

臺北美術獎 AFTER THE 症候群
TAIPEI ART AWARDS

陳肇驊個展
CHEN ZHAO-HUA SOLO EXHIBITION

2026 9.25—12.20

展覽室 GALLERIES EF

臺北市立美術館 TAIPEI FINE ARTS MUSEUM

Winner of the Grand Prize at the 2023 Taipei Art Awards, Chen Zhao-Hua responds honestly to the circumstances of his own life, transforming struggles and contradictions that are difficult to articulate into his work. This solo exhibition confronts the challenge of sustaining a livelihood that persists even after receiving institutional recognition, extending his personal experiences and inner tensions into a broader inquiry into the conditions of contemporary labor.

The exhibition opens with an event that actually happened in Chen Zhao-Hua's life. After receiving recognition at the Taipei Art Awards, Chen dismantled the award-winning work *At the Xiaguirou Mt.* and brought the materials back to his studio. Housed in a bitterly cold sheet-metal studio, the timber left from the dismantled work eventually became firewood for warmth during the winter. Chen brings this experience back into the museum and asks: When artistic practice can no longer financially support oneself, how should the value of an artwork be measured?

Following the exhibition route, visitors enter scenes based on the artist's everyday life in his studio at Xiaguirou Mountain. A chair remade from a discarded mattress, the tools he uses each day, and a song by musician JiLe Tsai come together to recreate the environment in which the artist has long lived and worked. As the exhibition progresses, visitors are gradually drawn into the artist's inner world. Glimpses of trees and moonlight through the window appear calm, yet carry a persistent sense of unease. As visitors walk into the latter part of the exhibition, surrounded by moisture and the sounds of machinery, they encounter a desolate landscape marked by fragmentation and ruin.

Wavering between surrender and perseverance, Chen does not attempt to offer an answer to his situation. Instead, he openly presents the pressures of survival and his psychological state after receiving the award, along with his uncertainty over whether to continue making art. The exhibition unfolds as both a confession and an inquiry: as workers in contemporary society, pulled between reality and dreams, what is it that compels us to carry on?



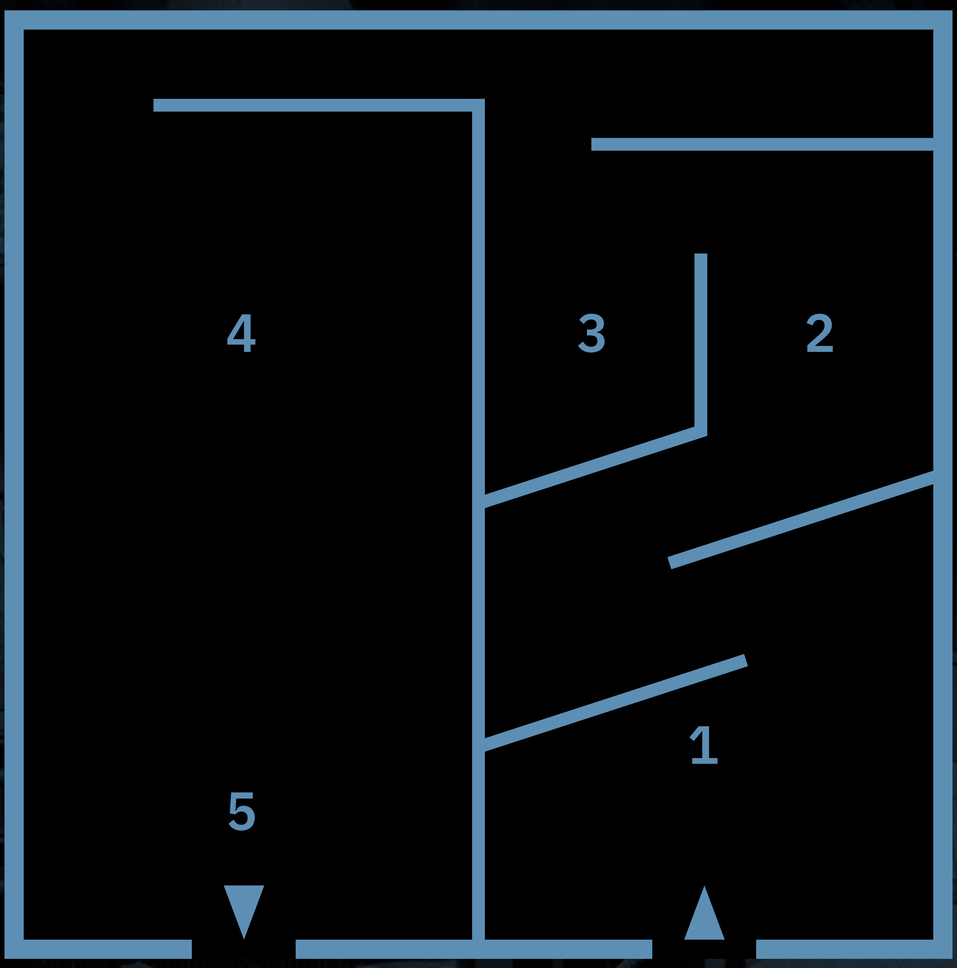
Chen Zhao-Hua

Born in Miaoli, Taiwan, in 1990, currently lives and works in Taipei.
Master of Fine Arts from Tunghai University and
MFA in New Media Art from Taipei National University of the Arts.

