

Press Information, June 2021

Zheng Bo – You are the 0.01%

Schering Stiftung | Unter den Linden 32–34 | 10117 Berlin

Press Preview: Monday, June 21, 2021 (summer solstice), 1:00–3:00 p.m.

Please register with Anna Papenburg | papenburg@scheringstiftung.de

Exhibition Opening: Monday, June 21, 2021 (summer solstice), 3:00–8:00 p.m.

Exhibition Dates: June 22 – September 30, 2021

Opening hours: Monday to Wednesday 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., Thursday & Friday 1 p.m. – 7 p.m., Saturday & Sunday 11:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. | Free admission.



Zheng Bo (in collaboration with wheat), YOU ARE THE 0.01%, installation view at Oi! Art Space, Hong Kong, 2019

Zheng Bo's installation "You are the 0.01%" is part of the artist's series "Living Slogans," which premiered in Hong Kong in 2019. On a lawn area in the courtyard of the Schering Stiftung, the words "You are the 0.01%" are clearly visible. The message planted from grass seeds refers to the sobering research findings by the scientists Yinon M. Bar-On, Rob Phillips, and Ron Milo, published in 2018 in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences: According to their studies, human beings make up just 0.01% of the earth's biomass but consume 30% of the entire primary production of the biosphere.

A political link with another slogan emerges: "We are the 99%" was the rallying cry of the Occupy Wall Street movement, which formed in 2011 to protest the unequal distribution of wealth in the

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United States, where 25 percent of the country's wealth is held by the richest one percent of the population.

In "You are the 0.01%," Zheng Bo refers not only to the unequal distribution of wealth. Through the slogan, the artist wants to express his view that the inequality between humans is directly related to the inequality between humans and other life forms. He therefore encourages us to reframe the Occupy slogan in ecological terms. "We are the 99 %. We are the 0.01%. We, the 99%, need the 99.99%. We need to collaborate with all non-human life forms."

In parallel with the installation at the Schering Stiftung, Zheng Bo's solo exhibition "Wanwu Council 萬物社" will be on display at the Gropius Bau Berlin until August 23. The exhibition picks up on the central question that the artist explored during his 2020 residency at the Gropius Bau: How do plants practice politics? Bo discussed this question with scientists from different disciplines in dialogue formats such as podcasts and a digital symposium, which took place at the Gropius Bau in November 2020 in cooperation with the Schering Stiftung. His fundamental concern is to challenge the dominant anthropocentric worldview. One possibility to let go of this worldview is offered by Zheng Bo's "Ecosensibility Exercises." They are to sensitize humans to perceive plants as political beings instead of reducing them to mere biological entities. By choosing the term "political beings," the artist on the one hand refers to the need for a structured and fundamental communication process between humans and plants. On the other hand, the term also suggests that plants too communicate with each other and establish productive and complex forms of coexistence.

One result of Zheng Bo's many conversations with scientists is the film work "The Political Life of Plants 植物的政治生活" (2021), which will be on view at the Gropius Bau and which was co-funded by the Schering Stiftung. Recorded in the beech forest of Grumsin in Brandenburg, the film features, among other things, the artist's conversations with the plant ecologist Prof. Dr. Matthias Rillig (FU Berlin) and the biologist Dr. Roosa Laitinen (Max Planck Institute of Molecular Plant Physiology).

Zheng Bo (*1974) lives on Lantau Island, Hong Kong. Since 2013, he has been associate professor at the School of Creative Media at the City University of Hong Kong. His works have been shown, among others, at Manifesta, the Yokohama Triennale, the Liverpool Biennial, and the Tapei Biennial.

For more information on the exhibition, please contact:

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