

## Press Release

### **Metamorphosis: Beyond the Real - Searching for Victoria Lu. When Humans and AI Think Together, the Story Begins.**

On 7 May 2026, at Ca' Foscari Esposizioni in Venice, the opening of the exhibition *Metamorphosis: Beyond the Real – Searching for Victoria Lu. When Humans and AI Think Together, the Story Begins* will take place from 6.00 pm to 8.00 pm.

Throughout the day, from 11.00 am to 6.00 pm, access to the exhibition will be reserved for the press and industry professionals, whilst in the afternoon, from 2.00 pm to 5.30 pm, the Iuav University of Venice – Palazzo Badoer, Aula Tafuri – will host the XVI edition of the Scrittoio della Biennale, titled *China & the Arts*, promoted by the International PhD Programme in the History of Arts at Ca' Foscari University of Venice, the Iuav Doctoral School, the Fondazione Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, BiTES – Biennale Theories & Stories and A3C – Centre for Contemporary East Asian Art, Architecture and Cities. The initiative will bring together scholars, curators and cultural professionals to explore the relationship between China and contemporary artistic production, with a particular focus on curatorial practices, transnational dialogues and the role of institutions in shaping global artistic discourses.

The exhibition will be open to the public from 9 May to 22 November 2026, Monday to Saturday, from 10.30 am to 6.30 pm, at Ca' Foscari Esposizioni.

Conceived simultaneously as a retrospective of Victoria Lu's artistic and curatorial career spanning more than half a century, as a contemporary curatorial project, and as a form of academic research, the exhibition reflects on how human beings may be understood, rewritten, and continuously regenerated in the age of artificial intelligence.

The project has been conceived in dialogue with the 61st International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, whose exhibition *In Minor Keys*, envisioned by the late curator Koyo Kouoh and realized according to her original project, places emphasis on artists as sensitive interpreters of social and psychological realities, attentive to the subtle forces of relation, becoming, community, and perception.

Against the backdrop of globalization, the exhibition explores the figure of Victoria Lu, a key figure in the history of contemporary art in the Chinese-speaking world: among the first women curators in Asia, one of the earliest Chinese pioneers of curating in contemporary art, as well as an art critic and transmedia storyteller.

#### **Fifty years of a pioneer: from painterly talent to a curatorial paradigm**

Victoria Lu (1951) was born in Taipei into a distinguished Shanghai family with a strong scholarly tradition. She began painting at the age of four; at nine, she was admitted to the evening program of National Taiwan Normal University, where she was recognized as the youngest university student of her time. At eleven, she became a student of Chang Dai-chien as a second-generation disciple of the Dàfēngtáng school, and at thirteen she held her first solo exhibition in Taipei, *Victoria Lu*

*Painting Exhibition.* In the late 1970s, she founded Stage One Gallery in Southern California, an independent exhibition space that marked the beginning of her curatorial practice. At seventeen, her hand-painted work *East-West Cross-Island Highway*, one meter high and forty meters long, was donated by Chiang Fu-tung, the first director of the National Palace Museum in Taipei, and entered the museum's collection. At twenty, she studied at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Brussels and later continued her studies in the United States.

In the early 1980s, Victoria Lu became a US citizen. She introduced into Chinese the translation of the English term “curator” as 策展人, helping to establish a new professional paradigm within the Chinese art system. At the turn of the millennium, she first returned to Taipei to contribute to the founding of the Museum of Contemporary Art Taipei. She then moved to Shanghai, her parents' city of origin, where she served as Art Director of Bund 18 Art Centre and Creative Director of MoCA Shanghai, while also formulating the theory of *Animamix*, anticipating both global transformations in visual culture and the emergence of UrbArt. She later took part in the development of the Moon River Contemporary Art Museum in Beijing and served as Creative Director of Today Art Museum, consistently promoting the international development of Chinese contemporary art.

