

Jessie Yingying Gong (CHN, 1990)

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Having been born and raised in China before setting out to study and live in Europe; prompted in Jessie a lasting fascination with the topics of memory, identity, symbols and language. Growing up in China Yingying Gong sees the - Western- world from a different angle. Open to narratives, Gong searches for understandable systems to tell universal stories. She is fascinated by history and sciences. She is currently developing a series of works regarding the form, materialisation and development of language. The research into these aspects of language, with a focus on the written forms, leads her to a kind of archaeology of symbolism, that serves to chronicle our history on a multitude of levels.

Jessie studied in London College of Communication in 2011, and Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam from 2012 to 2015. In the first half of 2018, she completed the artist residency at Swatch Art Peace Hotel; she was awarded Werkbijdrage Jong Talent from Mondriaan Fonds in the same year. Jessie is currently based between Shanghai, China and Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

ABOUT THE WORK

'New Semiotics C - Arts & Crafts' (2018)

38,0 x 29,0 x 2,0 cm

Handmade white neon light with metalwork and a transformer

New Semiotics C - Arts & Crafts is only a single neon sculpture out of a collection of 14 lights. It's modern visualisation of ancient archaeology of symbolism into the languages. The letters and characters of an alphabet began as depictions of daily objects and at first, signified those alone. In time they came to represent syllables or sounds. In the Chinese written language - this is particularly evident, as the original memory of meaning is still visible. A study into the Greek history showed me it also exists in very early manifestations of the western alphabet. Linear B is a form of ancient Greek dating from the Mycenaean civilisation. This half pictographic, half syllabic language surprisingly bears much similarity with the ancient Chinese oracle bone script. Bringing together the familiar ancient Chinese and delving into the study of the newly discovered Linear B, has led me to connect the two in a kind of archaeology of symbolism.

This study of the ancient languages and their semiotics is incorporated back into daily objects that we're familiar with, and are used for commerce just as those now exotic scripts were mainly used for in ancient time. By creating lively neon signs in those ancient languages, the contrasts and similarities come to life in these conflicting conditions. These letters and symbols are something foreign and alien, yet they are the foundation of something very familiar and recognisable.