

# WUTONG\* SAYS: “GLOBALISATION IS OVER, WE NEED TO DEAL WITH CONSEQUENCES.”

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**ZANE MELLUPE**  
SOLO EXHIBITION

CURATED BY LAURENT DE MEYER

**VERNISSAGE 05.SEP.2019 @5PM**  
**IN PRESENCE OF THE ARTIST**

**06.SEP.2019 - 09.NOV.2019**  
**THU. - SAT., 2PM - 6PM**

## BRUSSELS

RUE SAINT-GEORGES/SINT-JORISSTRAAT 24, 1050 IXELLES/ELSENE

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**SCEPTER**  
2019 (VIDEO STILL)

SINGLE CHANNEL VIDEO, 1'25", EDITION OF 3

This exhibition by Zane Mellupe continues to explore the materiality and conceptual nature of objects, pursued already in her series “Graphies” (2015) and other works. The central image of the exhibition is *platanus acerifolia*, a hybrid plane tree. It was formed by hybridisation of *platanus orientalis* and *platanus occidentalis* introduced in many metropolises around the world. The artist sees this as a symbol of globalisation, urban development.

Hybrid plane has many wonderful qualities – its leaves and branches create a good shade, the tree is resistant to high pollution levels, it can thrive in the lack of water as well as in the abundance of water. Its most peculiar character is the way it acquires its new bark; by peeling off the old layers, giving the impression the tree camouflages itself.

Lately things have gone bad for globalisation processes, and coincidentally also for plane trees. A vicious disease, imported from American sycamores, has infected the hybrid plane trees. There is no cure, but to cut down and burn the infected trees.

The exhibition by Zane Mellupe plays on various semantic shades provided by hybrid plane trees. Plane trees of Ixelles/Elsene municipality are dressed up like humans. Humans are blending in with trees. A hybrid state arises where human becomes indistinguishable from trees.

*“I used to do pollarding before and after breakfast, before falling asleep. And the more I did it the more I had to do, starting from the tip of fingers, wrists, the hair, the forehead, then the eyebrows, eyes and ears, then hands, then arms, then shoulders, then the mouth, the chin, then the side of the neck. Till there I stood – utterly lost, well pollarded.”* – Zane Mellupe.

According to Laurent De Meyer, curator of the exhibition, Zane Mellupe *“will trace the complete history of this tree, which parallels with globalisation and the mephitic effects of the latter. Zane’s works are the result of this reflection, the juxtaposition of the elements ‘tree’ and ‘body’, ‘tree’ and ‘urban material’, ‘body’ and ‘urban material’; showing us poetic figures, sensitive, in pain, as they are ill [...]”*.

\* The history of Fàguó Wútóng 法国梧桐 appears in Shanghai former French concession.

法国梧桐 means French Phoenix Trees or French Platanus, known in the western world as London Plane (a.k.a. *Platanus × acerifolia*, *Platanus orientalis* or hybrid plane). The species was formed by hybridisation in the 17th century.

## DURING THE EXHIBITION

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05.SEP.2019

VERNISSAGE IN PRESENCE OF THE ARTIST

PERFORMANCE IN THE GALLERY

03.SEP.2019 - 11.NOV.2019

INSTALLATIONS IN SEVERAL LOCATIONS AT IXELLES/ELSENE COMMUNE



**ALL THOSE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE**  
2019

MULTIPLE LOCATIONS INSTALLATIONS (SITUATION IN SHANGHAI), VARIABLE SIZE

1981 RIGA, LATVIA

**Z**ane Mellupe is a Shanghai-based artist and curator from Latvia. As an artist, she works mainly in contemporary photography where Zane deconstructs the popular understanding of photography, expanding it both conceptually and materially. Another important part of her work is socially involved art, urban renewal projects, as well as documentary research. Zane Mellupe is the founder of YongkangLuArt and WhyWhyArt, and the co-founder of the artists collective Liudao, based in Shanghai.

Embarking on photography studies at the age of fourteen in Riga, and subsequently in London and Shanghai, Zane Mellupe devises her artistic work as a way of “thinking in images”. Her installations and mixed technique photographic work reveal hidden interpretations of our feelings. She employs in her art works three mediums important to her: the image, the object and the body. The object merges with the image, the body reclaims its functions and enters the photographic image. These three mediums are in a dynamic of simultaneous coordination and opposition, in the same way of literary figures of speech. A recurrent element in her work is the questioning of photography, treating the image as if it were an object, and also multiplying the suggestive powers of the image. This oeuvre becomes a visualisation of metaphors that allow us to express mind states. She creates textual pieces, the “physical world of literature”. Photography and reality merge together in Zane Mellupe’s work, being a constant back-and-forth between the material and the conceptual.

Zane’s artistic work could be divided in two parts: the personal and the social, where she involves other artists to conduct research on societal topics.

Zane’s main solo exhibitions are, ‘In the memory of a perfect wife’, ‘Another Trilogy’ and, ‘Creating Terminology? Entropy?’.

