

Wagga Wagga Art Gallery



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# See You in Hell

Jess Bradford  
and Louise Zhang

16 December 2023 - 25 February 2024





*'See You in Hell' presents a collection of playful and subversive works by artists Louise Zhang and Jess Bradford exploring Chinese concepts of the Afterlife.*

*Diyu, the Chinese Buddhist concept of Hell, is both a starting point and a meeting place for the artists to explore personal experiences and complex relationships to their shared Chinese cultural heritage as 'third culture kids'.*

Cover image: Jessica Bradford and Louise Zhang,  
*Nature cutting straight through me* 2023  
Page 2: Louise Zhang, *Blood pool with lotuses*. 2023

## Jess Bradford

Jess Bradford is a Singaporean-born and Sydney-based artist, working across painting, ceramics, video and installation. Her work explores her mixed-race identity and Chinese heritage by questioning representations of cultural or national identity. Her current work focuses on a Chinese cultural theme park in Singapore called the Haw Par Villa / Tiger Balm Gardens. Having frequented the park as a child, Bradford uses the site to explore her ambivalent connection to Singaporean-Chinese culture; and concepts of collective memory and cultural inheritance.

Jessica Bradford.  
Photo credit: Jacquie Manning







## Louise Zhang

Louise Zhang is a Chinese-Australian multidisciplinary artist whose practice spans painting, sculpture and installation. Zhang explores the dynamics of aesthetics, contrasting the attractive and repulsive in order to navigate the senses of fear, anxiety and a sense of otherness reflecting her identity. Her work is inspired by horror cinema, Chinese mythology and botany, adopting and placing symbols and motifs in compositions of harmonic dissonance.

Louise Zhang.  
Photo credit: Zan Wimberley





兔園巡行記

# 兔園關



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玉皇殿三第



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Wagga Wagga Art Gallery is delighted to present *See You In Hell*, major collaboration between Sydney based artists, Louise Zhang and Jessica Bradford. This body of new work explores the artists' Chinese heritage through rubric of Diyu (Chinese Hell) as an organising framework for the exhibition's physical build and conceptual underpinnings through which identity, religion and Chinese mythology and iconology are considered. In creating Diyu the artists will employ their characteristic use of mixed media with pop and cross-cultural references – specifically, Chinese myth, motifs, concepts and belief.

Zhang and Bradford have painting and sculptural practices with significant synergies. *See You in Hell* is both a starting point and a meeting place for the artists to explore personal experiences and complex relationships to their shared Chinese cultural heritage as 'third culture kids'.

*See You in Hell* was commissioned by Wagga Wagga Art Gallery with the support of Create NSW.

Dr Lee-Anne Hall  
Director  
Wagga Wagga Art Gallery



## Exhibition Essay

Artists Jessica Bradford and Louise Zhang break down the concepts behind the exhibition *See You in Hell*





*See you in Hell* brings Bradford and Zhang together for the first time, building on their personal and complex connection to Chinese culture.

This exhibition brings together Zhang's multi-coloured exploration of complex spiritual and religious beliefs from her family's Chinese hometown of Wenzhou and Bradford's childhood introduction to Buddhist Hell at Haw Par Villa, a Chinese cultural theme park in her birth country of Singapore.

The concept of Diyu / Courts of Hell is a confluence of Chinese Buddhism, Taoism and folk religion; it is an amazing example of syncretism / transculturation, which is an important connection and point of focus for both Bradford and Zhang. As both artists have nuanced experiences of biculturalism, as being a part of the Chinese diaspora.

Diyu / Hell is described as multiple underground spaces with differing punishments for the different sins accumulated during life. Unlike the Christian concept of Hell, Diyu is not permanent and everyone has to go. It is a surprisingly bureaucratic place, and as the concept was adopted and further developed in China, mirrored the contemporaneous structure of society. Judgments were administered by Kings / Judges who dealt out punishments and the length

of your stay based on your sins. There are differing accounts of Buddhist Hell, especially as Buddhism spread from India across to East and South East Asia, and in this exhibition Bradford focuses on the variation as described in Haw Par Villa, with Ten Courts, each with varying punishments for different crimes. (more info at <https://www.wheresidewalksend.com/court-of-hell/>)

Haw Par Villa's Ten Courts of Hell several metre long cavernous diorama is a highly immersive visual space. But this theme park could be seen as a descendant of 13th and 14th century Hell scrolls; specialised manuscripts with text and illustrations that monks would use to help disseminate Buddhist teachings. These highly popular literary forms were often accompanied with story-telling or practised speeches, adding an aural or performative element to what was effectively an early form of the comic book. These scrolls remained popular for several centuries and were believed to help disseminate Buddhist teachings across different dialect groups or illiterate viewers due to their highly visual nature.



