

**DIRTY HOUSE**

95 HAYMERLE  
ROAD  
SE15 6SD  
LONDON

## **Mu Tian**

### **Killing All On Board**

**23-29 MARCH 2019**  
**PV: 22 MARCH 6PM-LATE**

Dirty House, in collaboration with Mu Tian presents *Killing All On Board*: a solo exhibition based on the human, the machine and ancient mythology. The artist follows his long-standing interest in human anatomy and the machine creating a narrative context to investigate the relationship between a mechanical installation and mundane life. *Killing All On Board* includes a marble sculpture, two prints on chrome board, a wallpaper, two 3D printed snake heads, two medical eyeball models, ink drawings on the wall, six fire-shaped aluminium plates, several metal chains and hours of physical labour from different human beings.

The title *Killing All On Board* comes from a piece of news that reported a serious aviation accident, in which the engine's malfunction caused the death of all passengers aboard the aircraft. Such accidents are sometimes left unsolved with no further explanation, evoking different hypotheses and conspiracy theories. The artist takes a fictional angle to propose a potential narrative: what if something more intangible than the human force causes such tragedies? Just like in a myth. The exhibited engine sculpture is made of marble, a material historically used in preserving iconic figures, similar to one's fate upon encountering the gaze of Medusa. What if Medusa stares at the engine and petrified the machine, causing the crash of the plane?

Of course, such explanations are not acceptable in a scientifically material world. However, a myth and a piece of art are both metaphorical stories, and we shall look beyond the physical bodies to search for their indications. A machine is broken if it does not follow its physical rules, also called a malfunction. The broken mechanical component become an individual since it no longer serves the whole machine. If the isolated problem remains unresolved, the broken status extends to the entire machine, the state becomes irreversible. In an accident such as a plane crash, the unchangeable state comes from the contrast between the superior strength of an inhuman species and the powerlessness of a singular human being, when facing an uncontrollable disaster that is much greater than oneself.

Mu Tian uses an absurd visual language to illustrate these unforeseen vulnerabilities brought on by technology. The human body and mechanical components in his work are equally vibrant matters. The disassembled parts do not maintain their original function within the system, but become objects independent from its adjacent parts. To reassemble those parts into a mixture indicates a fantasy, which is repeatedly explored in history. Whether it is the gods in ancient mythology, or the cyborgs in the future, they have been produced to reflect an imagination of human beings to expand their capabilities, which is driven by the inevitable mistakes made by machines.

Mu Tian (b. China 1985) lives and works in London. Currently studying MA Sculpture at Royal College of Art. Mu produces works in a variety of media including drawing, painting, sculpture, and video. His upcoming projects include a public sculpture at Broomhill Sculpture Park, (2019); solo exhibition at Hive Art Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing(2019), residency program at ZK/U Berlin (2019). Mu is also a member of the Royal Society of Sculptors since 2018,