

曾慶強

REXY TSENG

PORTFOLIO

2025.04.17



Scars and Pores | 2024 | 200 x 200 x 5 cm | Oil on canvas



Mouthful of Dirty Copper | 2025.01.16 - 2025.03.01 | Solo exhibition | Magenta Plains | New York, NY, USA





Somewhere Nowhere | 2022 | Installation | 660 x 364 x 85 cm | Baggage carousel, packing tape, bubble wrap, mixed media





Somewhere Nowhere

2022

660 x 364 x 85 cm

Baggage carousel, packing tape, bubble wrap, mixed media

The airport is a place of reunions and goodbye, where expectations are met and escapism is realized. Its baggage claim is therefore a composite of signifiers; transporting meaningful souvenirs, personal valuables, exotic merchandise, and more. Any unclaimed object on this cyclical construct points to unfulfilled desires and unwanted stories. It lingers in purgatory to never be lifted.

"Somewhere Nowhere" is inspired by the vacant airports during the COVID-19 pandemic, when lovers and families became separated and estranged. As national and regional borders closed one by one, plans and promises were broken. In the critical situation, we saw the frailty of contemporary existence, the inherent flaws of technocapitalism, and our longing for others.

The installation appropriates an airport baggage carousel, nullifying its original usage. The work stages humor and tragedy. Similar to lovers in a long distance relationship, the two humanlike luggages in bubble wrap are fated to circle each other for eternity, forever yearning yet never reaching physical proximity. The work is a comical portrait of a dysfunctional technocratic state, where tools meant to bring intimacy only drive us further into isolation.

Video documentation: [vimeo.com/739623941](https://vimeo.com/739623941)





Pyres | 2023 | 100 x 100 x 5 cm | Oil on canvas





Batting Average of a Dick | 2022 | Installation | Dimensions variable | Baseball bats, robotic arms, punching bag, clothes, red carpet





Batting Average of a Dick

2022

Dimensions variable

Baseball bats, robotic arms, punching bag, clothes, red carpet

The work is inspired by an incident of real-life violence.

In 2020, a friend of the artist was assaulted at his doorstep in Taipei, his head was bashed by an assailant wielding two blunt weapons. There was massive bleeding and the friend was rushed to hospital. With multiple surveillance recordings and solid evidence, the incident was reported with the expectation of swift justice. However, after three appeals, the court gave only a reduced verdict and a mediocre fine to the aggressor.

Witnessing the spectacular failure of the Taiwanese justice system, the artist externalized the feelings of anger, helplessness, and irrationality into the installation.

Two robotic arms holding baseball bats repeatedly strike the punching bag on the red carpet. The scene manifests danger and absurdity. The punching bag is a symbol of masculinity, but it lays tragically on the ground and endures punishment repetitively. The work is an endless cycle of banal violence, it offers no explanation or resolution. When facing life's chaos at times, one can only powerlessly accept it as it unfolds, and in acceptance there exists the cruel humor of the civilized world.

Video documentation: [vimeo.com/743779709](https://vimeo.com/743779709)





