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"CHEMICAL GILDING, KEEP CALM, GALVANISE, PRAY, GRADIENT, ASHES, MANIFESTATION, UNEQUAL, DISSATISFACTION, CAPITALISE, INCENSE BURNER, SURVIVAL, AGITATION, HIT, DAY LIGHT. II – CHOU YU-CHENG"

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CHOU YU-CHENG, *Chemical Gilding, Keep Calm, Galvanise, Pray, Gradient, Ashes, Manifestation, Unequal, Dissatisfaction, Capitalise, Incense Burner, Survival, Agitation, Hit, Day Light. II*, 2016, stainless-steel plate, coated steel plate, neon, paintings, plaster and fruits, dimensions variable. Courtesy Edouard Malingue Gallery, Hong Kong.

**CHEMICAL GILDING, KEEP CALM, GALVANISE, PRAY,
GRADIENT, ASHES, MANIFESTATION, UNEQUAL,
DISSATISFACTION, CAPITALISE, INCENSE BURNER, SURVIVAL,
AGITATION, HIT, DAY LIGHT. II
CHOU YU-CHENG**

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EDOUARD MALINGUE GALLERY

HONG KONG TAIWAN

Even before entering Edouard Malingue Gallery, the unusual title of Taiwanese artist Chou Yu-Cheng's solo exhibition prompts intrigue. The exhaustive title, "Chemical Gilding, Keep Calm, Galvanise, Pray, Gradient, Ashes, Manifestation, Unequal, Dissatisfaction, Capitalise, Incense Burner, Survival, Agitation, Hit, Day Light. II," teases viewers with themes of the exhibition that are hidden throughout the eclectic configuration of objects, materials and paintings.

The concept of daylight, as referred to in the exhibition's title, is recalled immediately upon seeing three ombré paintings installed in the gallery. Soft spectrums of color ranging from blues to pinks to yellows are the artist's interpretations of daylight, the darkest of which is culled from his childhood memories. The gentle monotony of the two brighter canvases is interrupted with the exhibition title written in bright white on each of the surfaces, and a single plaster ball that is glued in the lower left corners. Additional white balls are placed around the gallery floor, bridging the gap between the viewers' physical environment and the works on display.

In stark contrast to the minimalist presentation of the paintings is the only other work in the show, a neat yet chaotic installation that takes up nearly the entire width of the back wall. At first glance, the amalgamation of objects, which range from white plaster casts of household items and neon tubes to raw fruits that have been left to naturally decompose, seem completely unrelated to one another. Here, the title of the exhibition is presented again on more spectrum paintings that act as backdrops for the various objects of the installation—its presence acting as the link throughout the show. All of these mixed and contrasting pieces are displayed on sterile metal shelves, which seem much more at home in a laboratory, and evoke the scientific, chemical aspects of his mysterious exhibition title.



CHOU YU-CHENG, *Chemical Gilding, Keep Calm, Galvanise, Pray, Gradient, Ashes, Manifestation, Unequal, Dissatisfaction, Capitalise, Incense Burner, Survival, Agitation, Hit, Day Light. II* (detail), 2016, stainless-steel plate, coated steel plate, neon, paintings, plaster and fruits, dimensions variable. Courtesy Edouard Malingue Gallery, Hong Kong.



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The words “galvanise” and “hit” perhaps draw the most immediate connection to a large-scale sheet of corrugated metal, similar to those used on roofs, which visually dominates the overall installation. This work is taken directly from Chou’s 2015 show of the same title, in which the audience was encouraged to pelt the same sheet of metal with rocks. This piece of metal was then reused for this second installation, which also explains why “II” is amended onto the title of his exhibition at Edouard Malingue.

To work through the rationale behind the title—“Chemical Gilding, Keep Calm, Galvanise, Pray, Gradient, Ashes, Manifestation, Unequal, Dissatisfaction, Capitalise, Incense Burner, Survival, Agitation, Hit, Day Light. II”—one must take its advice to keep calm, and perhaps even pray for those so inclined, and further examine the more technical aspects of the installation: namely, its neon graphs and painted charts. The bright, jagged neon lights not only draw the eye, but also provide commentary with their representation of graphs of Taiwanese housing market trends. Seeing that they are paired with pie charts displaying government censuses on the happiness of the Taiwanese people (a startlingly small slice of the pie represents “happy” people), the decision to include the more nebulous and conceptual words in the exhibition title, such as “Dissatisfaction,” “Agitation,” “Survival” and “Unequal,” becomes clear.

The data of Taiwan’s economy, housing and happiness, when viewed together with the casts of household objects and slowly-decomposing fruit, prompt viewers to turn their speculative gazes inwards, to evaluate their own happiness. In Chou’s unique manner, he not only prompts a dialogue between the works themselves, but also between the objects and the viewers.

Mimicking the dichotomous and cryptic title, the exhibition is both calming and discomforting, orderly and chaotic, static and fluid. Walking among the pieces, in an attempt to draw the intended connections between the works and the title, each viewer embarks upon a unique journey resulting from Chou’s artistic decisions and their individual life experiences.



Installation view of **CHOU YU-CHENG**’s “Chemical Gilding, Keep Calm, Galvanise, Pray, Gradient, Ashes, Manifestation, Unequal, Dissatisfaction, Capitalise, Incense Burner, Survival, Agitation, Hit, Day Light. II” at Edouard Malingue Gallery, Hong Kong, 2016. Courtesy Edouard Malingue Gallery.

Chou Yu-Cheng’s “Chemical Gilding, Keep Calm, Galvanise, Pray, Gradient, Ashes, Manifestation, Unequal, Dissatisfaction, Capitalise, Incense Burner, Survival, Agitation, Hit, Day Light. II” is on view at Edouard Malingue Gallery, Hong Kong, until August 13, 2016.