

EXHIBITION GUIDE

EPISODE 8: STEPH HUANG

A Great Increase In Business Is On Its Way

24 Jun – 31 Jul 2022

Bridget Riley Gallery, First Floor

For her first institutional solo exhibition, Steph Huang presents a new series of paintings and sculptures exploring food and fortune. Originally from Taiwan and now based in London, Huang is interested in how trade routes and supply chains are informed by colonial legacies. Both an artist and a chef, she looks at food as a ritual, and as one of the oldest forms of exchange between cultures.

Huang has spent time researching markets throughout London – including Ridley Road, Peckham, Deptford and East Street – as well as markets in Paris, Venice and Taiwan. She is interested in the local traditions of each market and in uncovering the social intricacies and “cultural spirits” that inhabit them, as well as how they function as interfaces between consumer and capitalism. The imagery of market signage and architecture is incorporated into Huang’s work, but also the rubbish and detritus produced and discarded as by-products of materialism and trade. Huang often reuses materials from previous works, recycling offcuts as well as incorporating found objects and real food. This playful combination of materials questions how our collective behaviours and superstitions produce a kind of surreal absurdity and how, in turn, these implicate labour, culture and the economy.

New works made especially for the exhibition bring the formal language of bars, restaurants and markets into the gallery. The entrance features a curved curtain rail, reminiscent of European restaurants, but hung here are plastic sheets commonly found in butcher’s shops and industrial fridges. A free-standing sculpture echoes the revolving clothes-hanging structures typically found on market stalls, but in place of garments is neon writing that cites traders’ hyperbolic language: “finest”, “premium”, “selected”. Snaking centrally through the gallery is an S-shaped wooden structure that echoes a bar. Upon it are offerings from Huang: bottles of Campari; peanuts carved in wood before being cast in bronze; in a fibreglass pudding mould, recycled glass fragments of phones, LED screens, wine bottles and strip lights.

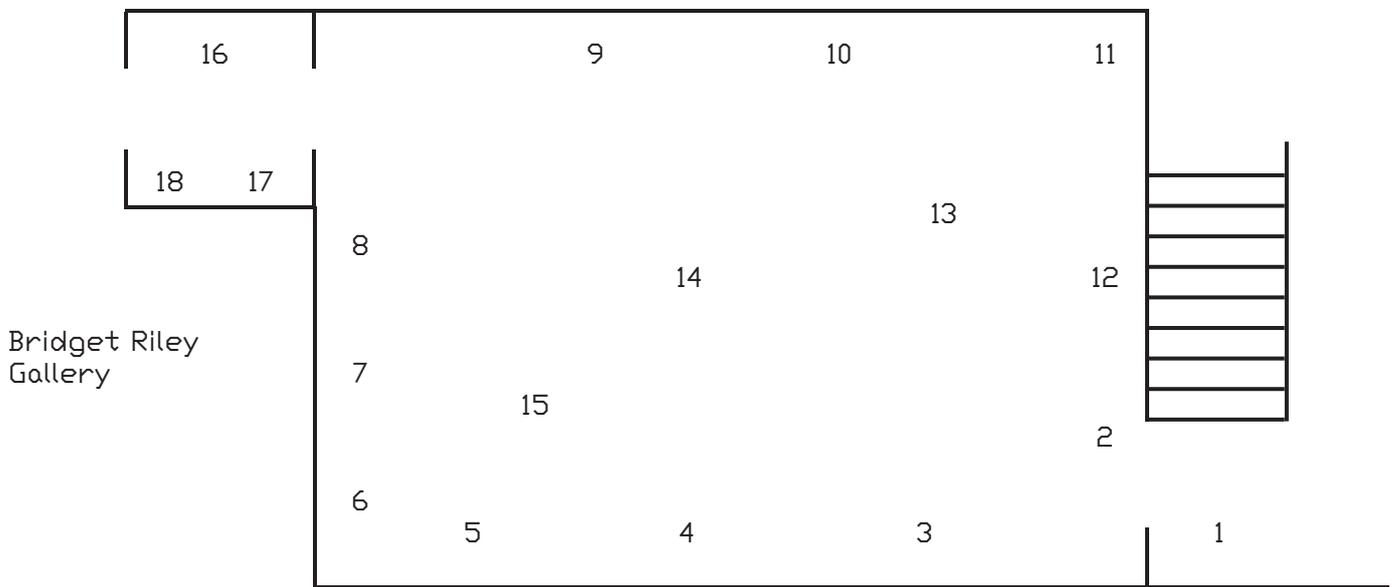
A robotic, fortune-telling pig’s head, *Tannakin Skinker*, references ATM machines and a 17th-century myth of a pig-faced woman, her appearance supposedly a result of witchcraft. Huang links fable with fortune to reveal the illusion of equal exchange. Pigs are a motif for the artist, and sausages in handblown glass and cardamom-filled silk recur throughout the exhibition. A formative image from Huang’s childhood was seeing trucks carrying live pigs on the motorway. In *Commander*, the artist has incorporated a racing car seat with bronze pig trotters, almost seductively poking out from behind a privacy screen.