With years of experience working in art fabrication, Chen Zhao-Hua sees himself as a machine. Reflecting on his experiences of work and life, he has gradually developed an artistic practice centered on modified compressors and condensation technology.

In his humid, weathered workplace, Chen reconstructs everyday labor through machines that continue to operate despite malfunctioning, alongside frost that repeatedly gathers and recedes across metal plant forms. These elements transform his lived experience into immersive installations, giving physical form to a psychological state that shifts between control and loss of control.

Behind the polished, finished surfaces of contemporary art lie the precarious conditions of artistic production. Chen brings these hidden realities into the exhibition space, using his work to examine the relationships among artistic creation, labor, and individual survival.



1 *Keep Warm*

2 *A Good Night’s Sleep*

3 *A Special Love for Someone Special*

4 *What's the difference between you and a salted fish?*

5 *Elastic Love*

Keep Warm

2026
Single-channel video, color, sound, 9′04″

On a cold winter night, Chen Zhao-Hua burned the dismantled remains of his award-winning installation to keep warm.

This was a real event in Chen Zhao-Hua's life. Created in 2023, *At the Xiaguirou Mt.* received the Grand Prize at the Taipei Art Awards. As a site-specific installation, however, the work had to be reconfigured for each exhibition space and was difficult to preserve intact. After the exhibition ended, it was dismantled and returned to Chen's studio at Xiaguirou Mountain. Housed in a sheet-metal studio that is bitterly cold in winter, the timber left from the dismantled work eventually became firewood for warmth during the winter.

The audience now watches this record of burning. Presented within the museum, the video creates a stark contrast between the clean, brightly lit gallery and the damp, cluttered conditions of Chen's studio. The work brings the symbolic value conferred by the Taipei Art Awards into direct tension with the material demands of everyday survival, exposing the gap between artistic recognition and lived reality.

A Good Night's Sleep

Songwriter: JiLe Tsai

The tender shoots in the village frost over at will,
fallen leaves on the branches quietly shed their colors.
The young shepherd, hair still tousled from sleep,
stares into the distance, wondering what can be done.
Reason and emotion no longer pull against each other.
The uncertainty ahead is both companion and passerby.
In my hand, a ticket with no station named,
wherever it takes me, no one checks my achievements.
Looking back, this road has wound through so
many seasons.
All that passion has left my whole body aching.
To pick things up and let them go with effortless ease
has somehow made me a clear target in the hunter's sight.
Yesterday is not yet over, and already I am back in today.
Here, cloudy skies keep returning in different forms.
Even an unassigned seat is something I have to find
for myself.
Close your eyes. I wish you a good night's sleep on
the journey.

A Good Night's Sleep

2026
Site-specific installation with sounds, Dimensions variable

The installation recreates the setting of Chen Zhao-Hua's studio, accompanied by a song created in collaboration with musician JiLe Tsai. Tools, materials, and traces of labor are dispersed throughout the space, evoking the working environment that has long been part of the artist's everyday life.

Chen worked while studying, an experience he shares with Tsai. In their conversations, the two often spoke about the pressures of pursuing a creative practice while making a living, gradually recognizing feelings shared by those in similar working conditions. Their conversations were transformed into lyrics that articulate the uncertainty of pursuing a dream without knowing where it may lead, as well as the lingering attachment that makes it difficult to simply let go in the face of reality. Repeated throughout the exhibition space, the song becomes like an inner monologue, echoing the questions that circle endlessly through the routines of daily labor.

A Special Love for Someone Special

2026

Installation, Dimensions variable

Viewed from the studio setting of *A Good Night's Sleep*, a gently swaying tree first appears through a window, recalling the familiar landscape outside Chen's studio at Xiaguirou Mountain and the scenery he sees while sitting at work. As the viewer approaches, however, the tree is revealed to be not a tree at all, but a rocking chair.

The work originates from the artist's bodily experience of spending long periods seated in the studio, thinking. The chair's subtle, continuous motion carries a persistent sense of unease, giving physical form to the artist's recurring thoughts and reflections on his practice. It is precisely because he still cares deeply about his work, his life, and the path he has chosen that he continues to question whether to carry on, and how. A rocking chair is usually associated with rest, family, and stability; here, its ceaseless movement quietly unsettles those associations, revealing an instability that never fully comes to rest.