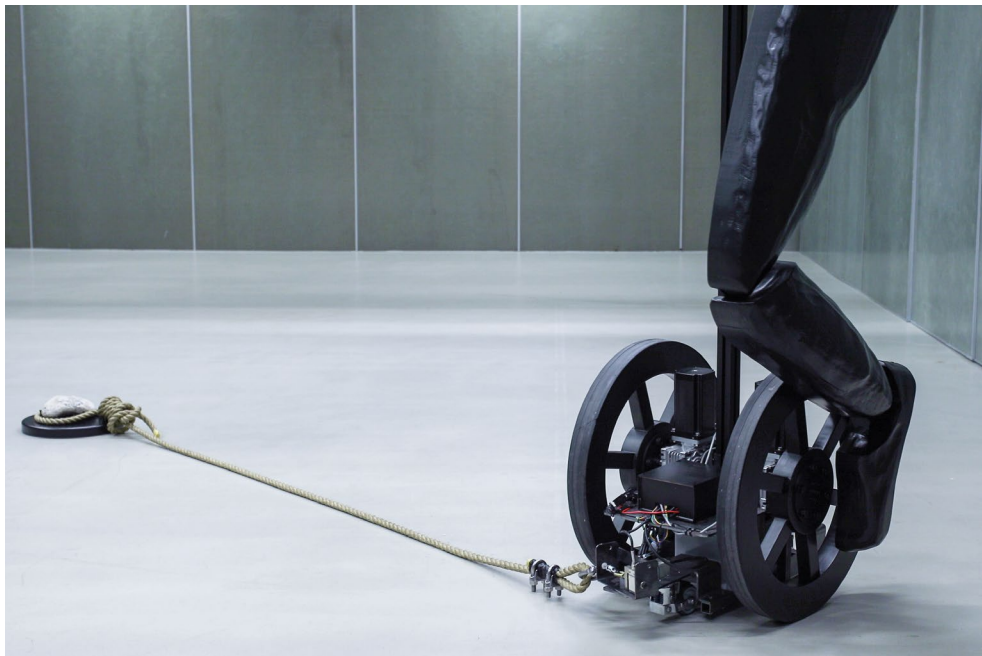
Bad Business | 2022 | 250 x 250 x 5 cm | Oil on canvas





Above a King, Beneath a Thing | 2020 | Installation | Dimensions variable | Wood, rubber, steel, aluminum, paint, rope, stone, electronics





Above a King, Beneath a Thing

2020

Wood, rubber, steel, aluminum, paint, rope, stone, electronics

A black mass, resembling a human leg, slowly moves across the floor. The mechanical leg, tethered to a stone by a rope, is quietly driven by wheels and motors. Sensing the tension in the rope, the onboard computer adjusts the motors' speed to render a circumscribed path. As the leg circles, the stone also turns like a ticking clock. The installation resembles aspects of a horse mill, a chained dog, and a science fiction entity. Its motion carries the weight of unknown anticipation, wavering between the familiar and the strange, between comedy and gravity.

The work draws inspiration from two sources: "robota," the Czech origin of the word "robot" and Sisyphus, who is condemned to push a boulder up a hill for eternity in Greek mythology. "Robota" translates to forced labor, just like Sisyphus who pushes the boulder up only for it to roll back down again. The work is an absurd comic about the repetitive daily routines that we perform, but it also asks serious questions about contemporary servitude in a capitalist society. With technological advancements and a widening wealth inequality, are we moving toward a better future?

Lastly, the work envisions a possible post-human state, where the machines are left to carry out previously programmed tasks in indefinite futility until its eventual breakdown into lifeless stones.

