

Edouard Malingue Gallery
马凌画廊

Sixth floor, 33 Des Voeux
Road Central, Hong Kong

2202, 2879 Longteng Ave.
Xuhui District, Shanghai

≡edouardmalingue.com

Samson Young

The highway is like a lion's mouth

Opening

6 November 2018, 5 – 7 PM

Dates

6 November – 23 December 2018

Contact

+86 21 6468 2389

mail@edouardmalingue.com

Media Enquiries

Wenjing Wang

wenjing@edouardmalingue.com

+86 21 6468 2389

All Other Enquiries

Ella Liao

ella@edouardmalingue.com

+86 21 6468 2389

The highway is like a lion's mouth

Samson Young's 2018 solo exhibition at Edouard Malingue Gallery (Shanghai) entitled *The highway is like a lion's mouth* follows from the English translation of a slogan that is familiar to Hong Kongers. Originating in a 1990s government-sponsored jingle, it educated children about the dangers of jaywalking.

Multi-disciplinary artist Samson Young was trained as a composer and graduated with a Ph.D. in Music Composition from Princeton University in 2013. His academic background in music has led him to incorporate elements of experimental music, sound studies and site-specific performance into his distinctive contemporary art practice. Young has had solo exhibitions at the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Centre for Contemporary Chinese Art in Manchester, M+ Pavilion in Hong Kong, and Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, among others. In 2017, he represented Hong Kong in a solo project at the Hong Kong Pavilion of the 57th Venice Biennale. Samson Young continues to be an active composer and years of practice in composition have earned him insights into the symbolism of musical structure. In his work, the auditory represents a reality that is hidden from plain sight. He excavates the ideological significance of sound and music and examines music's role as an instrument of power. His oeuvre employs sound as a thinking tool, cutting through the veil of the everyday and of common sense, to uncover its political propositions.

In *Noise: A Political Economy of Music* (1977), Jacques Attali pointed out that music is a mirror of society: "Music is a herald, for change is inscribed in noise faster than it transforms society." Ever since the notion of car culture and car living was promoted to great fanfare at the 1933 World's Expo in Chicago, a new mode of living emerged alongside new social systems and behavioural norms. In this exhibition the artist revisits the dawn of the automobile age, exploring motor vehicle's dual nature as a symbol of optimism and a source of anxiety as road safety increasingly became a public concern. At the core of this exhibition is an animated music video titled *The highway is like a lion's mouth*. The animation is the artist's take on a road safety educational jingle, a genre of music that has evolved independently in many parts of the world, which serves as a prime example of how governments use mass media and advertising campaigns to regulate existing social norms or instigate new ones. *The highway is like a lion's mouth* is the first part of a trilogy of animated music videos, the entirety of which will be presented in a solo exhibition in 2019 at the SMART Museum in Chicago.

Also included in this exhibition are *My car makes noises* and *Solid* – two series of new sound drawings by the artist. *My car makes noises* are visual representations of the sounds of malfunctioning automobiles. For those with driving experience, such sounds contain a great deal of information with minute differences allowing one to detect the state of the vehicle so that preemptive measures may be taken to avoid terrible accidents. *Solid* are graphical transcriptions of the sound of Porsche and Mercedes-Benz doors slamming shut. In the common lexicon of car 'talk', European cars have a reputation for being strong and solid. The truth of the matter is that luxury carmakers invest considerable resources into engineering a bass-heavy, full-bodied, door-shutting sound. Through the act of transcription in *Solid*, it is as though the artist is wondering whether these luxury cars can convey through sound a sense of reliability and safety.

The exhibition rounds off with a theme park bumper car in the shape of a gigantic 3D-printed shoe. As the "shoe" makes its way, in snail-like speed, across the gallery floor, its movement is accompanied by the theme song from the classic BBC radio programme *Music While You Work*. The post-war program piped popular

light music into offices and factories across the nation with the aim of relieving the tedium of labour and raising workers' productivity. The "shoe" also references the "boot" piece in Monopoly. In the classic board game the boot was a long-standing symbol of the working class before it was removed from the game in 2017 along with the thimble and wheelbarrow,

Samson Young's accomplishments as a composer have made his work stand out in the world of contemporary art through his acute powers of aural perception - his distinctive tool to understand reality. Today, "car living" has become a reality and highways and thoroughfares for automobiles have become a completely ordinary element of living. By rethinking what is now an accepted condition of living, and by magnifying the sound and music that such conditions generate, the artist ultimately seeks to examine how we as a society adapt and conform in the face of rapid progress.

///

Multi-disciplinary artist Samson Young was trained as a composer, and graduated with a Ph.D. in Music Composition from Princeton University in 2013. Young has had solo exhibitions at the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Centre for Contemporary Chinese Art in Manchester, M+ Pavilion in Hong Kong, and Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, among others. In 2017, he represented Hong Kong in a solo project at the Hong Kong Pavilion of the 57th Venice Biennale. Group exhibitions include Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Biennale of Sydney; National Museum of Art, Osaka; National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul; and documenta 14: documenta radio; amongst others. Furthermore, he has participated in multiple festivals, as well as been the recipient of several prizes, including the 2015 BMW Art Journey Award and 2018 Hong Kong Art Centre Honorary Fellowship. Further awards include Artist of the Year (Hong Kong Arts Development Council), Prix Ars Electronica, Bloomberg Emerging Artist Award.