

I am a Contemporary English Language Mother Chunxiao Qu

Gertrude Glasshouse
26 April – 31 May 2025

In *I am a Contemporary English Language Mother*, Chunxiao Qu constructs a space where power, language, and authorship collide in a series of playful yet unsettling inversions. Through sculpture, neon text, and performative gestures, Qu questions whether reversing roles can ever truly dismantle the structures they seek to subvert.

By claiming the title of a 'contemporary English language mother' as a non-native speaker, Qu embodies a contradiction where authority is both seized and undermined. Her works confront the futility of reversal – where the gaze, once flipped, merely mirrors the original power dynamic, leaving its core disturbingly intact.

I am a Contemporary English Language Mother invites viewers to navigate a terrain where humour and contradiction destabilise certainty, leaving them to confront the unsettling realisation that even in reversal, authority remains a game that refuses to be won.

Chunxiao Qu is a Melbourne-based artist born in China. Her interdisciplinary practice spans sculpture, installation, neon, painting, print-making, poetry and fashion. Humour, conceptual play and linguistic tension run throughout her work, as she explores themes of language, authorship, intimacy and identity.

Selected recent solo exhibitions include *Melbourne Art Fair* with FUTURES, Naarm Melbourne (2025); *as tragedy / as farce*, 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney (2025); *Art is a washing machine that is washing itself*, FUTURES, Naarm Melbourne (2023); *An artist doesn't need a label*, LRI Biannual Façade public Art Commission, La Trobe Art Institute, Bendigo (2022-23); *COPY*, 99% Gallery, Naarm Melbourne (2022); *The title is no longer relevant*, Trocadero Projects, Naarm Melbourne (2021). Selected group exhibitions include *Direct, Directed, Directly*, Samstag Museum of Art, Tarntanya Adelaide (2025); *Hair Pieces*, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Naarm Melbourne (2024); *Gertrude Studios 2024*, Gertrude Contemporary, Naarm Melbourne (2024); *Person, woman, man, camera, TV*, Blindside, Naarm Melbourne (2022); and *Everything That Is Outside Of Us*, Palazzo Vai, Prato, Italy (2017).

She has published two poetry collections: *This poetry book is too good to have a name & Logic Poetry* (Discipline, 2022) and *Popcorn, Porn of Poetry* (no more poetry, 2021).

Chunxiao Qu is represented by FUTURES, Naarm Melbourne.

Acknowledgements

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The 2025 Glasshouse Program is supported by the City of Yarra.

Glasshouse is generously supported by Michael Schwarz and David Clouston. In 2025, Gertrude celebrates one decade of Glasshouse.

List of works

1. *We Kissed* 2025
photopolymer resin, polished metallic gold finish
30 x 10.8 x 2.2 cm
2. *Boyfriend Table* 2024
ABS polymer, steel, acrylic paint, plexiglass, glass
215 x 86 x 84 cm
3. *Wig Shoes No.2* 2025
Balenciaga shoes, synthetic wig
30 x 8 x 10 cm
4. *I AM A CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE MOTHER* 2025
LED neon with transparent acrylic frames
80 x 73.39 cm
5. *I AM YOU AND YOU ARE ME* 2025
LED neon with transparent acrylic frames
45 x 45 cm
6. *too fun to run* 2025
LED neon with transparent acrylic frames
45 x 45 cm
7. *Lingua Nova* 2025
digital print on paper, hardcover book, case bound
29 x 22.3 x 2 cm

All works courtesy the artist and FUTURES, Naarm Melbourne