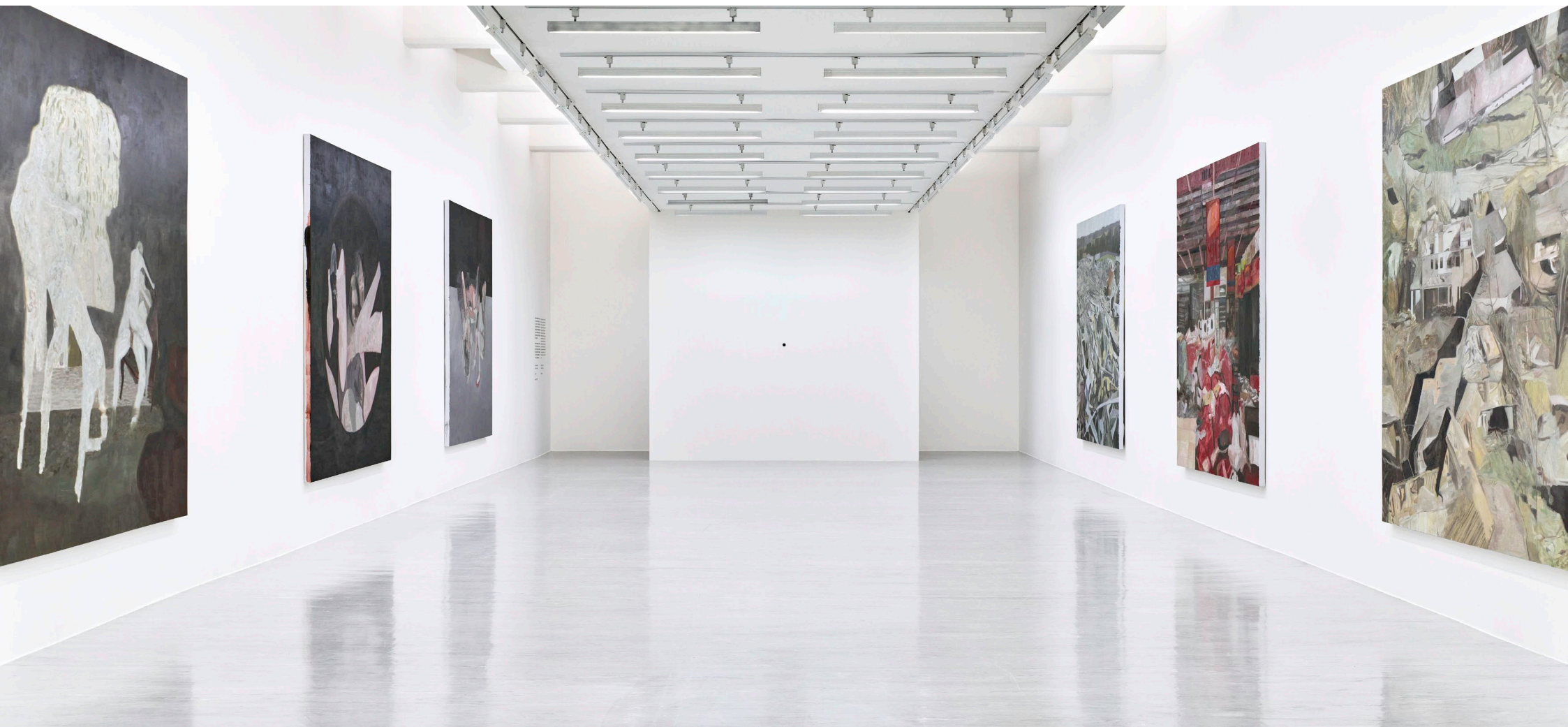
Video documentation: [vimeo.com/452818063](https://vimeo.com/452818063)





Taipei Art Awards | 2020.12.12 - 2021.02.28 | Taipei Fine Arts Museum | Taipei, Taiwan | [vimeo.com/502254103](https://vimeo.com/502254103)













Torn Estates | 2022 | 250 x 250 x 5 cm | Oil on canvas





Scrap and Shine | 2022 | 250 x 250 x 5 cm | Oil on canvas





The Sum of Fears | 2024 | Installation | Dimensions variable | Stone lions, surveillance cameras



The Sum of Fears

2024

Installation

Dimensions variable

Stone lions, surveillance cameras

The installation consists of stone lions and surveillance cameras, all collected from various sources. In Chinese culture, stone lions (shishi) are architectural ornaments believed to protect owners from malicious intentions, evil spirits, bad luck, or intruders. Similarly, surveillance cameras are used to enhance control and security. By combining the symbolic and functional meanings of these objects, the installation presents contrasting concepts such as old and new, mystical and technological, fact and fiction.







