

HIGHER DEGREE BY RESEARCH  
**ART EXHIBITION**  
EXHIBITION SEVEN/SEASON 2024



pusat pengajian  
**seni**  
school of the arts USM



## Zhu XiaoMing

School Of The Arts, Universiti Sains Malaysia.  
Higher Degree by Research Art Exhibition  
Exhibition Seven/Season 2024

Venue: Muzium & Galeri Tuanku Fauziah (MGTF),USM  
Date: From 11<sup>th</sup> September 2024 to 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024

**MAN AND NATURE: ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN  
EXPLORATION OF PLASTIC MATERIALS IN ARTWORKS**

Pameran Seni Ijazah Tinggi melalui Penyelidikan  
*Higher Degree by Research Art Exhibition*

Pameran Tujuh/Musim 2024  
*Exhibition Seven/Season 2024*

*Man And Nature: Environmental Issues in Exploration of Plastic Materials in Artworks*  
Oleh/by: Zhu Xiao Ming  
Dari 11 September 2024 sehingga 25 September 2024  
*From 11<sup>th</sup> September 2024 to 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024*

*Muzium & Galeri Tuanku Fauziah (MGTF),USM*

School of The Arts, Universiti Sains Malaysia.  
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# Profile

**ZHU XIAO MING (b. 1991)**  
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Zhu Xiao Ming is a contemporary artist pursuing a Ph.D. at the School of the Arts, Universiti Sains Malaysia. Her work is renowned for its use of everyday plastic materials and the intense emotions it conveys. Drawing inspiration from current environmental issues and consumer behavior, her creations seek to capture the subtle relationship between humanity and nature.

## **Education**

**2012** graduated from Luxun Academy of Fine Arts with a bachelor's degree ;  
**2016** graduated from ShanDong Normal University Academy of Fine Arts with a master's degree.





# Introduction

The emergence of plastics has significantly enhanced daily convenience, but their large-scale production and use, driven by consumerism, have caused severe plastic pollution, straining the relationship between humans and nature. Plastic pollution has become a global crisis affecting both marine and terrestrial ecosystems. However, current artistic creations largely focus on marine plastic pollution, overlooking the impact of plastic pollution on terrestrial ecosystems and the interconnection between plastic pollution and climate change.

This project aims to examine and produce artworks through studio-based research by integrating eco-aesthetics, environmental issues, and overconsumption. The artistic creations seek to contextualize discarded plastic materials within the discourse of environmental issues, raising public awareness of the plastic crisis in terrestrial ecosystems and expanding public imagination within the context of consumerism.

This exhibition mainly explores the plastic pollution on the land which includes three main phases with the first phase focusing on the repetition-plastic, the second phase is called disguise-plastic crisis and climate change, and the third phase is called conflict and symbiotic.



## Repetition-Plastic

According to the Guinness Book of World Records, plastic bags are the worlds' most common consumer product."(Lewis & Young, 2019) It is visible at the beach, underwater, in the Arctic, and even on Mount Everest, the highest point on earth. Plastic bags can be found everywhere in the environment we live in.

This phase is born from the remnants of mass-produced plastic bags—vivid, enticing, and yet insidiously destructive. As a byproduct of consumerism, plastic materials are linked to people's repeated socioeconomic behaviour - consumption and recycling (Yue, 2016). Therefore, the transfer of repeated plastic bags is the performance of people's repeated consumption behaviour.





Zhu Xiao Ming (2020)  
**Plastic and Environment I**  
 [Installation]



Zhu Xiao Ming (2020)  
**Plastic and Environment I**  
 40\*50cm  
 [Mixed Media]



