

DREAMS, ILLUSIONS, BUBBLES AND SHADOWS: CATCHING ETERNITY IN A FLASH OF LIGHT | 2024

Dreams, Illusions, Bubbles and Shadows: catching eternity in a flash of light | 2024
showcases the creative works of **Xinwei XU**

This exhibition is inspired by the story of the earliest dated printed book, the Diamond Sutra (868). The plunder of this sutra and other manuscripts from Dunhuang, China around 1900s was a national tragedy. The exhibition explores non-linear temporality and matter through this book, with a willing of repatriation.

Officially opened by Associate Professor **Paul UHLMANN**

Gallery25

Opening: Thursday 28 November 5pm–7pm
Exhibition dates: 21 November–11 December 2024
Floor talk: Wednesday 4 December 12:30pm–1:30pm
Gallery opening hours: Tuesday to Friday 10am–4pm
Building 10, 2 Bradford St, Mount Lawley

ECU Galleries acknowledges the traditional custodians, the Whadjuk Noongar people, and elders past and present. We pay our respects for the great privilege of living, making and researching on these unceded lands.

ECU Galleries



Biography

Xinwei Xu is an artist, translator and researcher and currently a PhD candidate immersed in her practice-led research at Edith Cowan University. Her artwork concerns cross-cultural themes, non-linear time and Buddhist emptiness. She now focuses on the study of the 868 printed Diamond Sutra, as well as doing art practices pertaining to the non-linear temporal structure and content of this sutra. Since 2016, she has been translating books on art and design history. She also worked as a lecturer for 3 years in Jiangxi province, China.

