

## "Placebo"

**Participating Artists:** Felix Beyreuther, Bing Bing 兵冰, Cai Duobao 蔡多宝, Thomas Charvériat, Manels Favre, Kong Moshu 孔墨沙, Kerry Ann Lee, Tom Lee Pettersen, Li Lingxi 李翎溪, Liu Dao 六岛, Nick Hersey, Zane Mellupe, Rose Tang 罗丝唐, Wang Dongma 王东马, Wu Yandan 吴艳丹, Zhang Deli 张德丽

**Curator:** Thomas Charvériat

**Art Director:** Zane Mellupe

**Exhibition:** From November 21st 2009 to December 22nd 2009

**Vernissage:** November 21st 2009 - 8pm

**Venue:** **island6 Arts Center**, 50 Moganshan Rd, bldg #6, 2F, Shanghai 200060, PRC

*Twice upon a time there lived a halfman, sometimes it was a man but sometimes he was a worm. The part that was man could be seen in light, the part that was worm in darkness. Most of the time the man believed that he is only half – for when he could see his upper part he could not see the lower, but when he saw the lower part he could not see the upper. So sometimes –It thought to be a man but sometimes he thought to be a worm. Days passed, he felt blind and insecure till one day an old crow flew by, she had only one eye and she looked very pale, so pale that you could mistake her for a dolphin; as she landed on his head that she thought to be a stone, she started to pick on his eye while screaming: "-but –a –day, but- a –day". While the halfman heard: "-butterfly, butterfly". And due to the terrible pain that smelled like eyeballs burnt in sugar, he finally realized 'butterfly'. He is a butterfly. So he raised high up in the sky – as high as the irises grow- and being so dazed by its vastness he caused a great wind that created mountains and seas, helicopters and chocolate.*

Zane Mellupe, Mumbai 2009.08.01

## The Placebo

"a substance or procedure ... that is objectively without specific activity for the condition being treated". In life as in medicine, the continued application of the placebo is a regular practice that has become part of the contemporary zeitgeist. Not just in the subconscious and neuro linguistic programming of advertising and contemporary broadcast culture, but in the foods we eat and the houses we live in- there are substances at play that perform their function only in our minds, that add value to our experiences only through the strength of our own imagination.

In medicine the placebo is a pill administered to solve a problem- a physiological complaint or psychological condition, or merely administered to achieve an effect, a result. As applied in society, placebos are harder to define, and the ethics of the experiment more complex and esoteric and the results more elaborate. When the placebo is no longer a pill, but a message, or a political doctrine, the rules change, our boundaries shift and windows of opportunity or cracks in our make-up appear. We build churches, mosques, synagogues, temples, pagodas, and cathedrals; we populate white houses, courts, and schools in order to have this external belief – a belief that everything is under control. There is a model built around an ideal, an ideal in which believers are not brainwashed followers, in which objects carry pure inherent properties and not perceived, exaggerated or distorted ones, and in which freedoms are born of genuine struggle and celebrated victory. The realization of that model may or may not happen through our collective efforts with and through the vision of distinguished talents peppered throughout our society. Artists are amongst those visionaries, and specifically in this context the artists of Liu Dao, but they are not exclusively responsible or capable of change. In the end the ideal cannot be realized, despite our best efforts, because perhaps, there will always be more pills, branding, past experience, and high price to increase the effect of placebo pills.

Nick Hersey, Shanghai 2009.11.02

"Placebo" is a second in a series of exhibitions organized by **island6** that focuses on the way in which studies of consciousness have inspired artworks created by the collective Liu Dao.

## About island6

Founded in 2006, **island6 Arts Center** is an artist-founded, artist-run organization based in Shanghai.

**island6 Arts Center** operates on a non-profit basis and is governed by voluntary staff.

**island6** is dedicated to the support of emerging artists and to the constant initiation of site-specific projects. **island6's** mission is to provide a forum for contemporary artists whose works explore social, aesthetic, and philosophical issues. Since April 2006, **island6 Arts Center** has shown 198 artists from 21 different countries, sponsored 110 resident artists, organized 37 exhibitions and helped in the creation of 1900 art projects. In 2007 **island6 Arts Center**, under the artistic direction of Thomas Charvériat & Zane Mellupe, founded Liu Dao, a collective of emerging Chinese and international artists.



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*Liu Dao explores the cultural potential in the convergence of art, technology and science, and their discoveries are applied to the development of the artist community.*