This exhibition is co-commissioned by Goldsmiths CCA and Devonshire Collective, Eastbourne. A second chapter of the show will open in Eastbourne in November.

A Great Increase In Business Is On Its Way is accompanied by a limited edition publication of the same name, which includes 100 35mm photographs taken by Steph Huang throughout the last few years, taken in various markets around the world, including in London, Leeds, Paris, Venice and Taiwan. It includes new texts by Fuchsia Dunlop, Yvonne Maxwell, Emma McCormick-Goodhart, Alex Rhys-Taylor and Junya Yamasaki, written in response to Huang’s work. Each book features a unique, handmade cover that has been letterpressed and foiled by the artist. Copies can be purchased both at the front desk and online and cost £10 each.

Steph Huang was born in Taiwan, and lives and works in London. She received her MA in Sculpture from Royal College of Art in 2021. This show coincides with the announcement of Huang’s inclusion in Bloomberg New Contemporaries 2022. Previous solo exhibitions include *mother’s tankstation*, London (2022); *ArtWorks Project Space*, London (2020); *Peak*, London (2020); and *4Cose*, London (2019). Selected group exhibitions include *Belmacz*, London (2021); *San Mei Gallery*, London (2021); *Bloc Projects*, Sheffield (2021); *South London Gallery* (2021); *Cromwell Place*, London (2021); *Nida Art Colony of Vilnius Academy*, Lithuania (2020); *Bolton Museum* (2019); *Podium*, Luxembourg (2019); *Alte Handelsschule*, Leipzig (2018); *Incheon Art Platform*, Seoul (2018); and *A.P.T. Gallery*, London (2017).

Episodes is an ongoing series of solo presentations that span installations, screenings, discursive events and new commissions. The focus of this programme is to provide an experimental platform for emergent practices. The series has featured work by: Olivia Sterling (2021), Kobby Adi (2021), Sophie Barber (2020), Roland Carline (2019 – 2020), Corey Hayman (2019), Adam Christensen (2019), and Oisín Byrne (2018 – 2019). Episodes is generously supported by the Episodes Circle: Alexander Petalas, Alison Jacques Gallery, Brian Johnson, Carlos/Ishikawa, Niru Ratnam and Georgie Griffiths, and Olga Ovenden. Additional kind support for this exhibition opening was provided by Campari.



1. *A Great Increase In Business Is On Its Way*

UV print on copper
29.5 x 21 cm

2. *Seascape*

UV print on PVC strip, mild steel
237 x 164 x 85 cm

3. *Salsiccia Piccante*

Powder-coated mild steel, cotton string, hand-blown glass
116 x 34 x 19.5 cm

4. *Private Space*

Plywood, silk, paint, chemiwood
114 x 125 x 323 cm

5. *Commander*

Powder-coated mild steel, bronze, silk, plywood, net, chain
70 x 62 x 45 cm

6. *Fully Tiled*

Inkjet print on non-woven paper
600 x 553 cm

7. *Tranquility*

Plywood, paint, hardwood, powder-coated mild steel
122 x 184 x 15 cm

8. *Vagues*

Powder-coated mild steel, fibreglass
113 x 23 x 10.5 cm

9. *Tannakin Skinker*

MDF, chemiwood, mild steel, paint, chain, arduino system, perspex
148 x 60 x 48 cm

10. *Mortadella Bologna*

Cotton string, hand-blown glass
25 x 12 x 12 cm

11. *Flow*

MDF, paint, silk, cardamom pod, thread
45 x 100 x 45 cm

12. *Do You Hear the People Speak?*

Plywood, speaker, cable, hand-blown glass, dowel, tin, sound (00:06:00)
110 x 18 x 32 cm

13. *Finest, Premium, Selected*

Neon light, powder-coated mild steel
140 x 73 x 73 cm

14. *Open Bar*

Plywood, powder-coated mild steel, bronze, glass, fibreglass, paint, Campari, cotton, powder-coated aluminium tube
102 x 100 x 320 cm

15. *Up in the Wind*

Powder-coated mild steel
200 x 35 x 20 cm

16. *Willow*

Plywood, paint, hardwood
122 x 122 x 2.5 cm

17. *The Destiny of Lazy Susan*

Mild steel, MDF, net, copper
48 x 46 x 46 cm

18. *Spice Bag*

Silk, cardamom pod, thread
98 x 34 x 19.5 cm

[All works 2022]