

## TEN

So here we are, island6 is ten years old. How else can we say it except *what a long strange trip!* As we look back on the journey it's a reminiscence hazed with hookers, club drugs, artworks and shattered dreams. Ok ok, I'm joking about a couple of those. What does it really mean to be ten though? Where have we been and where are we going? Does it even matter? Is this just an excuse to have a big party and be self-congratulatory? Yes, no and maybe to all of that but for now lets take a stroll down memory lane, as well as a jaunt up future avenue.

What a unique experience to turn ten years old. Think of it this way, unless you are in the .0045% of the global population who will make it to 100 years old<sup>1</sup>, turning ten is the only time you'll add an extra digit to your age. Most ten year olds are perched precariously on the edge of *tweenhood*, experiencing the first rumblings of self-esteem, starter concepts of 'cool', ambiguous sexual feelings and Kafkaesque body changes. Much like these confused little humans, we've also gone through some phases. A few simple clicks on the island6 website from newest work to oldest is all you need to illustrate that point. It's hard to pinpoint each phase, even harder to pinpoint the reasons behind any of them ending or beginning. A safe explanation though, it that we're like a sports team. Maybe some years we had a cooler logo than others, some seasons we scored more or less points, we were occasionally shocked by the high level of talent we acquired, seemingly out of nowhere, other times the well was all but dry. One thing that has stayed the same though, we've spent ten years making some truly beautiful artwork. Ten is a special year in terms of age, but also as an anniversary. Of the marriages that end in divorce, roughly 80% occur before the 10-year anniversary<sup>2</sup>, and, to be fair, the Liu Dao collective has had its fair share of *those*. We've parted ways with some artists, art directors, curators, writers, people who we weren't even sure what their job here was, ex-lovers, and even a lot of *ideas*. These splits were almost always on pleasant terms... almost. But such is the nature of being a creative person, and of creativity itself: artistic satisfaction and contentment are always running away faster than you can go to catch it. In short, people come and go, especially when they are creative, talented, driven.

10 just so happens to be the atomic number of neon. Liu Dao has used plenty of *that* over the years. From "Ooh La La" to "Fuck Me Like You Love Me," all the way up to the more recent "#Selfie," nothing is able to emphasize a word or short phrase with quite the colorful punch of glowing neon light. Maybe the best example of this is "Goldfinger," a giant gold neon hand giving the middle finger. Speaking of hands, unless you are a little kid or have some syndrome, the length of your hand is 1/10 of your total height<sup>3</sup>. The War of Troy lasted ten years. The hero of this war Odysseus had a ten-year journey back home after its conclusion, a famously difficult trek which inspired Homer's *The Odyssey*<sup>4</sup>.

The idea behind island6 was always (and is now) the same: to elevate a group of people by combining the best they have to offer into each artwork. This concept isn't so different from a sports team or a movie production company. Individuals are interchangeable and many will come and go, but the philosophy has stayed the same: the exploration of the beauty inherent at the intersection of traditional and contemporary. Everywhere you look now (especially throughout Asia and China) new buildings tower over tiny old homes, people who are so old they can barely walk are playing with the newest iphones, traditional peasant dishes are being served by billion dollar food chains and millions of people who would've been farmers at any other point in history are wearing suits and ties to work. But island6 wasn't always what it is now. It has had a long winding road over the last ten years with countless ideas, artists, artworks, and even locations.

### April of 2006, 120 Moganshan Road

On the south bank of the Suzhou Creek, Moganshan Road occupies an area of 41,000 square meters with old industrial buildings now entirely transformed into art centers, galleries and studios, built across different historical phases dating back to the 1930's. A dynamic and vibrant art culture has gradually evolved on Moganshan Road, marked today by the immediately recognizable graffiti-filled walls that reach most of its length. The aspiration to occupy and preserve its Pre-WWI industrial buildings by artists and galleries has helped the area become the quirky must-visit Shanghai destination it has become today. It was in this spirit of rugged, DIY renovation, restoration and innovation that the first island6 space sprung up inside a quaint, turn of the century warehouse known as the Fou Foong Flour Mill. From this lone 'island' of a building, island6 moved its home base a short walk down the road to the M50 art district, a former textile factory in the north west of Shanghai. The shores of the nearby Suzhou river are lined with turn of the century factories, mills, warehouses, ancient quays and modern barges which create a striking contrast with the ultra-modern horizon of condominiums and skyscrapers behind it. It has been this backdrop of cultural contrast that has influenced island6's artwork over the years.

The history of island6 is as winding as Moganshan road itself (and in fact didn't begin there). The origins actually stem from Barcelona, and a little start-up *artist* association that went by the name Montcada5. It was this original iteration of the idea that would become the island6 lab in Shanghai; a non-profit artist association put in place to assist, and promote young, emerging talent. This slowly became an artist residency program, with artists coming to Shanghai from all over the globe to take advantage of the island6 support system. The residency program shifted though, essentially ending in 2010 in order to put more emphasis on local artists and the collaborative process. That collaborative process, and spirit, has led island6 to work with over 300 artists over the years, producing or facilitating somewhere in the neighborhood of 3000 plus artworks, displayed in over 200 exhibitions. There have also been more than 190 video clips, countless newspaper, web and blog articles and interviews from all sorts of random people.