Contact Information

Instagram: @awueitm

Website: <https://www.annxu.live>

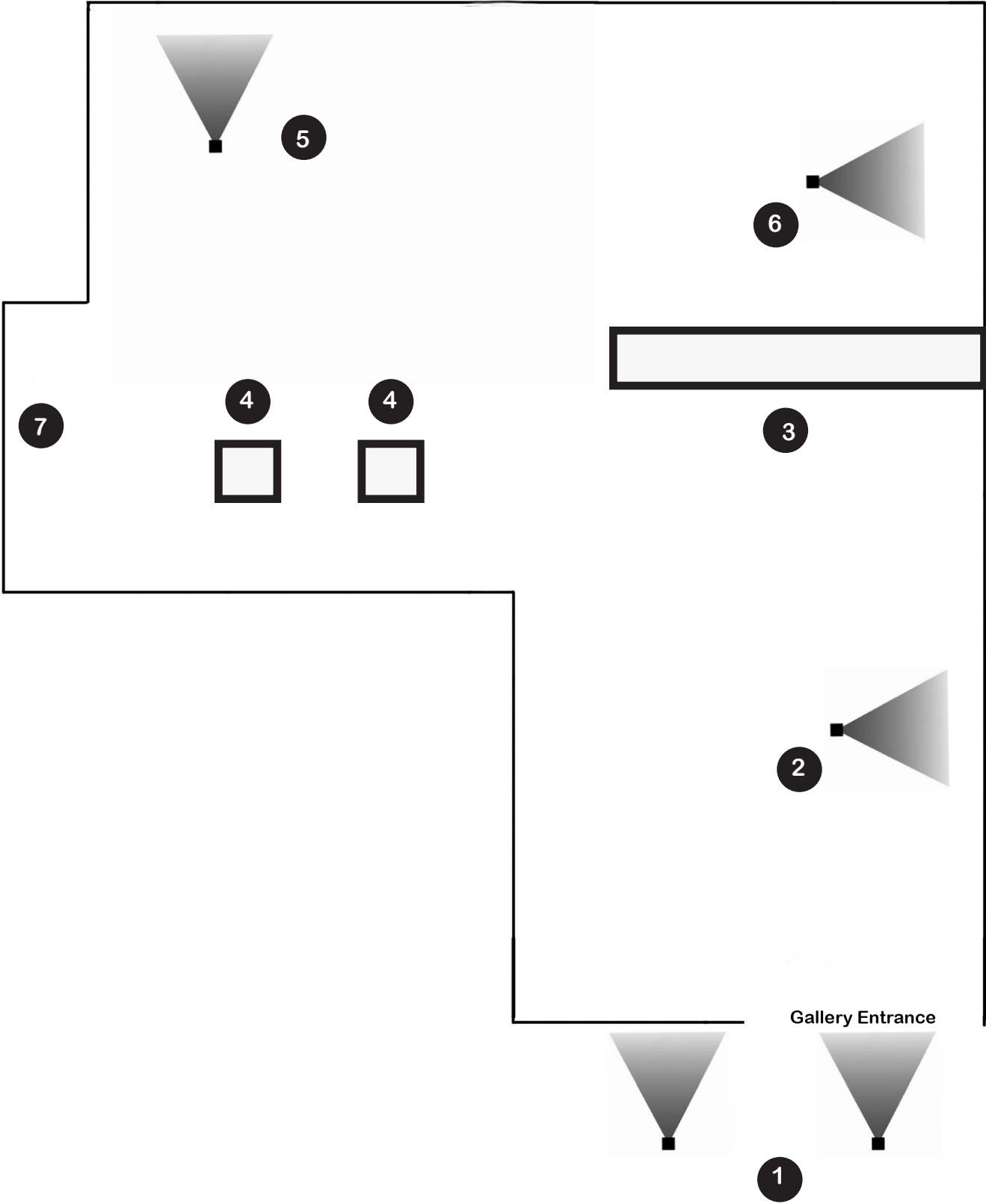
Artist's Statement

This exhibition explores concepts of non-linear time and emptiness and is informed by my research into the multiple intersecting stories of the world's earliest dated printed book, the Diamond Sutra (868). This highly significant and rare early Chinese translation of a key Buddhist text, now preserved in the British Library, was illicitly removed from a sealed cave in Dunhuang, China and brought to the UK in 1909. The removal of this cultural artefact and other Dunhuang manuscripts is widely seen in China as being a national tragedy. Juxtaposed with the tragedy, this sutra has been rewritten by multiple materials for the purpose of conservation, including Western papers, Japanese paper, Chinese paper and recently repaired with Japanese paper. Paradoxical to numerous substantial changes, the Diamond Sutra records the elusive Buddhist thought on emptiness which was originally taught by the Buddha around 500 BC.

Central to my project is a stated aim that the sutra and the other 50000 manuscripts must be repatriated to China.

The exhibition is comprised of installations and videos with an aim to create immersive experience that contrasts ideas of emptiness and materiality, eternity and impermanence, past and ever-present. The exhibition shows my material translations towards the Diamond Sutra through videos and a special type of bamboo paper sourced from my hometown in Jiangxi Province, China. Known as liansi zhi, the paper has been used for printing for hundreds of years, is imbued with the culturally-rich memory of local makings and printings. Both video works and paper installations were made based on the idea that matter is not only an object and only exists in one time but contains infinite folds and intricate textures of time. Apart from these ideas, the exhibition examines how Buddhist emptiness can be materiality.

The exhibition is divided into four spaces, each examining different themes through artworks. The first space examines materiality and emptiness. The second space examines impermanence. The third space examines conversation and conflict. The fourth space examines works emerged spontaneously. These spaces are not sequential, but organic. The exhibition forms a story and a translation of the Diamond Sutra (868) that I may never see, touch or read aloud again.



List of Works

- 1 **The nameless wave**, 2023, 2-channel video, dimensions variable
- 2 **The unfolded**, 2023, 1-channel video, dimensions variable
- 3 **Emptiness in materiality**, 2022, liansi paper, chinese ink, dimensions variable
POA
- 4 **Time machine**, 2024, canvas frames, screens, approximately 30 x 30 x 30cm
each
- 5 **Murmurs and whispers**, 2024, 1-channel video, dimensions variable
- 6 **In the emptiness hills I see no one**, 2024, projection on xuan paper, wood
frames, lights, paper installation: 50 x 150cm
Video: dimensions variable
- 7 **Dreams, illusion, bubbles and shadows**, 2022-2024, embossed liansi
paper, approximately 26 x 70cm each