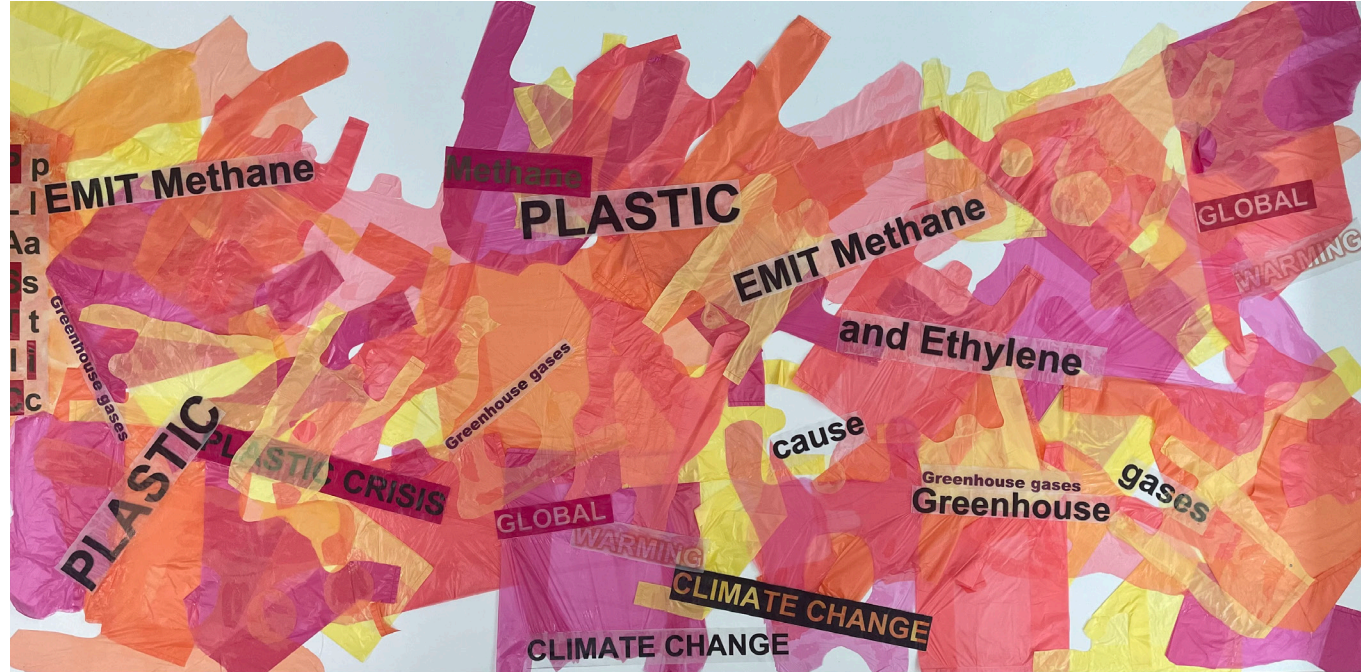


Zhu Xiao Ming (2020) **Plastic and Environment II** 50\*60cm [Mixed Media]

