

frieze

Timur Si-Qin's Slick Brand of Environmental Art

At von ammon co., Washington DC, the artist presents a series of new-media works that further his 'New Peace' polemics against the West's exploitation of the natural world

BY IAN BOURLAND IN REVIEWS | 09 NOV 20



Five years ago, Timur Si-Qin started taking pictures of trees: hundreds of photographs of single growths that were then algorithmically stitched and 3D-printed into uncanny sculptural forms, distorted in scale and orientation. Already known for his alluring landscapes rendered in VR software then dye-sublimation printed, Si-Qin's arboreal structures are sui generis; they add a sense of place – rootedness – to emergent forms of digital fabrication. One was compiled from a tree at Georgia O'Keeffe's Ghost Ranch in New Mexico (*Juniper/kneumapee (Age of Rocks - Religion of Scale)*, 2019); another he encountered in the Peruvian Amazon whilst on an ayahuasca trip (*La Guardiana del Río Rinquia*, 2020).

The latter – with its rhizomic splay, rich enamel paint and rough synthetic-print-medium residues – is part of a suite of seven new works (all 2020) that comprise 'Take Me, I Love You' at von ammon co. Si-Qin's solo show continues a run at the gallery – housed in a moody industrial space amid the luxury retail shops and cobbled alleys of Georgetown – of new-media work that would feel bleeding edge even in Berlin, where the artist is based. Sparingly installed transparent acrylic tablets – radiating ethereal LED light, etched with sinuous lines and inscribed with axia from Si-Qin's ongoing 'New Peace' project (the artist's branded machinations in environmental spiritualism) – hang from above or rest on custom plinths detailed with skeletal and amphibian forms. These totems, haloed in green, enclose the gallery like neoliths from another world, and give you the feeling of having stumbled onto the film set of *Prometheus* (2012).

It would be easy to dismiss these works as simply more of the arch, capitalist-realist ventriloquism ascendant in recent years. Still, if the artist's blurring of the fetish, the sacred and the commodified seems like a knowing wink, his corpus of interviews and writings suggest something more sincere. In this light, Si-Qin's tech-mediated *oeuvre*, high gloss aside, confronts us head on with the sublime terror of collapsing ecological and social systems and the non-European forms of knowledge that may restore them. Don't turn away.

Timur Si-Qin's 'Take Me, I love You' at von ammon co., Washington DC, runs until 15 November 2020.



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