# 鬼門關







**Louise Zhang**  
Lives and works in Sydney

*See you at Yellow Spring* 2023  
acrylic on canvas  
103 x 61  
Photographer Jessica Maurer





## Jess Bradford

b. 1987, Singapore  
Lives and works in Sydney

*Cauldron* 2023

pastel on board  
60 x 50

Photographer Jessica Maurer



## Jess Bradford

b. 1987, Singapore  
Lives and works in Sydney

*Dreaming of an afterlife in middle management* 2023

pastel on board  
40 x 35

Photographer Jessica Maurer





## Jessica Bradford and Louise Zhang

*Hellscapes from Haw Par Villa 1 (Tiger Cut) 2023*  
hand painted Lambda Print  
30 x 40



## Jessica Bradford and Louise Zhang

*Hellscapes from Haw Par Villa 2 (Treetop) 2023*  
hand painted Lambda Print  
30 x 40





## Louise Zhang

Lives and works in Sydney

*Wisteria, spirit and stone* 2023

acrylic and oil on linen

152 x 132

Photographer Jessica Maurer



## Louise Zhang

Lives and works in Sydney

*Map of Diyu* 2023

acrylic and oil on linen

152 x 132

Photographer Jessica Maurer





## With thanks

This exhibition is supported by CreateNSW





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SEE YOU IN HELL





## Works in exhibition

Jess Bradford  
***Steak*** 2023  
Pastel on board

Jess Bradford  
***Postcards from Hell #1*** 2023  
Lambda print

Jess Bradford  
***Postcards from Hell #2*** 2023  
Lambda print

Jess Bradford  
***Postcards from Hell #3*** 2023  
Lambda print

Jess Bradford  
***Postcards from Hell #4*** 2023  
Lambda print

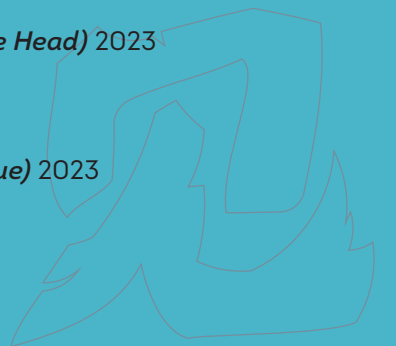
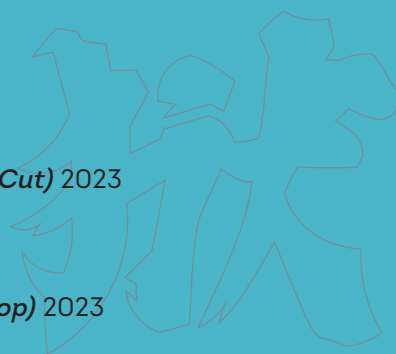
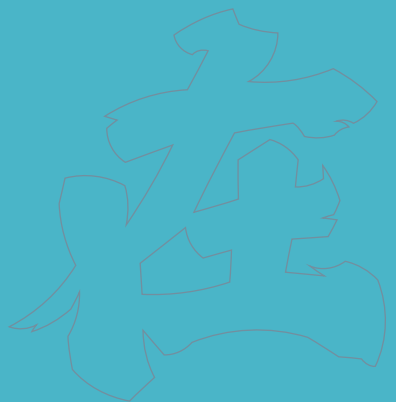
Jess Bradford  
***Postcards from Hell #5*** 2023  
Lambda print

Jess Bradford and Louise Zhang  
***Hellscapes from Haw Par Villa 1 (Tiger Cut)*** 2023  
Hand painted Lambda print

Jess Bradford  
***Hellscapes from Haw Par Villa 2 (Treetop)*** 2023  
Hand painted Lambda print

Jess Bradford and Louise Zhang  
***Hellscapes from Haw Par Villa 3 (Horse Head)*** 2023  
Hand painted Lambda print

