

Artsy, *The Top Emerging Artists of 2016*, text/ Artsy Editorial, December 2016

ARTSY

The Year in Art 2016

The Top Emerging Artists of 2016

Artsy Editorial

Among the more pervasive art-world narratives of 2016 was the downturn in the market for works by emerging artists. Market contractions may have limited the sheer number of new names bubbling up to surface this year in comparison to the last few. But this tempered pace also allowed for greater attention to be placed on the emerging artists of true quality and depth who gained traction in 2016—and it allowed a number of artists who have been working actively and slowly gaining recognition over several years to step up and strongly stake their claim as among those defining contemporary art today. Surveying this landscape, Artsy's editors consulted a number of data sources, including UBS's art news app Planet Art, and the insight of influential individuals to see who among these new and newly essential names proved a cut above the rest. Here, in no particular order, are the top emerging artists of this year.

<https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-the-top-emerging-artists-of-2016>

LEO XU PROJECTS

Cheng Ran ⊕ Follow

B. 1981, INNER MONGOLIA, CHINA • LIVES AND WORKS IN HANGZHOU, CHINA



Portrait of Cheng Ran in Shanghai by Samuel Croskery for Artsy.



ENTER SLIDESHOW

This year, Chinese video artist Cheng's inaugural trip to the U.S. marked a groundbreaking moment in his career: the first solo museum show of his work outside of China, at the New Museum in New York. On view through mid-January, "Cheng Ran: Diary of a Madman" follows Cheng's three-month-long residency at the museum as part of a new collaboration with the K11 Art Foundation. It brings to light the hypnotizing effects of Cheng's films, which fuse aspects of contemporary everyday life with elements of myth and mystery—and have grabbed the attention of curators, critics, and collectors alike this past year. Case in point: In Cheng's March solo exhibition at the K11 Art Foundation's Hong Kong outpost, chi art space, he unveiled an epic nine-hour film, *In Course of the Miraculous* (2016), which visualized the stories behind unsolved mysteries, like the disappearances of British mountaineer George Mallory and conceptual artist Bas Jan Ader.

"Not only is his work remarkable—*In Course of the Miraculous* has already attained a kind of cult status—but he is a great catalyst and an enthusiast, someone who can spend three months in New York and not only make great work, but also really absorb and engage with the art scenes here," says New Museum artistic director Massimiliano Gioni. For the 15 videos currently on view in "Diary of a Madman," Cheng layers footage of both the mundane (city streets) and the mysterious (an abandoned asylum) taken around New York, piecing together a dreamlike vision of an outsider's experience. "I think his work preserves the immediacy of the tradition of independent cinema coupled with a sense of wonder and spectacle that we usually expect from more mainstream cinema," adds Gioni.