

**Vincent CAZENEUVE**  
***My Side of the Mountain***



2022.9.07 – 10.15  
DUMONTEIL  
Bldg.105 Yong Ping Lane 199 Hengshan Rd. Shanghai

DUMONTEIL Shanghai is delighted to present *My Side of the Mountain*, the solo exhibition of French artist Vincent Cazeneuve. This is the artist's third solo show with the gallery, showcasing his most recent practice in the last two years after his resettlement in the Daba Mountains in central China. Featuring nearly twenty works, including several large-scale pieces, the exhibition encompasses his insightful research into ancient Yi lacquer culture, while continuing his exploration of materials and craftsmanship across time.

*What he presents is China in his eyes, the traditional craftsmanship of China. He brings life to this skill(lacquer), the renaissance of intangible cultural heritage. Vincent has explored a path – the idea of a modern artist, but rooting the ancient skills in modern life. And he finds new soil for an old seed to grow and to bloom. And that is what we call innovation.*

Liu Guanzhong, Professor, School of Fine Arts, Tsinghua University

Cazeneuve's continuing research into the history of lacquer and its related traditional crafts has been an important catalyst for his work, enabling him to break the constraints of traditional concepts such as lacquer painting and lacquerware and create his own 'abstract totem'. The millennia-old lacquer culture of the Yi people has been the focus of Cazeneuve's research over the past two years. The use of lacquer penetrates all areas of Yi's social life, and what most impresses the artist is the ancient Yi leather armor, which inspires one of the highlights of the exhibition. The main body of the work is based on the armor skirt that consists of hundreds of small lacquered pieces joined together with leather strips, topped with a rice-bag fragment painted with copper-colored lacquer, and later adorned with abstract symbols in iron powder. The tones, shapes and textures of each part of the work contrast and react, resulting in an aesthetic complexity.

In addition to the lacquer culture of the Yi people, some of the works also make use of the well-known eggshell inlay and mother-of-pearl inlay techniques of traditional Chinese lacquer, as well as the coiling and weaving techniques of rattan and bamboo prevalent in Southeast Asian lacquer. The diversity and plasticity of these approaches provide the artist with rich visual material, while the sentiments carried forward from generation to generation create a strong bond of cultural memory. By incorporating all these aspects of craftsmanship into his creative vocabulary, Cazeneuve attempts to transcend the expression of 'object' with its creation.

The exhibition also offers an overview of the artist's practice during the past few years with several large-scale works, including a five-panel folding screen inspired by the Art Deco period and the artist's largest rice-bag-fabric supported lacquer piece to date. The ruffled texture of the rice bag is reflected in the polished gold leaves, like a sunlit mountain range, rocky and yet fluid like the waves of the sea. In the center of the work, the color variations of the natural lacquer (creamy white, brown and black) are used to ignite the initial form of life, the origin of nature.

Abundant in lacquer trees and bamboo forests, the Daba Mountains provide Cazeneuve with an otherworldly working and living environment. From his side of the mountain, the artist watches the clouds move through the mountains, and the sun rises and sets. Each day, he walks from his home through the lacquer forest to his studio, contemplating, observing the growth of the lacquer trees and listening to the sounds of nature, while the bamboo weaving material immediately available in the forest also facilitates the artist's creative experiments. It is essential for Cazeneuve to build an emotional connection with the materials he uses, and to feel their transformation in his hands.

Vincent Cazeneuve's passionate study of lacquer culture is driven by his pursuit of profoundness and eternity in art. He believes that a piece of art should be equally appreciated and valued regardless of its time - a thousand-year-old artefact, an antique from the last century, or a contemporary multimedia installation. It is the efforts of each generation that have culminated in the creativity of humanity. One can only leave a mark that is strong enough to resist death if one strives to create, to learn new techniques, to overcome technical and material difficulties. The artist looks forward to his work encountering the civilization of the next millennium.

## **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Vincent Cazeneuve (b.1977) is a French artist using Chinese lacquer as his primary medium of creation.

After completing his studies in France, he created a studio specializing in the restoration of Western and Asian lacquerware before moving to Chongqing, China, in 2009 to decipher the secret of lacquer and traditional culture and craftsmanship essential to his work.

He gradually developed his narratives and aesthetics from both occidental and oriental influences with his deceptively simple and yet complex language while relentlessly exploring non-traditional supports such as old rice bags, wool felt, and leather. He also tries to draw on other art forms such as lithography, relief carving, collage, and traditional crafts such as rattan and bamboo weaving, lending his work rich layers and tactile feelings.

Vincent Cazeneuve's work has been widely exhibited in art institutions in China and abroad, including TCCA, Xiamen (2022), XLY MoMA, Chengdu (2021), the Academy of Arts and Design of Tsinghua University, Beijing (2020), Yunnan Provincial Museum (2019), Art Museum of Sichuan Fine Arts Institute (2019), Chinese Cultural Center, Paris, France (2017), Revel IMARA, France (2013), Shanghai Biennale of Contemporary Art (2010), etc. His work has also been included in private collections in France, Italy, Switzerland, the United States, and China.