Return to Senders | 2024 | 150 x 150 x 5 cm | Oil on canvas





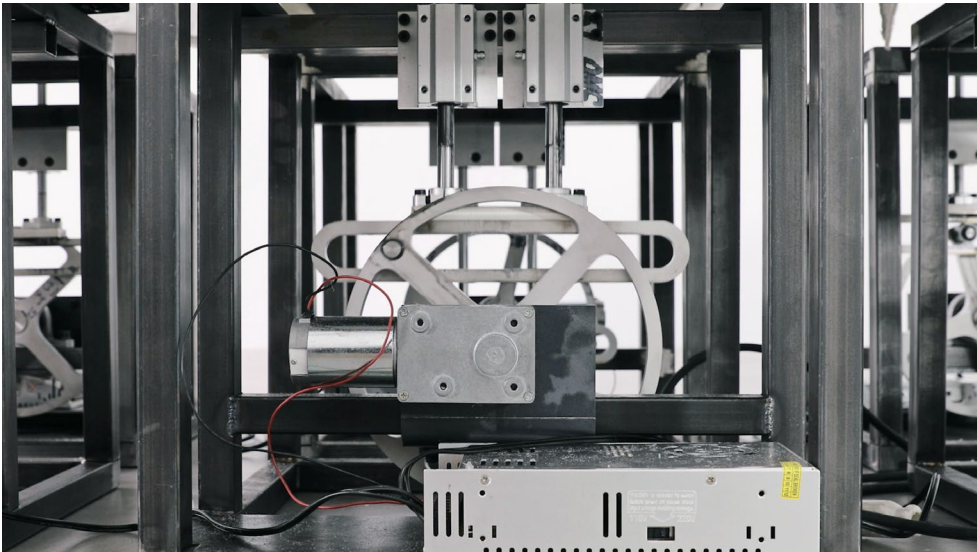
90x200 | 2019 | Installation | 90 x 200 x 60 cm | Cloth, metal, wood, bodily fluids, electronics | [vimeo.com/309451791](https://vimeo.com/309451791)





"90x200" is an installation that dramatizes the emotions of frustration, anxiety, and delirium through mechanical movements. The work is inspired by the artist's own experience of being bedridden because of a serious infection in Paris. It stages the internal state of push-and-pull with a ghostly body accompanied by stale and repetitive machine noises, signaling a symbolic sickness of contemporary living by automation.

The title "90x200" not only describes the dimensions of a single bed, but also evokes the idea of pixelation. As one's perspective is increasingly commanded by screen pixels, the body is becoming a secondary point of reference to the external world. The work plays out as a crude mechanical resolution, pointing to a possible future in which the human body disappears while machinery performs the lingering visceral and psychological residues for eternity.



The work poses three episodes of engagement. One, the viewer is confronted by the motorized choreography as the mattress breathes and the sheets tear; the work inhales into a possible breakdown and then exhales back to inconclusiveness. Two, the audience is faced with his/her own projection of being propped and moved by the bed parts, the motors working the audience through an ambiguous forecast of pain and pleasure. Three, the audience is left wondering about the possible outcomes after disengaging from the work: Will the performance sustain? Or will the parts wear themselves out to an unfulfilled promise?

Video documentation: [vimeo.com/309451791](https://vimeo.com/309451791)



After Delight | 2023 | 100 x 100 x 5 cm | Oil on canvas





Sweet Nothing | 2019 | Installation | Dimensions variable | Carts, gold foil paper, chocolate, sand



Sweet Nothing

2019

Dimensions variable

Carts, gold foil paper, chocolate, sand

"Sweet Nothing" is an installation initially conceived at an ironwork factory in Chongqing, China. The work repurposes two carts found on site. Wheel and cart are two fundamental technologies of human history, they augment material transportation with speed, load, and ease. By extension, they provide the necessary means for the development of a commodified society. The materials carried by carts therefore signify economical relevance or production waste.

In the installation, one cart spills sand while the other spills chocolate wrapped in gold foil paper. Sand is noted as an abundant and low cost material/waste; chocolate is associated with the notions of luxury, passion, and colonial history. The chocolate balls, presented as golden treasures, symbolize the peak of capitalism; the sand represents the base of a capitalistic pyramid. The forced merging of the two materials demonstrates an uncomfortable juxtaposition of opposites: gold and dirt, have and have-not, rich and poor. The viewer may be inclined to perceive the setup as a mistake, an accidental spill, or a conflict of interest.

The title "Sweet Nothing" is a misspelling of the idiom "sweet nothings," the tender words exchanged by lovers. Taking the customary sign of chocolate as a gift of affection, sand in this scenario denotes the lack of affection. The work can be read as a tragic split, where one party is full of passion while the other is emotionally detached.





