



Afternoon Projects is pleased to present “Secret Living”, a solo exhibition by Toni Tongyu Zhao. *Secretly Living* as the possessive meditation of a ghost self. It’s when you look at a piece of over used wash cloth and felt empathy, it’s wanting to out-live the lived, to live more than required. From hiding to being hidden, from chasing a seashore to guarding a stagnant time, the ghost lives in their own logic of being.

Meditating on deeper dustier meanings through mark makings of drawing, sewing, crafting, decorating, and cleaning as collecting, this show explores the mental and physical states of new-age hermit life (new age not in new technology but just new, and aged), an experience enhanced by the global pandemic. Like new born ghosts, stranded and bound to their very immediate environments, the works were domestically processed (possessed) with labor, and executed with much obsession.

The friction of daily life can be delicate yet brutal, it’s the softness of the cloth that rubs away the stains on a tile. It’s also too much indoor life, that takes away the work of living. Living is still hard work. Reflecting on daily life in transitional stagnancy, as location and history has seemed to matter less to apartment routines and phone shopping. Glitchy connections where built out of short-sightedness, but life is still everywhere, in a world with many windows.

Metaphors of this show were borrowed from personal journals, family members, neighbouring trees, job applications, lived spaces, real estate advertisements, grocery shops, stationary stores, tropical gardens, distant mountains and some imagination shredded in secret.

Artist Bio

Toni Tongyu Zhao (b. 1993 Hubei, China) is an artist based in her guts, she thinks about material/object encounters and habituated chores. With an often intuitive but coy language, Toni intends to stir up insignificant life moments and ponder about its weirdness. Incorporating craft techniques, collaging and domestic objects, Toni is currently living and working in her home studio in Zhuhai, China.

Toni graduated with a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2016. She was a recipient of the Ox-Bow School of Art LeRoy Neiman Fellowship in 2016, and has performed at the Centre A gallery in Vancouver, CA. In 2018, she was selected for Guangdong Times Museum Banyan Commune Residency program as an artist duo with Sam Chao, their community-based project was exhibited in 2019. In 2020 Toni participated in OCAT Shenzhen “Youth Intersection” program. Her work was recently exhibited at The Shouter Cloister Project in Shanghai.