

Lee Kit: You.

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A response to the Venice Biennale

For his first exhibition at the Venice Biennale last year, Hong Kong artist Lee Kit chose to reflect the metaphorical mirror away from himself and direct the refractions towards the audience, hence the title *You (you)*. The pavilion and indoor space he was granted was filled with readymade utilitarian objects, which were juxtaposed with sound, video and performance works. Lee was joined by curators Lars Nittve and Yung Ma in creating a space which he called 'a home space, but not necessarily my space. It looks like the corners in people's homes'.



You and me Kit's Venice show, 2013

Those familiar with Lee's oeuvre will know to read the subtle shifts in his quotidian colours, in his shapes that are familiar-yet-not familiar. His work at the Venice Biennale pushed for a bolder aesthetic as he tried to build a cultural platform for which universal understanding could come about, and to reveal the most vulnerable of emotions – regret, nostalgia, sadness – through the fabric of his quiet works. Now, he proposes a continuation of the same show with *You.*, which is to be shown at the Cattle Depot Artist Village this month – but with a more condensed concept, and, some might say, an even bolder message. "If I was showing certain kinds of emotions in Venice, there is one thing I didn't explore or mention," explains the artist. "Anger."

The reason for this, says Lee, is that he is tied to Hong Kong, by birth and blood, and to its politics and governmental skirmishes (he moved to Taipei in 2012 to escape the madding crowd). Exhibiting at the Venice Biennale, he wanted to cleanse himself of those influences and instead focus on the art itself, but back on his home turf, he found the same feelings coming back to haunt him. "In Venice, I didn't want to sell out my Hong Kong identity, telling myself that I'd be doing something good for my city or country," he says. "I just treated it like another serious show. But this time it's about Hong Kong, and it's kind of about the government."

Lee and the M+ team have employed architect and artist Sara Wong (also a close friend of Lee's) to help transform the raw brick interior of the Cattle Depot Artist Village into an installation space. Half of the works are coming from the Venice show and half are completely new. A public programme accompanying the installation includes talks, screenings and tours. "It's going to have more narrative elements, even more fictional than before," says Lee. "Not simply using the arrangement of the space, but really telling a story in a different way; every story is about a different kind of emotion. Some of it will be quite violent." Knowing Lee's style, however, it's sure to be a subtle kind of violence. Ysabelle Cheung

You. Cattle Depot Artist Village, until Apr 13; westkowloon.hk/you.