovative research, interdisciplinary scholarship, and knowledge of art and its histories befitting Canada’s leading university and the country’s largest city.

Our Supporters

The Art Museum gratefully acknowledges operating support from the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, and the Toronto Arts Council, with additional project support from the Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival. Special thanks to the MadeIn Gallery in Shanghai for their support in the realization of this exhibition, and to Trinity Square Video and Gallery 44 for supporting the equipment.

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