Over the last two decades, Victoria Lu has further expanded the boundaries of curating through a series of landmark projects and international platforms:

1998 | Marries art historian Professor Fu Shen

1999 | *Plural Perspectives*, National Art Museum of China, Beijing

2001 | Participates in the founding of MOCA Taipei and becomes a member of its first board of directors

2004 | Curates *Virtual Love*, an international Animamix exhibition at MOCA Taipei

2005 | Appointed Art Director of Bund 18 Art Centre, Shanghai

2006–2007 | Serves as Creative Director of MoCA Shanghai and launches the Animamix Biennale

2007–2008 | Participates in the development of the Moon River Contemporary Art Museum, Tongzhou, Beijing

2008–2009 | Member of the Asian Council of the Guggenheim Museum, USA

2010 | Creative Director of Today Art Museum, Beijing

2011 | Curates the collateral exhibition *Future Pass — From Asia to the World* at the Venice Biennale

2014 | Director of the Asian Platform, Venice Film Festival Market

2017 | Participates in the Venice Biennale collateral exhibition *MODUS*, bringing Chinese public square dance to Venice

2022–2025 | Four consecutive editions of the Metaverse Art Annual Exhibition @ Venice

2024 | Professor Fu Shen passes away

2025 | Co-founds the AI Art Innovation Alliance in Sanya, Hainan, and serves as its Vice Chair

### **In Venice: new presentations and new experiences in the first year of AI art**

Held in parallel with the Venice Biennale, the exhibition takes shape as a project of academic research exploring how the life of a woman may, in the digital and virtual era, move beyond the traditional constraints of physical form, and how, through digital technology and artificial intelligence, deep and enduring symbiotic relationships are emerging.

The exhibition presents new works, new formats, and new modes of engagement initiated in Venice by Victoria Lu together with numerous interdisciplinary innovators. On the one hand, it reflects on the experiences and achievements of Victoria Lu's richly layered life; on the other, it embraces, from a perspective of continual becoming, what the curator-artist considers the inaugural year of AI art.

The exhibition is organized by Future Pass Creative Inc., with the organizational support of Fondazione Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, and promoted by Today Art Museum, the Shanghai Soong Ching Ling Foundation, and the Ho Chuang-Shih Calligraphy Art Foundation.

The exhibition is co-curated by Angelo Maggi, Professor of History of Architecture and delegate for international relations at Iuav University of Venice, Fei Jun, Professor of Digital Art at the China Central Academy of Fine Arts Fu Sen, PhD from Ca' Foscari University of Venice, and Chuang Cheng Chi of Future Pass Creative Inc., who jointly developed the project's narrative structure.

The initiative is also held under the patronage of Ca' Foscari University of Venice and Iuav University of Venice.

The exhibition unfolds through four interconnected sections: *Generation*, *Translation*, *Recomposition*, and *Co-Writing*. Through the dialogue between generative images (AIGC), experiments in co-creation between human and machine, and works collected by Victoria Lu by artists from different generations, the exhibition constructs an evolving generative field between history and future, memory and computation. The curatorial team does not construct a single linear art-historical narrative for Victoria Lu; rather, it deliberately places her in a condition of continuous emergence, so that artificial intelligence does not function as a single provider of answers, but instead allows both Victoria Lu and the audience to become co-participants in the process of understanding.

From her early proposal and practice of cross-media curatorial methods at MoCA Shanghai in 2006 to her direct engagement with the current era of artificial intelligence, Victoria Lu has also formulated the figure of the *Curategist*: a professional role that points toward a future mode of cultural production integrating curating, storytelling, technology, and strategy. Thanks to a finely tuned sensitivity to the spirit of the times and a humanistic foundation deeply rooted in Eastern cultural traditions, she has remained in constant dialogue with the artistic transformations of the present, establishing herself as a pioneering and original voice of her time.

The exhibition also introduces new professional roles for a new era, including *Project Curategist* Xie Limei, *Promotion Curategist* Michael Lim, and *Aesthetic Curategist* Dai Wenhua.