Spring Temper (left), Wet Dirt (right) | 2024 | 35 x 27 x 2 cm (each) | Oil on canvas



Cosmic Rejection (left), Stealing From Heaven (right) | 2025 | 35 x 27 x 2 cm (each) | Oil on canvas





Sugar High | 2021 | Installation | Dimensions variable | White sugar, glue, wood



Sugar High

2021

Installation

Dimensions variable

White sugar, glue, wood

Block: 1.5 cm × 2.5 cm × 7.5 cm

Platform: 30 x 30 x 5 cm

Appropriating the classic game of Jenga, the work consists of fifty-four blocks of white sugar on a pedestal. The work, manifesting the excitement and risk of stacking blocks onto an increasing height and against an unstable structure, is an analogy to the reckless pursuit of monetary gains in the greater fool theory: the brash purchase of overpriced assets later on, for a higher price, is deemed the greater fool.



The work comments on the cryptocurrency hype of 2020-2021, where digital assets climb to record market highs with dubious economic foundation. The sugar blocks symbolize the optimistic rush of a buyer who expects his investment to rise ever higher. The ephemeral nature of sugar also creates the expectation of a future collapse through insects, moisture, or heat. The protruding pedestal adds to the suspension and potential fall. The all white appearance of the work makes it ghostly against the wall, as if the work exists halfway between the physical and the ether.





Open Wound | 2024 | 150 x 150 x 5 cm | Oil on canvas



Wet Walls | 2024 | 150 x 150 x 5 cm | Oil on canvas





Cavities | 2020-2023 | Painting series | 50 x 50 x 2 cm (each) | Oil on canvas





Cavities | 2020-2023 | Painting series | 50 x 50 x 2 cm (each) | Oil on canvas





Cavities

2020-2023

Painting series

50 x 50 x 2 cm (each)