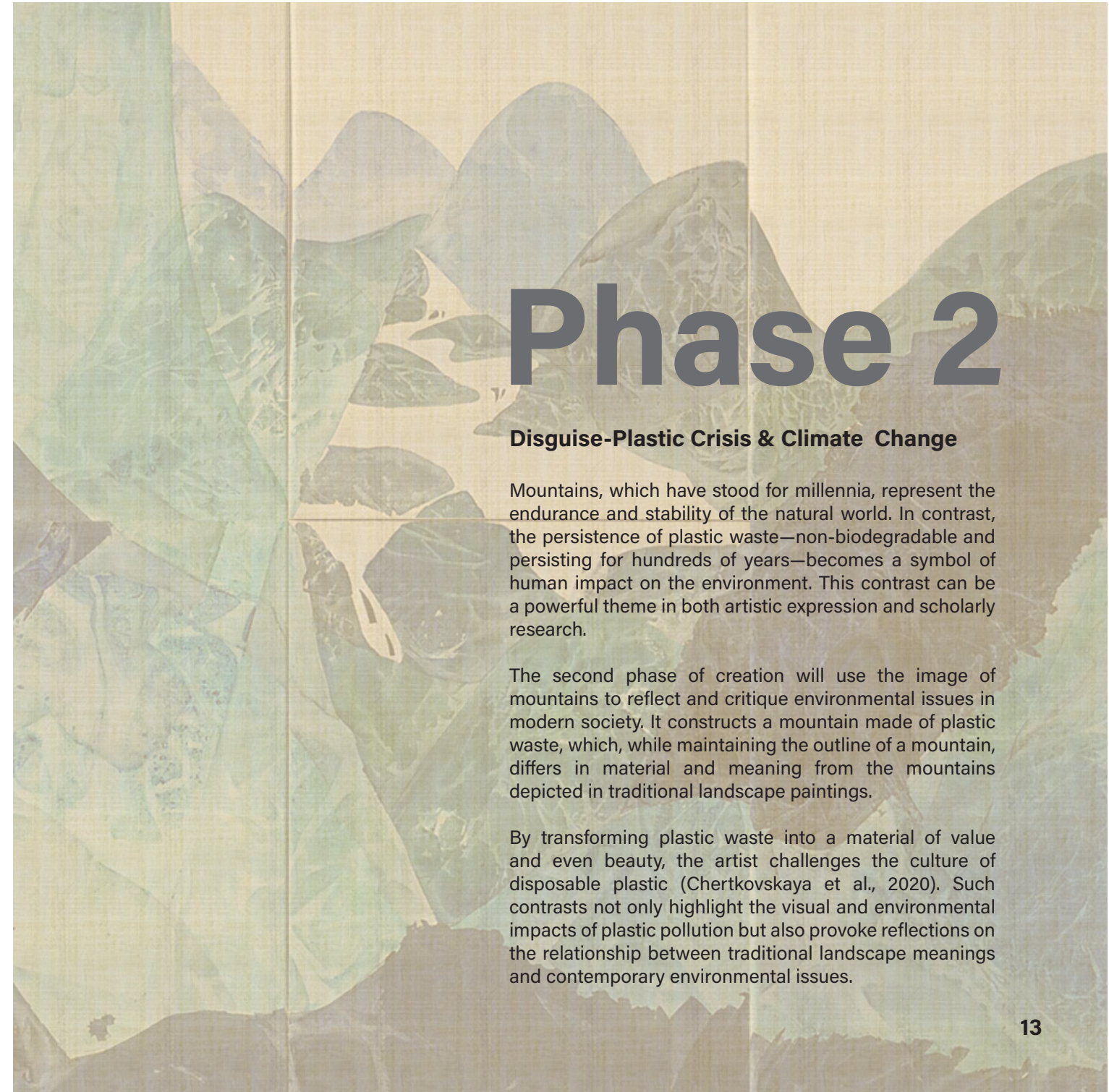


Zhu Xiao Ming (2020)  
**Plastic Bag Dynamics I**  
80\*150cm.  
[Mixed Media]





Zhu Xiao Ming (2023)  
**Plastic Bag Dynamics II**  
 95\*185cm  
 [Mixed Media]



# Phase 2

## Disguise-Plastic Crisis & Climate Change

Mountains, which have stood for millennia, represent the endurance and stability of the natural world. In contrast, the persistence of plastic waste—non-biodegradable and persisting for hundreds of years—becomes a symbol of human impact on the environment. This contrast can be a powerful theme in both artistic expression and scholarly research.