As Fei Jun, Artistic Advisor of the exhibition, observes:

*“The weight of life did not crush her. On the contrary, she transformed human warmth into her underlying tone and refined sensitivity into her armor. The trajectory of her life is itself a condensed history of interdisciplinary artistic transformation.”*

The four sections of the exhibition: *Generation*, *Translation*, *Recomposition* and *Co-Writing*.

## **01 | Generation: a genesis that begins with love and relationship**

The exhibition begins with love, artificial intelligence, and relationships, rather than with success and status. It returns attention to the earliest moments of support and guidance, allowing visitors to

grasp how an individual is gradually nurtured and formed within family, lineage, and cultural environment. In this perspective, generation does not coincide with the sudden manifestation of talent, but with the outcome of a long process of reciprocal response. “Birth” is thus understood as gradual formation within relationships.

## **02 | Translation: how the gaze alters the position of the subject**

From the historical syntax of Eastern ink screens to contemporary images dense with cultural symbols and UrbArt, seeing itself becomes a force that alters the position of the subject. When a person is observed and represented through images, media, and exhibition dispositifs, subjectivity is no longer stable, but is continually reinterpreted and repositioned in different contexts. Translation is not simply a shift of form, but a reorganization of identity and meaning.

## **03 | Recomposition: when reality no longer has only one version**

This section introduces the creative mechanisms of AI through the central project *In Search of Victoria Lu*, in which data, images, and narrative are disassembled and reprocessed through artificial intelligence algorithms. Different data sources and heterogeneous computational logics generate multiple, divergent, and at times contradictory versions. The exhibition deliberately preserves these inconsistencies, so that “reality” is no longer reducible to a single recoverable prototype. When even AI cannot provide a single definitive answer, identity as a dynamic assemblage becomes vividly visible.

## **04 | Co-Writing: taking incompleteness as method**

Within the theoretical framework of *Carbon-Silicon Co-Writing*, developed by Victoria Lu together with *AI Curategist* Ren Ren, and within the broader field of her interdisciplinary collaboration with numerous artists, human beings and AI are not placed in a relation of substitution, but enter into a concrete experimental condition of carbon-silicon co-creation. Experience and perception, computation and response intertwine, generating new narrative nodes through repeated revisions and dialogues. The exhibition does not offer a definitive conclusion; on the contrary, it adopts incompleteness as a method, inviting the public to reflect on how, in future creative fields, human beings may move alongside technology, preserve warmth and sensitivity amid torrents of data, and continue to become through ongoing processes of generation.

## **Special program**

1. “On Site • Dancing with Life” — 72-hour program

*The Generation of Love: From Hengqin to Venice — A 72-Hour AI Art Film Co-Creation Program* is a special initiative jointly developed by Hengqin Digital Art Expo 2026 and Venice Living Art Exhibition 2026, organized by Today AI Art Lab with the support of Lenovo. Jointly promoted by leading scholars and community founders active in the fields of digital art and AI creation — including Victoria Lu, Fei Jun, Xie Limei, Zhao Bozuo, Mai Ju, and Ye Pusa — the program invites prominent figures in contemporary art such as Fang Lijun, Fei Jun, Victoria Lu, and Liu Jiayu to raise questions under the theme of “Living Art.” From the perspective of art history in the AI era, leading Chinese AI creators are invited to respond, through video works and images, to a central question: what form of living art is taking shape today in the age of AI? The program is designed to unfold from creation and selection in residence in Hengqin through continued production and

exhibition in Venice, interwoven with forums and international professional exchange. Lenovo will provide hardware support and computing power throughout the AI art production process.

2. *“On Site • A Life Party” — private Venetian dinner with artists*

This is both the inaugural ritual of an exhibition and a live inscription of artistic life. Taking Venice as its coordinate of time and space, Victoria Lu transforms her fifty years of artistic practice into an intimate yet open celebration of life, inviting companions from different countries and generations who have established real ties with her artistic life to enact a collective retrospective through art history, emotion, and memory, around a shared table and in dialogue.