Her educational background includes Theatre Direction studies at the Shanghai Theatre Academy, a Bachelor of Arts in Chinese Language & Literature (Shanghai Teacher’s University, 2004), and Master of Arts in Photojournalism & Documentary Photography (University of the Arts, London 2007).

Zane Mellupe’s art has been exhibited in China and Europe in galleries and museums and her works are present in private and public collections.

## PERSONAL EXHIBITIONS

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- 2019 - 'WUTONG\* SAYS: "GLOBALISATION IS OVER, WE NEED TO DEAL WITH CONSEQUENCES."', IFA GALLERY, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM
- 2016 - 'ENTROPY: SENDING OUT AN APPLICATION FOR AN N-SUM', 1933 CONTEMPORARY ART SPACE, SHANGHAI, CHINA
- 2015 - 'CREATING TERMINOLOGY? ENTROPY?', THE BUND ART MUSEUM, SHANGHAI, CHINA
- 2014 - 'ANOTHER TRILOGY', IFA GALLERY, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM
- 2014 - 'SHANGHAI LIGHTS', PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY SCHOOL, RIGA, LATVIA
- 2013 - 'SHANGHAI LIGHTS', THE CASTLE OF CULTURE, VIESITE, LATVIA
- 2012 - 'ŠANHAJAS GAISMAS', M.BUCLERA PHOTOGRAPHY CHAMBER, LONE, LATVIA
- 2011 - 'IN MEMORY OF THE PERFECT WIFE', IFA GALLERY, SHANGHAI, CHINA
- 2010 - 'SHANGHAI LIGHTS', MAJORI CULTURAL CENTRE, JURMALA, LATVIA
- 2009 - 'ŠANHAJAS GAISMAS', SALDUS LIBRARY, SALDUS, LATVIA
- 2009 - 'SHANGHAI LIGHTS', MUSEUM OF OLAINĒ, OLAINĒ, LATVIA
- 2008 - 'SHANGHAI LIGHTS', PHOTOGRAPHY MUSEUM OF LATVIA, RIGA, LATVIA
- 2005 - 'ALSO IN CHINA', HOUSE OF UNITED NATIONS, RIGA, LATVIA

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

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- 2019 - 'ANTONYMS', ACTONITIONS, WHYWHYART, WORLDWIDE
- 2019 - 'DECENTRALISATION', BAOLONG ART FAIR, HANGZHOU, CHINA
- 2017 - 'ON STARTING ANOTHER CONVERSATION ABOUT COMPARATIVE FEMINISM', WHYWHY ART AT CHIC OASIS, NANJING, CHINA
- 2015 - 'BABEL ME', SHANGHAI MUSEUM OF GLASS, SHANGHAI, CHINA
- 2013 - 'MY COUNTRY', IFA GALLERY, SHANGHAI, CHINA
- 2010 - 'POLICE AND HER', IFA GALLERY, SHANGHAI, CHINA

## PROJECTS

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- 2015 - 'FOUNDER OF WHYWHYART, SHANGHAI, CHINA
- 2010 - 'FOUNDER OF YONGKANG LU ART', SHANGHAI, CHINA
- 2008 - 'CO-FOUNDER OF THE ART COLLECTIVE 'LIU DAO'', ISLAND 6 ARTS CENTER, SHANGHAI, CHINA

ifa gallery is established in 2006 in Shanghai by Alexis Kouzmine-Karavaïeff. Diligently visiting artists' studios, the gallery worked to select the most promising artists, whose singular language and means of expression are far from clichés and conventions, offering artistic visions and strong concepts. In a 700sqm converted textile factory space in Moganshan Road, M50 Creative Centre, the gallery presented major exhibitions, e.g. the solo shows for Park Sung-Tae (Korea), and sought-after young artist Liu Bolin (China). In 2008, the gallery moved to a colonial British house from the twenties, located in Jing-An district, and acted as an artistic meeting point for contemporary art in Shanghai organising a number of curated group shows and major solo exhibitions with Gao Brothers, Dai Guangyu, Zane Mellowe and Wu Junyong.

The gallery acquired an international recognition through its participation to art fairs such as Art Basel Hong Kong, Art Paris, Art Stage Singapore, Asia Now or Photo Shanghai.

Fall 2013, ifa gallery moved to new premises in Brussels. The gallery offers a programme with artists from China and new artists from Europe. In parallel to the Brussels move a new exhibition project was opened in 2014 in the district of Jing'An in Shanghai, continuing to showcase some local artists.

ifa gallery exhibits today in Brussels contemporary art regardless of artists origin. Represented artists include Dai Guangyu, a leading figure of China's avant-garde, the Gao Brothers or europeans, such as Zane Mellowe (Latvia), Alexandre Ouairy (France), Paulina Otylie Sury (Poland), and Joakim Eneroth (Sweden). The gallery also features artists such as Zhang Dali, Li Chevalier, Szilárd Cseke, or Christophe Demaître.

## CONTACT


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