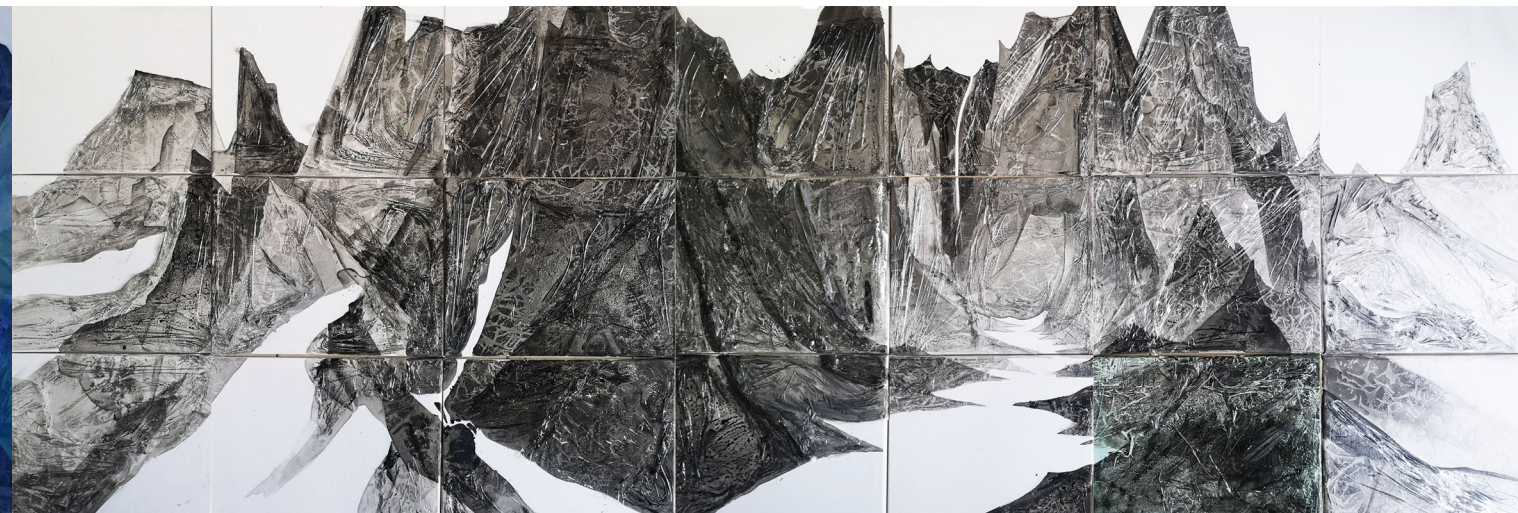
The second phase of creation will use the image of mountains to reflect and critique environmental issues in modern society. It constructs a mountain made of plastic waste, which, while maintaining the outline of a mountain, differs in material and meaning from the mountains depicted in traditional landscape paintings.

By transforming plastic waste into a material of value and even beauty, the artist challenges the culture of disposable plastic (Chertkovskaya et al., 2020). Such contrasts not only highlight the visual and environmental impacts of plastic pollution but also provoke reflections on the relationship between traditional landscape meanings and contemporary environmental issues.



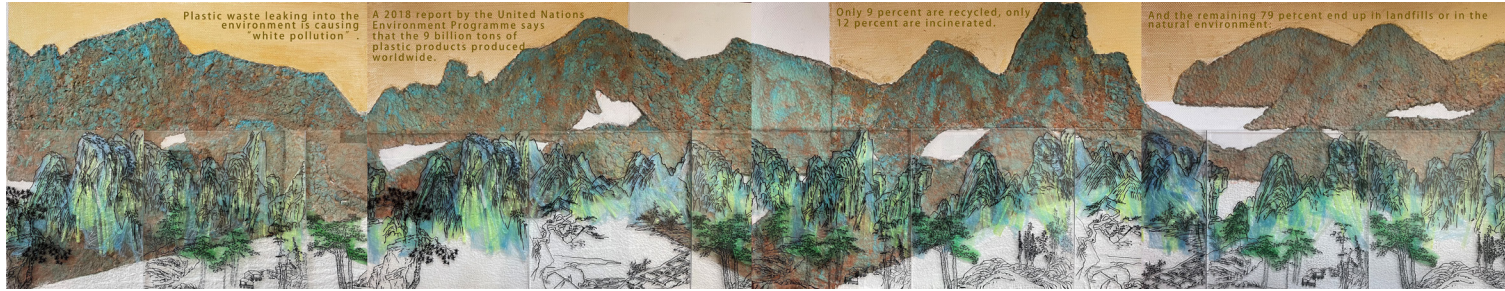


Zhu Xiao Ming (2020)  
**Such a landscape I**  
80cm\*240cm  
[Mixed Media]