3. *“On Site • Beauty in Shared Becoming” — special project*

This curatorial project seeks to restore beauty not as aesthetic judgment, but as a form of social action and life practice. At the intersection of technology and the humanities, it identifies ten women who have *“blossomed through beauty”* in their lives and historical contexts, documenting and presenting their states of being, choices, and creative acts through micro-documentaries. *“Living toward beauty”* is no longer treated as a slogan of consumption, but as a form of life art through which ordinary people actively shape their own existence. These women are not constructed images, but subjects who respond to the world through their own experience, allowing individual life to enter a social space in which it may be seen, understood, and resonate.

4. *“On Site • Journey of Life” — experiencing the Venice Biennale with Victoria Lu*

This will be a lived experience guided personally by art history itself. Taking Victoria Lu’s lived practice and academic vision as its guiding thread, the project invites a limited number of participants to enter the deeper structure of the Venetian art world, where exhibition, city, institution, and personal life experience intertwine. Through art history lectures, visits to Biennale sites, and in-depth visits inside major museums and art schools in Venice, participants will no longer simply *“look at art”* but will understand, as direct witnesses, how art continues to be generated through time, institutions, and individual life. It is an immersive curatorial practice that takes Venice as method and life as measure.

5. *“On Site • In Search of Eastern Aesthetics” — a series of presentations*

At a moment when the global cultural landscape is being reorganized, Eastern aesthetics is no longer simply a traditional object of contemplation, but is becoming an active and contemporary method of generation. This series adopts research as its operative logic, responding to the renewed rise of Eastern aesthetics in contemporary art, design, and ways of living. It points both to deep historical and cultural roots and to future modes of perception. Taking Venice as a living stage of global art, the project will launch a series of *In Search of Eastern Aesthetics* presentations with different collaborative partners, using new ink art, Chinese porcelain, fragrance, and related forms as points of access in order to construct an evolving experimental field of contemporary Eastern aesthetics. Here the East is no longer a stylistic label, but a philosophy of life and a worldview unfolding through multisensory experience.

6. *“On Site • The Salon” — women’s forum series*

At the Venice Living Art Exhibition, *The Salon* takes art as its medium and extends invitations to extraordinary women whose lives have been shaped by resilient acts of creation. An ongoing series of women’s salons on different themes will be held throughout the exhibition period. It is both an integral part of the exhibition itself and a fluid banquet of shared life experiences.

The first public discussion on Living Art has already begun at Today Art Museum, and the exhibition's special programs are also conceived as open frameworks for interdisciplinary collaboration. Collaborative partnerships related to the exhibition are now open to the public.

### **Conclusion: redefining becoming**

*Metamorphosis: Beyond the Real — Searching for Victoria Lu* is not only about the life trajectory of a curator; it is also about how our generation may redefine becoming in the age of AI.

When humans and AI begin to think together, the story truly begins.

### **Media quotes:**

“This exhibition is both a retrospective of Victoria Lu’s fifty-year artistic and curatorial career and a curatorial experiment on how human beings may be understood, rewritten, and continuously generated in the age of AI.”

“The curatorial team does not construct a single linear narrative, but allows ‘Victoria Lu’ to remain in a state of continuous emergence.”

“When even AI cannot provide a single definitive answer, the very structure of reality becomes visible.”

### **Media image:**

Image 1 | Key visual of *Metamorphosis: Beyond the Real — Searching for Victoria Lu*.

Caption: Centered on Victoria Lu’s forward-reaching gesture, this key visual overlays text and figure to evoke the condition of the contemporary subject as seen and reconstructed within image culture and digital contexts. The composition balances historical space and contemporary visibility, responding to the exhibition’s central concepts: Generation, Translation, Recomposition, and Co-Writing.

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