

The New York Times

3 Art Gallery Shows to See Right Now

Galleries and museums are getting creative about presenting work online during the pandemic. Some are open for in-person visits. Here are shows worth viewing either way.



Wang Xu's "Seven Star Road" (2020), single-channel video.

Wang Xu

Aug. 19, 2020

By Martha Schwendener

Wang Xu, an artist who was involved with an alternative art space and residency program called Practice run out of collective artists' studios, left New York in January to celebrate the Lunar New Year with his family in Dalian, China, assuming he would be gone a month. Seven months later, he is still in China, confined mostly to his family's apartment because of the coronavirus. "[Dream Animals](#)," a special online presentation of his work on 47 Canal's website, offers a glimpse into his world.

"Seven Star Road" (2020), a nearly 13-minute video made in his family's apartment, features close-ups of the artist's hands sawing, carving and sanding a piece of stone to create a small sculpture, as well as scenes of people working and moving about the drab cityscape below. The final image is the finished object: "Daydreamer" (2020), a soapstone sculpture of a curled-up animal. Other sculptures in the presentation feature real and mythical creatures carved or made with a 3-D printer and which recall figures in historical Chinese art and literature.



Wang Xu's soapstone sculpture "Daydreamer," from 2020.

A series of Wang Xu's short poems on the website underscores our collective, odd and surreal year. One reads, "In an empty station / Anxious people are looking for their return train / Afraid to miss them / At such a moment / We indeed live in a spectacle / Our body is our own monument." This could apply to Wang Xu's sculptures and scenes in the video, but also to the current pandemic, in which fear and confinement are accompanied by opportunities for reflection and poetic reverie.