### Birth of Liu Dao

The eventuality of island6's collaborative endeavor was the *Liu Dao collective*, island6's permanent in-house group of working artists. The collective was born in Shanghai's contemporary art scene in 2007 as it was witnessing an explosion that accompanied the city's infrastructural boom and relentless international attention. As reputations were going global and the expanding market was drawing spontaneous investors and inciting monetary ambitions for the young and susceptible, Liu Dao was formed as a counteraction to the mass-misallocation of talent coursing through the momentum of the sprawling industry. Thomas Charveriat founded both the Arts Center and Liu Dao with the specific aims of helping the young Chinese contemporary art scene financially, promotionally and most importantly: *creatively*. It should be noted an emphasized that there have been countless people involved throughout the development and evolution of island6. Over the years the artists and other contributors that have comprised the Liu Dao collective have brought stunning talent to the table. Talent that matches the numerous prestigious degrees, unique training histories and mastery of mediums that has allowed the broad successes the collective has enjoyed. This framework of eclectic academic interests and influences has created a haven for the ever-curious, invited conversational intellectualism and provided a firm spine of philosophic integrity to guide artists whose ideals and directions are endangered by commercialist temptations.

### Evolution

Since its inception in 2006, hundreds of guest artists have received support from the Arts Center in terms of resources and publicity. But most importantly they have contributed to, and taken part in, an exciting modern art experience practically unmatched on the international scene. In the collective's spirit of collaboration, Liu Dao and island6 have adapted to the rapidly changing circumstances of Shanghai's contemporary art scene, which sees scores of contributors and international artists descending upon the city with ever-increasing regularity. To this end, Liu Dao is perpetually refining and adapting its process of recruitment in order to configure and maintain the ideal group for facilitating communication and collective energy among its talents. Due to the blossoming of new media and its involvement in making art, Liu Dao has recently been drawn to the



idea of incorporating narratives within its artwork. One of the new current aims of island6 is to make art using the same process as the film industry, with a cast and credits of people with different skills, thus enriching the artwork by adding a multitude of different viewpoints.

**Location, location, location!**

island6 has moved around quite a bit. New locations have opened, old ones closed, and the cycle has gone on and on and of course will continue to. After the afore-mentioned original spaces, a small space was added on 116 Moganshan Road known as the *island6 Shack*. In a similar vein, the *island6 Lab* opened on 249 Aomen Road in January 2008. Growing demand for the unique art pieces of the resident collective necessitated a larger production space and workshop. After renovations to the *island6 Lab* on Moganshan Road opened up an in-house production unit in December 2008, the workshop was relocated back to adjoin the arts center. From January to April 2010, the arts center also experimented with a photography studio on 100 Aomen Road. It was aimed at developing photographic art amongst young Chinese photographers and included a dark room in its facilities. After six successful years in Shanghai, the Liu Dao spirit burst out to become more international. island6 opened the doors on its second home in Hong Kong in June of 2012, followed by the *island6 ShGarden* the spring of 2013, the *island6 Bund* in the fall of 2013, and *island6 Marina*, located in Phuket, in March of 2014. The Bund and Hong Kong spaces have since closed down (one because the government decided to it needed the building more than we did and the other because people think it's a good idea to charge foreign tenants 400% of what normal rent should be). Oh well, so be it. Things move forward and there are new spaces, artists, artworks, technologies and opportunities on the horizon. The wonderful thing about island6 is that it is, and has always been, freely able and willing to adapt to changing circumstances and environments around us. Almost like a pro football team, you can change some players, some managers, even the arena, but the show goes on. What we drives us is being able to go out and play everyday. We're not sure where things will be in another ten years but we're looking forward to another ten years of LED, paint, exotic locations and intriguing new people. Much like the restaurant business, most art galleries close within the first five years of opening. Ten years consistently producing artworks is a success unto itself, here's to ten more!

**Dates:** From April 22nd to April 29th, 2016

**Vernissage:** Friday, April 22nd, from 6:00 – 10:00 pm

**Curation:** Ryan Nimmo

**Art Direction:** Thomas Charvériat & Nick Hersey

**Live Music Performance:** Leven Smith, David Poppell, Laurent Lettrée (from \*LLND) & Steiner Nickelsen

**Research:** Carla Bisoli, Charles Caplan, Michael Sedbon, Virginie de Jouffroy Gonsans

**Artistic Research:** Jin Yun 金云, Tang Dashi 汤大师 & He Dashi 贺大师

**Coordination:** Yeung Sin Ching 杨倩菁 & Ellie Zhang 张莹

**Venue:** island6 Main, 50 Moganshan Road, building 6, 2F, Shanghai

**Artists:** The Liu Dao art collective, Nick Hersey, Zane Melleupe, Roland Darjes, \*LLND (Laurent Lettrée and Nathalie Delpech), Alexandre Ouairy, Ryan Nimmo, Steve Messam, Thomas Charvériat

**Link:** [http://www.island6.org/10\\_info.html](http://www.island6.org/10_info.html)

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**家具赞助:** Deluxe Home



**推广赞助:** in-Buzz (Asia) Ltd



Scan and follow island6 Wechat account



<sup>1</sup> <http://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/UNFPA-Report-Chapter1.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2013/article/marriage-and-divorce-patterns-by-gender-race-and-educational-attainment.htm>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.vendian.org/mncharity/dir3/bodyruler\\_angle/](http://www.vendian.org/mncharity/dir3/bodyruler_angle/)

<sup>4</sup> <http://classics.mit.edu/Homer/odyssey.html>