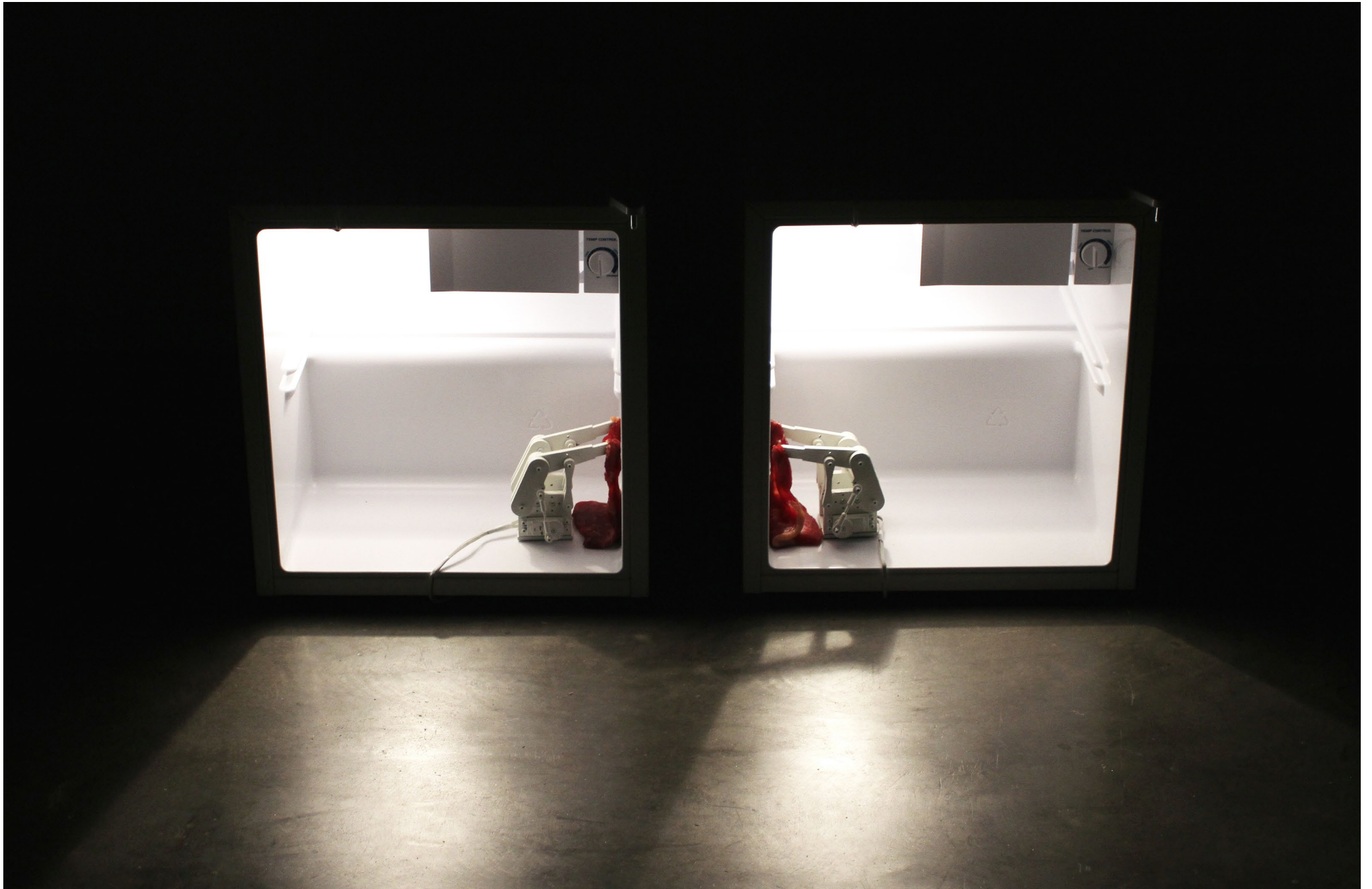
Oil on canvas

"Cavities" is a painting series that originated during the COVID-19 quarantine in 2020. It comprises scenes devoid of human presence. The word "cavity" denotes an empty space within an object or a compartment of an animal's body. Instantiating the concept, the pool is intentionally rendered with a hint of flesh tone to enhance the double meaning. The pool is a symbol of leisure and family activities, holding buoyant bodies; however, a drained pool is an emotional hole, embodying only past memories. The deserted pool stands as a relic of affluence, its emptiness resembling a capitalist ruin, where a force majeure disposes of the haves and have-nots alike.