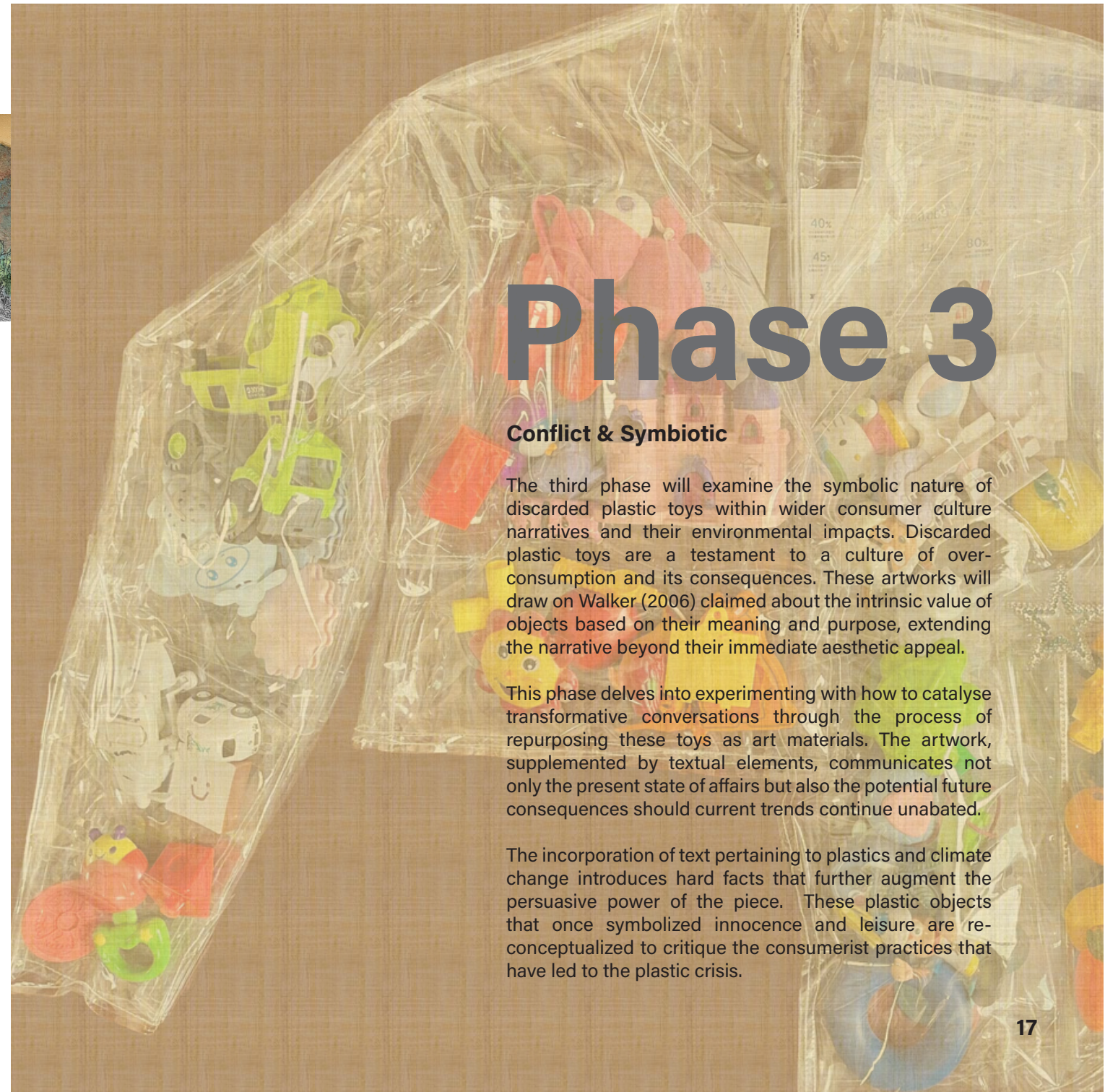
