

Open Reception on Sunday, May 25th, 5-7 pm

A Space Gallery is pleased to present *The Second That Twitched*, the solo exhibition by New York-based artist Qianying Zhu. Working primarily with jewellery as her medium, Qianying brings a playful, sensitive, and humorous approach to moments in daily life that often go unnoticed. With what she calls a "toy-maker's mindset," she uses metal, enamel, resin, fabric, and thread to create works that break free from the traditional jewellery form, transforming into miniature theatrical worlds where objects, animals, and cultural memory intertwine.

In Qianying's world, art doesn't strive to deliver grand statements—it responds to odd, fleeting, and deeply real moments: a quick snapshot of someone playing tennis, a falling grape, a crumpled black candy bag, and a sudden spill of popcorn. These tiny, amusing incidents resemble involuntary twitches—fleeting, funny, and yet somehow tender. They offer unexpected access to emotions tied to time, memory, and imagination.

The reimaged Chinese zodiac serves as a central thread throughout the exhibition. For Qianying, the zodiac is not only a fixed symbol of tradition but also a visual and material embodiment of time. In her works, the twelve animals become actors in narrative fragments: sometimes resembling toys, sometimes food, sometimes mischievously tangled with symbols of restriction.

In *Oops*, all twelve zodiac animals In *Oops*, the twelve zodiac animals become popcorn in disguise, capturing the chaotic moment of a sudden spill. In *Chicken Box*, they take the form of fried chicken, humorously recontextualised into fast-food culture. In *Discussion of Dragons Is Not Allowed*, the dragon symbol is quietly paired with a prohibition sign, suggesting a silent yet potent tension that sparks a sense of absurd reflection.

Qianying's pieces aren't always carefully pre-planned—they emerge organically through playing. For her, practice leads to thought. Through tactile repetition and material exploration, she builds stories without scripts. Inspiration often comes from what she calls "unimportant things": forked and steaming food, vintage toys, prohibition symbols, tennis, candies tumbled out, and most sentimentally, the worn eyes of a toy sheep that has slept beside her since birth. These intimate, honest emotions are embedded into the very texture of her work.

The Second That Twitched is not an exhibition about time, but the sensitivity to micro-moments. It invites us to notice the things that twitch, glitch, or gently interrupt the everyday—a popcorn kernel mid-air, a smile forming too soon, a soft chaos tucked inside a brooch. Qianying aims for her art to be light-hearted and playful, using humor as a gentle way to prompt a second thought or a subtle shift in perspective.