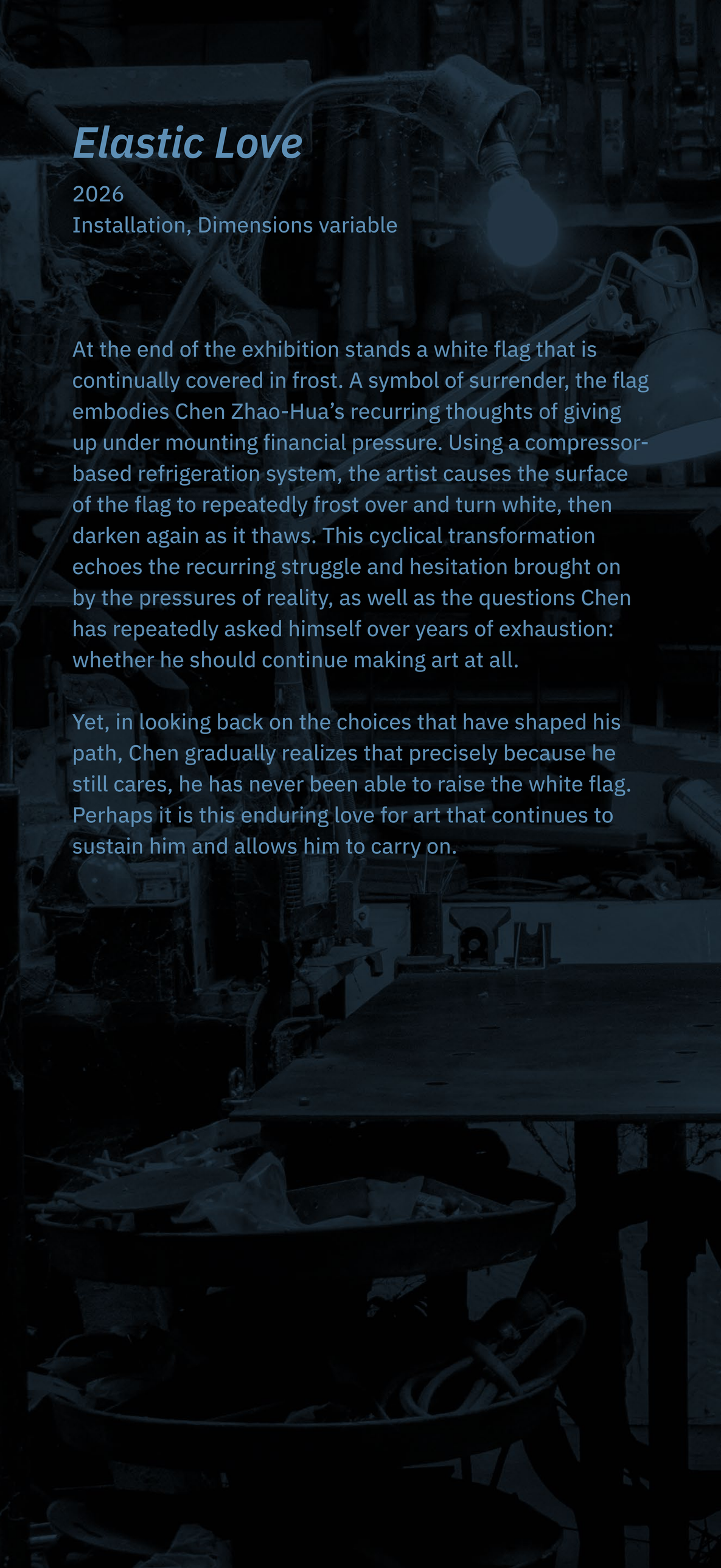
What's the difference between you and a salted fish?

2026

Installation, Dimensions variable

Passing through the corridor, viewers first glimpse a faint beam of light through a window in the wall. It falls at the center of the gallery, where a small boat rests quietly in the distance.

“If a person has no dreams, what is the difference between them and a salted fish?” The work takes its title from a line in a Stephen Chow’s film. Chen places the idea of “dreams” within this nearly stranded boat. It appears to be sailing, yet its destination remains unclear, and it is impossible to tell whether it is truly moving forward. The image echoes the artist’s ongoing search for direction between creative practice and survival. As viewers follow this line of sight into the gallery, they discover that the boat is not sailing across the sea, but inhabiting a desolate landscape filled with the sound of dripping water. The repeated sound reverberates through the space, introducing a sense of unease into the museum’s clean, brightly lit white cube. By bringing traces of the harsh living conditions Chen endured at Xiaguirou Mountain into the exhibition space, the work transforms experiences of solitude and precarity into a symbolic image of a journey that continues, yet has not reached shore.