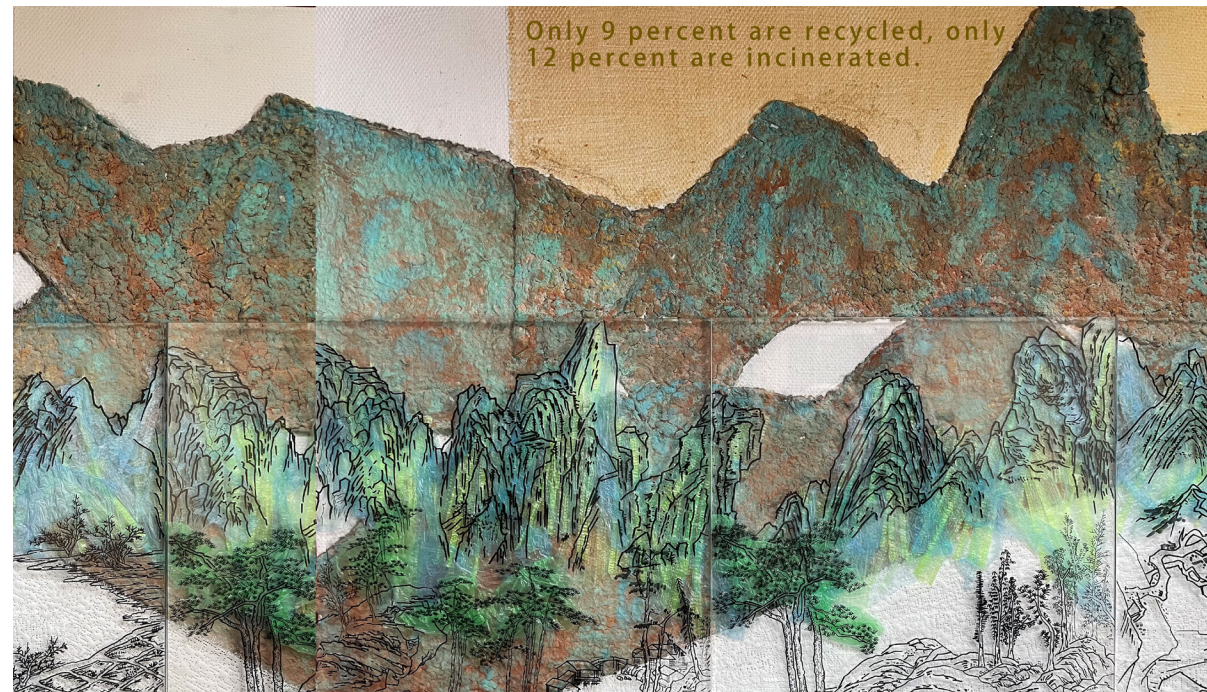


