
BY ART MATTERS
天目里 美术馆

Press Release
For Immediate Release

**Elmgreen & Dragset to Present “After Dark” at BY ART MATTERS
Adding new structures to the local cultural landscape**

A presentation of sculptural scenes and large-scale installations ranging from a nightclub to a tennis court will be featured in the third season of BY ART MATTERS's exhibition program. Due to open on November 12, 2022, “After Dark” will be the second major institutional solo exhibition in China by the internationally acclaimed artist duo Elmgreen & Dragset, following their 2016 exhibition “The Well Fair” at UCCA Beijing.

“Without a club named *After Dark* there might not have been an Elmgreen & Dragset...” state the artists. Indeed, in 1994, Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset met for the first time at a club in Copenhagen bearing the name and soon after began their artistic collaboration. For over two decades, they have exhibited across the world, holding solo exhibitions at institutions like Tate Modern, Serpentine Gallery, Boijmans van Beuningen Museum, Fondazione Prada and biennials including the Venice Biennale (2009), where they earned the jury's special mention for their double exhibition *The Collectors* – to name just a few. Speaking of the coming exhibition in Hangzhou, the duo share that in addition to the personal meaning of *After Dark*, they also hope that the exhibition's title might bring a more positive outlook for our common future after years shadowed by the pandemic and lockdowns internationally.

Continuing the duo's long history of transforming museum spaces into unexpected environments, in this exhibition they have re-configured the ground floor of BY ART MATTERS into a nightclub complete with a dancefloor, stage, cloakroom, and media-wall at the entrance - where everything is built to resemble a real club. Though it is a club after opening hours, no DJ's music will be played through the duration of the exhibition – instead visitors to the show will hear a subtle soundtrack of the behind-the-scenes activities in a club: the cleaning up after a party or sound checks for what might be the next event . Different sculptures created by the artists are also dispersed throughout the space, ranging

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from a sleeping young man in a pink rabbit costume to an acrobat suspended in mid-air looking down at the audience, as if to signal the in-between state of a party about to begin or to end.

However, one week before the exhibition opening, on November 5, 2022, a real club night hosted by Elmgreen & Dragset will take place. This event will feature DJs from Hangzhou, Shanghai, and Beijing—previous hosts of active local nightclubs, which have sadly since closed. For this occasion they will return to re-create a vibrant night of partying with a local Hangzhou audience prior to the opening of the exhibition. Traces of the party will also be preserved and will form a dialogue with the artworks displayed in *After Dark*.

The sixth floor of the museum instantly transports the viewer to a contrasting environment with a selection of figurative sculptures and the installation *Short Story*, which presents a tennis court and two players. The dim lighting and sculptural figures at opposing ends of the court offer the viewer the possibility of entering a narrative context in a still-frame scene. Elsewhere, sculptures of two boys wearing VR devices are transformed into cyborg-like creatures with their expressions mostly obscured, leaving viewers forever unsure of what they are looking at. Playing with gazes and speaking to internal feelings or struggles, the artworks in this part of the exhibition invite visitors into a mysterious world which in an almost surreal manner speaks about the difficulties of growing up and shaping one's identity.

As Elmgreen & Dragset mentioned in a conversation with the exhibition's curator and director of BY ART MATTERS, Francesco Bonami, "We have found that by modifying the architectural features of a gallery space, and by moving away from the conventional white cube aesthetic, it's possible to alter how people interact with art." Elaborating further, Bonami explains, "After Dark" and the landscape it creates is about surviving the changes of life, sometimes people misunderstand these changes as failure. And this show tells you that you never fail, you change."

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About BY ART MATTERS

BY ART MATTERS is a contemporary art space located in the OōEli campus, designed by Renzo Piano Building Workshop to the world-class museum standard. Opens in December 2021. It organizes exhibitions and promotes publications and opportunities for artists. BY ART MATTERS provides a third space for the public outside of their everyday life routines and working environment: a unique place for creativity.

BY ART MATTERS aims to become one of Hangzhou's hubs of the international and domestic art scene and to be a catalyst for sensitivity, research and artistic practice. We aspire to cultivate the public's independent aesthetics for contemporary art through diverse exhibitions and public education activities, to provide sensual, intellectual and spiritual inspiration.

Official website: <https://www.byartmatters.com/en/>

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