

tutu gallery

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1028 Bedford Ave, Brooklyn, NY

Alexander Si

Atlas

Curated by April Zhu

May 14th - June 18th, 2021

Tutu Gallery, 1028 Bedford Ave, Brooklyn, NY



Tutu Gallery is delighted to announce the opening of Alexander Si's solo show *Atlas* on Friday, May 14th, 2021 with a reception from 6 - 9 pm. The show features the site-specific mixed media installation *Atlas (05142021)*. For this iteration of his work, Alexander will expand the size of the installation tailored to the gallery space, tying the narrative element of *Atlas* to the domesticity of Tutu. Through this piece, Alexander examines the identity of a modern-day spectator and the boundless knowledge and entertainment granted by the internet, questioning the feasibility of forming one's own identity under these influences.

Alexander Si makes a map. He releases names in his head automatically, scrawling them onto a wall with vehemence, his wrist like stone: Bruce Nauman, Lana Del Rey, Serge Gainsbourg, Leonard Cohen, Lou Doillon, Abel Tesfaye, Kim Kardashian. The names that occur to him are those of great presences, of models, filmmakers, celebrities, writers, musicians, artists. They reveal that perhaps, on this given day, the artist had a certain sensibility for the threads of glamour and fame that gloss human history. To have your name remembered by a loved one is one thing; to have it remember across globally and timelessly is another. It is hard to imagine never being forgotten. This grid of names: a dazzling and blinding map of the blue Earth, or an accumulation of a particular mind's knowledge. When you look at it from afar the names appear rigid, contained, and entombed.

Si has covered the grid. He crucifies the names with various fasteners, connecting them associatively using white electrical wires and ethernet cables attached to his back. He grows entwined to the names which have only just passed through his mind. There are consequences to thought. What you let occur to you will burden you forever.

I suppose all maps hold a promise of finality. I wonder if those early cartographers imagined how their shapes of the Earth's surface would change, by force of both human precision and human damage. What they have in common with Si's map is an attempt to make one thing stand for another. In the artist's case: this "mind map" (as Si puts it) signifies the saturation of popular culture. His brain is steeped in it: unboxing videos, YouTube feuds, on-and-off again Instagram, watching every film ever featuring a particular actor, being unable to pull oneself away from the screen at night until realizing the sun has risen. The fear of what happens when you sleep too close to your phone. The fear of being away from the phone for too long and the knowledge that life will creep on behind ones back.

Si has connected the names on the walls. He turns and pulls and attempts to yank the work from the wall in heavy gestures. Some of the chains break free from the wall. Some of the panels fall off in chunks, wires snap, and the floor is covered with dusts and ashes.

There is a delight in seeing visual artists destroy things, to be certain. There is also a delight in knowing that the thing created was created for a purpose, to be used and scattered across the ground of our world. Destruction is the work. It's the internal push-and-pull we all have with media and informational technology manifested and emphasized.

- *Naomi Falk*

Alexander Si is a multidisciplinary artist, curator, and publisher who lives and works in Chinatown, New York, NY. He holds two honor BAs in Architecture and Media Studies at the University of Toronto, and an MFA in Fine Arts at the School of Visual Arts. Si has been included in various exhibitions with galleries and institutions like Chinatown Soup, Spring/Break art fair, Latitude Gallery, 187 Augusta, and Visual Aids. Si is currently the dual program fellow at the Elizabeth Foundation of the Arts. He is also the founder and director of 24EBroadway, a project space in Chinatown dedicated to producing socially relevant and curatorial and editorial contents.

Tutu Gallery is a DIY art space in Bed-stuy Brooklyn. Founded by Tutu (cat) and her human assistant, the gallery is dedicated to under-the-radar talent who are immigrants, students, or self-trained artists of all medium and discipline.