Jess Bradford and Louise Zhang  
***Hellscapes from Haw Par Villa 4 (Tongue)*** 2023  
Hand painted Lambda print



Jess Bradford and Louise Zhang  
***Hellscapes from Haw Par Villa 5 (Mallet Smash)*** 2023  
Hand painted Lambda print

Jess Bradford and Louise Zhang  
***Hellscapes from Haw Par Villa 5 (Instructional Tools)*** 2023  
Hand painted Lambda print

Jess Bradford  
***Hellscapes from Haw Par Villa (Smashing Mallet)*** 2023  
Lambda print

Jess Bradford  
***Hellscapes from Haw Par Villa (Guillotine)*** 2023  
Lambda print

Jess Bradford  
***Every job you didn't want in life is waiting for you in Hell*** 2023  
Pastel on board

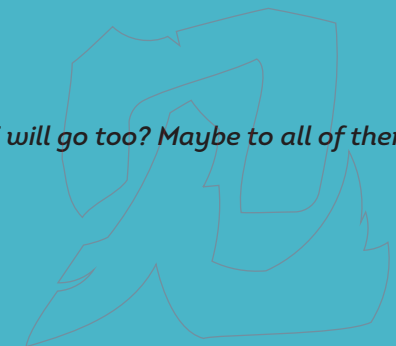
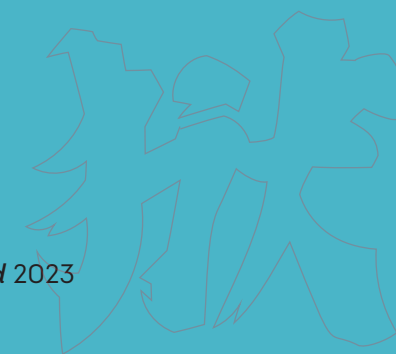
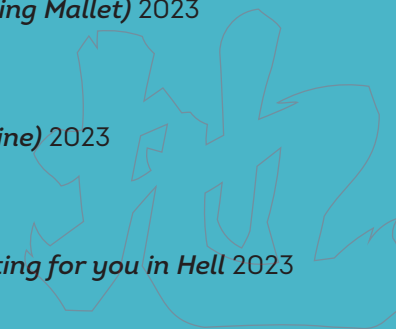
Jess Bradford  
***Demons*** 2023  
Pastel on board

Jess Bradford  
***Blades like petals*** 2023  
Pastel on board

Louise Zhang  
***Immortality peaches with peach wood*** 2023  
Acrylic on oil on linen

Louise Zhang  
***The Iris and ghost*** 2023  
Acrylic on oil on linen

Louise Zhang  
***I am wondering which heaven or hell I will go too? Maybe to all of them?*** 2023  
Acrylic on oil on linen





## Works in exhibition

Jess Bradford and Louise Zhang  
*Nothing to forgive* 2023  
Ink and acrylic on paper

Jess Bradford and Louise Zhang  
*Map of Diyu: Ten Courts of Hell* 2023  
Installation

Louise Zhang  
*See you at Yellow Spring* 2023  
Acrylic on linen

Louise Zhang  
*Just passing through, do not worry (Temple)* 2023  
Molded plastic, resin and timber

Jess Bradford and Louise Zhang  
*If I don't finish my tea, could I remember you?* 2023  
Plywood, tasmanian oak, porcelian

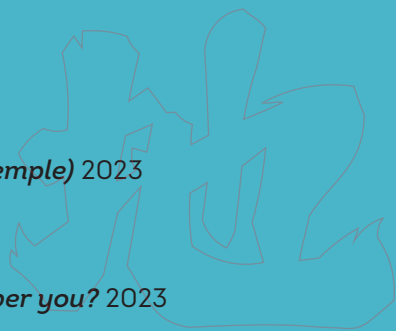
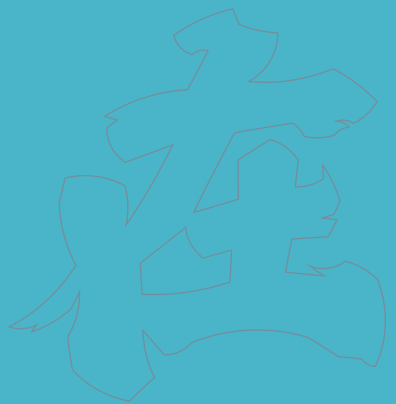
Jess Bradford and Louise Zhang  
*Ouch!* 2023  
Single channel video