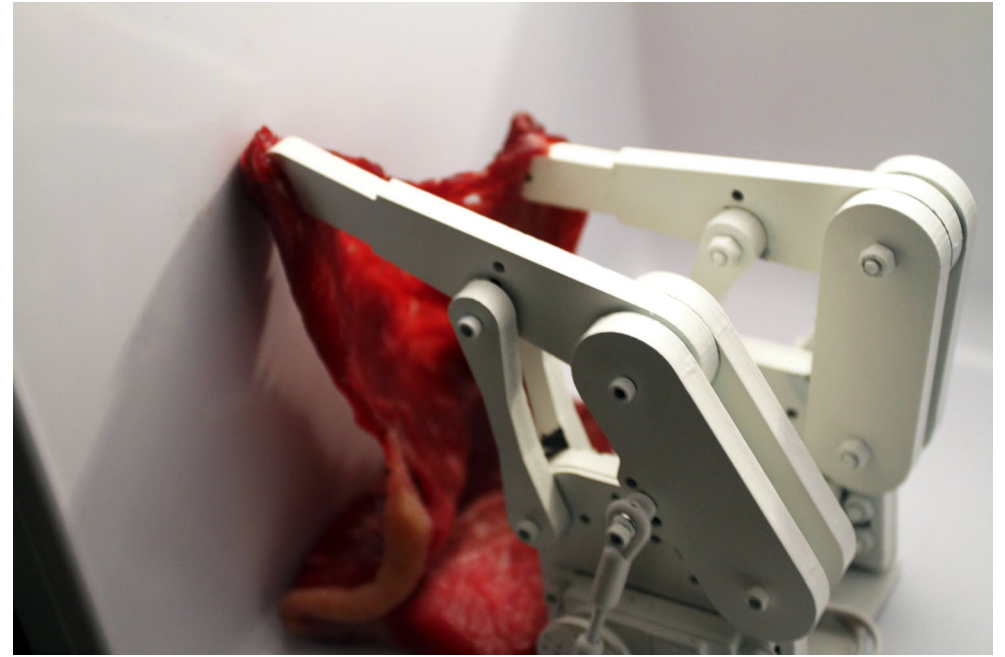
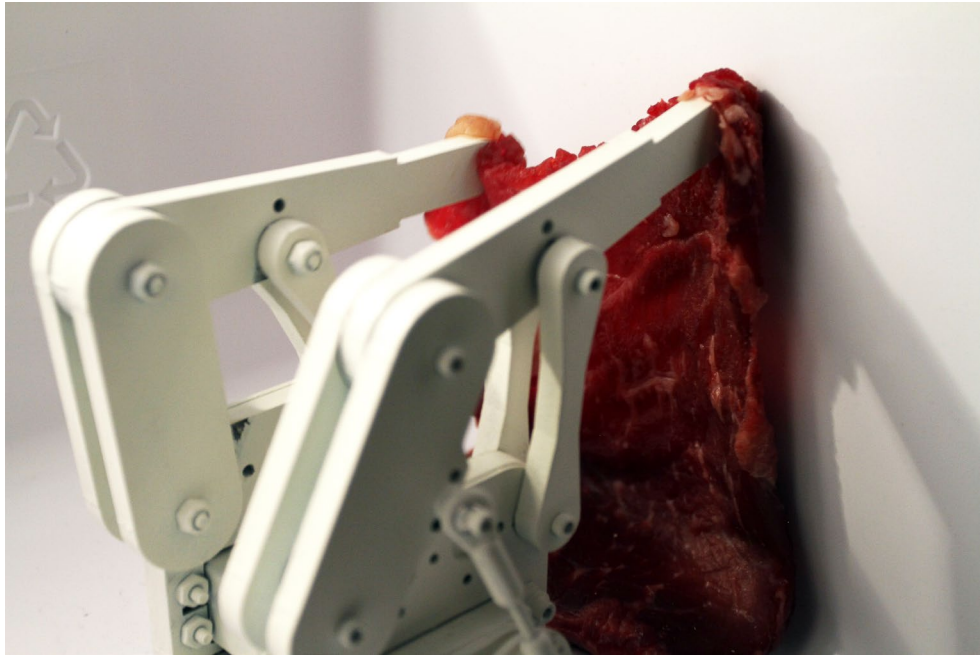
Complementing the pool, the natural scenery offers an optimistic relief. The absence of human activities points to the possibility of renewal; in the vast expanse of the space-time continuum, the erasure of civilization accounts for mere melancholy.

Separated by a physical gap, the duo images invite emotional residue. The pairing of manless scenes with fluctuating moods reflects on quarantine bipolarity, a mental state that wavers between hope and despair.



Meet Apart | 2010 | Installation | 50 x 48 x 90 cm | Meat, mini fridges, electronics | [vimeo.com/18451702](https://vimeo.com/18451702)





Meet Apart

2010

Installation

50 x 48 x 90 cm

Meat, mini fridges, electronics

Two rectangular mini fridges glow in the dark, each with a small robot inside acting on a piece of raw meat. The robots seem to be attempting to communicate by pushing the meat back together. The work provokes a mixed sense of sympathy, disgust, affection, absurdity, powerlessness, humor, and eeriness. Inspired by our primal need to connect with one another, "Meet Apart" presents animalistic desires against modular machine logic. The work is a comic metaphor to our intimate tendencies as lovers, brothers, neighbors, friends, and lonely strangers.

Video documentation: [vimeo.com/18451702](https://vimeo.com/18451702)

## VIDEO LINKS:

2022 | PAIN AND PLEASURE | [VIMEO.COM/753181737](https://vimeo.com/753181737)

2022 | SOMEWHERE NOWHERE | [VIMEO.COM/739623941](https://vimeo.com/739623941)

2022 | BATTING AVERAGE OF A DICK | [VIMEO.COM/743779709](https://vimeo.com/743779709)

2020 | TAIPEI ART AWARDS | [VIMEO.COM/502254103](https://vimeo.com/502254103)

2020 | ABOVE A KING, BENEATH A THING | [VIMEO.COM/452818063](https://vimeo.com/452818063)

2019 | 90X200 | [VIMEO.COM/309451791](https://vimeo.com/309451791)

2010 | MEET APART | [VIMEO.COM/18451702](https://vimeo.com/18451702)



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