Zhu Xiao Ming (2021)  
**Such a landscape II**  
90cm\*280cm  
[Mixed Media]





Zhu Xiao Ming (2023) **Beneath the brilliance, lies the burden** 55cm\*294cm [Mixed Media]



# Phase 3

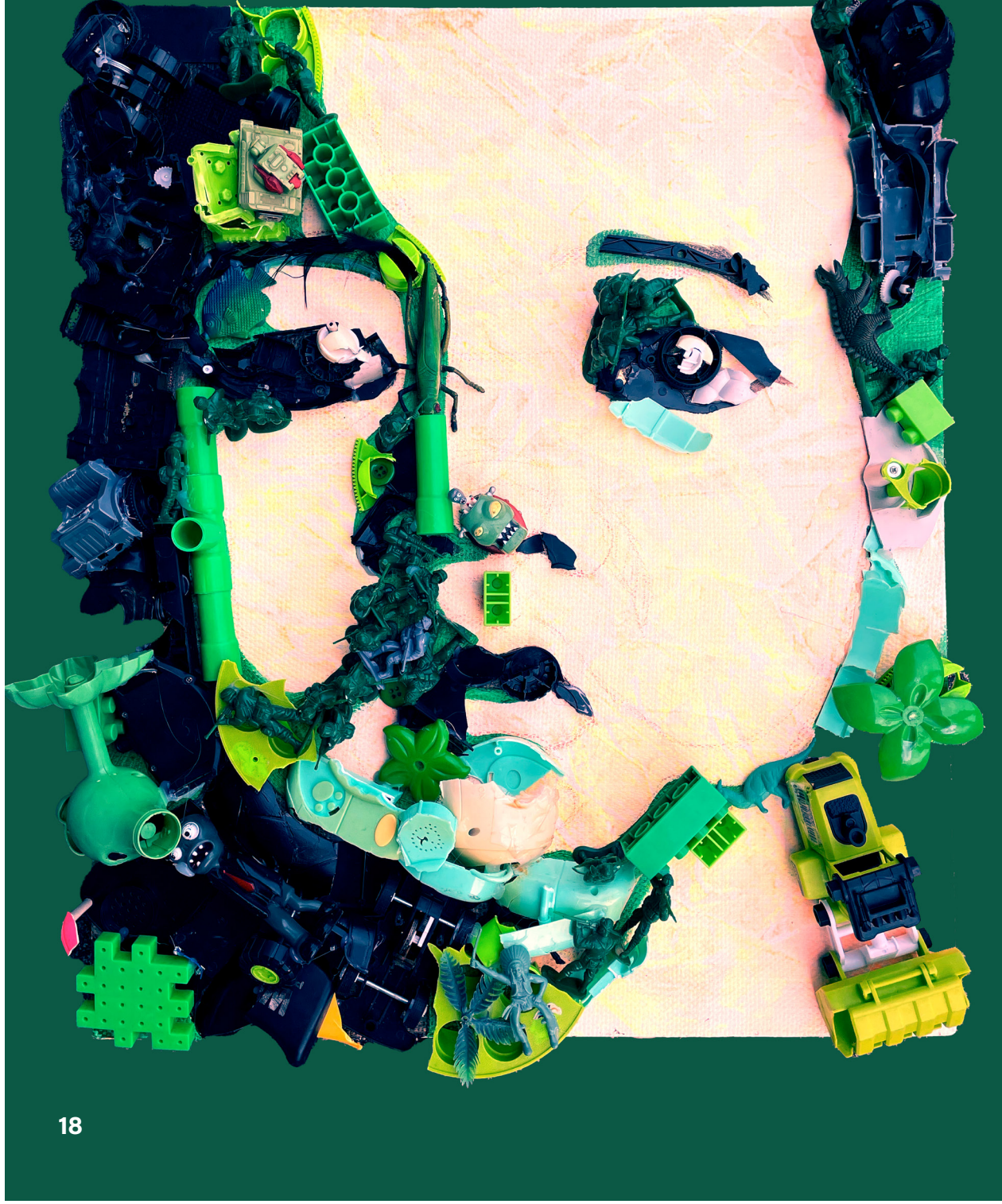
## Conflict & Symbiotic

The third phase will examine the symbolic nature of discarded plastic toys within wider consumer culture narratives and their environmental impacts. Discarded plastic toys are a testament to a culture of over-consumption and its consequences. These artworks will draw on Walker (2006) claimed about the intrinsic value of objects based on their meaning and purpose, extending the narrative beyond their immediate aesthetic appeal.

This phase delves into experimenting with how to catalyse transformative conversations through the process of repurposing these toys as art materials. The artwork, supplemented by textual elements, communicates not only the present state of affairs but also the potential future consequences should current trends continue unabated.

The incorporation of text pertaining to plastics and climate change introduces hard facts that further augment the persuasive power of the piece. These plastic objects that once symbolized innocence and leisure are re-conceptualized to critique the consumerist practices that have led to the plastic crisis.



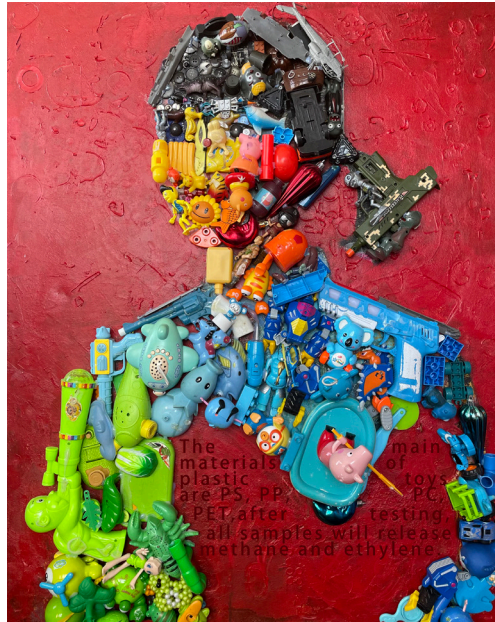


Zhu Xiao Ming (2024)  
**Where Do We Come From? Where Are We Going? I**  
 40cm\*60cm  
 [Mixed Media]



Zhu Xiao Ming (2024)  
**Where Do We Come From? Where Are We Going? II**  
 40cm\*60cm  
 [Mixed Media]





Zhu Xiao Ming (2022)  
**Make Changes from Your Surroundings**  
 [Installation]



Zhu Xiao Ming (2022)  
**Where Do We Come From? Where Are We Going?III**  
 80cm\*100cm\*3  
 [Mixed Media]







Terima kasih kepada;

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Dekan

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