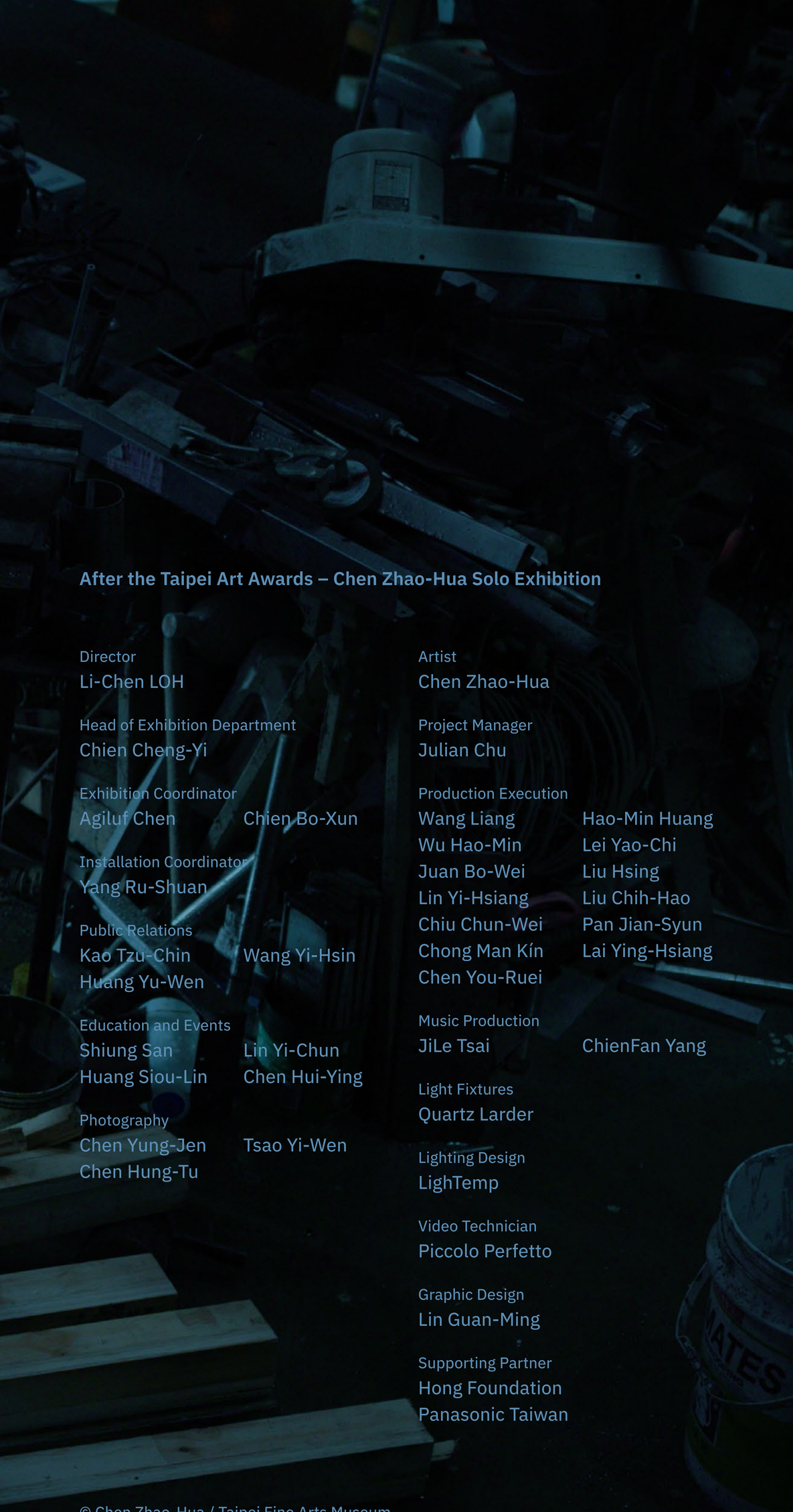


Elastic Love

2026
Installation, Dimensions variable

At the end of the exhibition stands a white flag that is continually covered in frost. A symbol of surrender, the flag embodies Chen Zhao-Hua’s recurring thoughts of giving up under mounting financial pressure. Using a compressor-based refrigeration system, the artist causes the surface of the flag to repeatedly frost over and turn white, then darken again as it thaws. This cyclical transformation echoes the recurring struggle and hesitation brought on by the pressures of reality, as well as the questions Chen has repeatedly asked himself over years of exhaustion: whether he should continue making art at all.

Yet, in looking back on the choices that have shaped his path, Chen gradually realizes that precisely because he still cares, he has never been able to raise the white flag. Perhaps it is this enduring love for art that continues to sustain him and allows him to carry on.



After the Taipei Art Awards – Chen Zhao-Hua Solo Exhibition

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