Jess Bradford and Louise Zhang  
*Guardians of Hell* 2023  
Ink and acrylic on paper

Jess Bradford and Louise Zhang  
*Guardians of Hell - Ox Head* 2023  
Ink and acrylic on paper

Jess Bradford and Louise Zhang  
*Guardians of Hell - Horse Face* 2023  
Ink and acrylic on paper

Jess Bradford  
*Fire* 2023  
Ink on paper



Jess Bradford  
*You, Me & Youtiao* 2023  
Ink on paper

Louise Zhang  
*Wisteria, spirit and stone* 2023  
Acrylic and oil on linen

Jess Bradford  
*What goes around and comes around* 2023  
pastel on board

Jess Bradford  
*Ghost Gate* 2023  
painted wood

Jess Bradford  
*Surprise visit!* 2023  
pastel on board

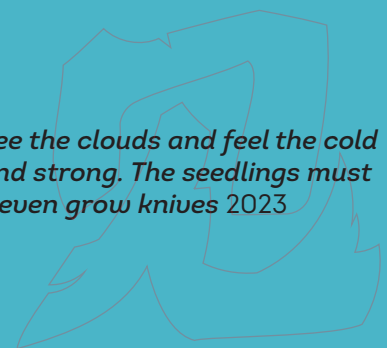
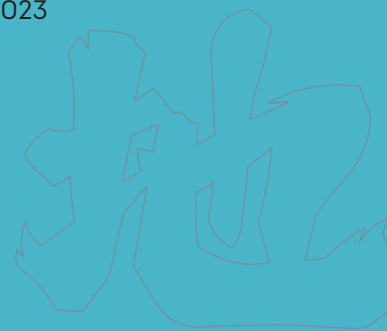
Jess Bradford  
*Having a bad day* 2023  
pastel on board

Jess Bradford  
*Blood Pool* 2023  
pastel on board

Jess Bradford  
*Falling into Oil* 2023  
pastel on board

Jess Bradford  
*As Above So Below* 2023  
pastel on board

Louise Zhang  
*Sometimes hell feels very close, but I see the clouds and feel the cold breeze. The trees in hell grow healthy and strong. The seedlings must have been well taken care of. They can even grow knives* 2023  
Arcylic on canvas



## Works in exhibition

Jess Bradford  
***Cauldron*** 2023  
Pastel on board

Jess Bradford  
***Gambling on the world being a better place*** 2023  
Pastel on board

Jess Bradford  
***Cold comfort*** 2023  
Pastel on board

Jess Bradford  
***Dreaming of an afterlife in middle management*** 2023  
Pastel on board

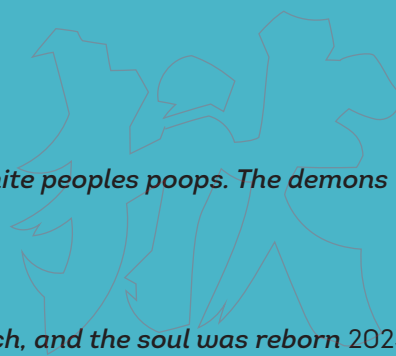
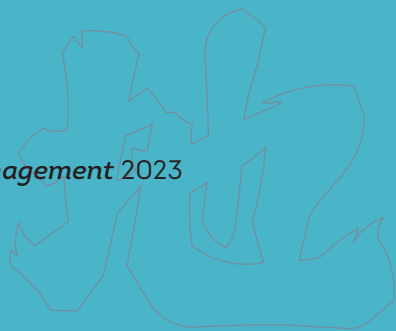
Jess Bradford and Louise Zhang  
***Mountain of Heads*** 2023  
Acrylic and pastel on board

Jess Bradford  
***Contemporary Hell*** 2023  
Pastel and acrylic on board

Louise Zhang  
***The plumbing in China can't handle white peoples poops. The demons reject their girth*** 2023  
Acrylic on linen

Louise Zhang  
***The ghost king waved the willow branch, and the soul was reborn*** 2023  
Acrylic on linen

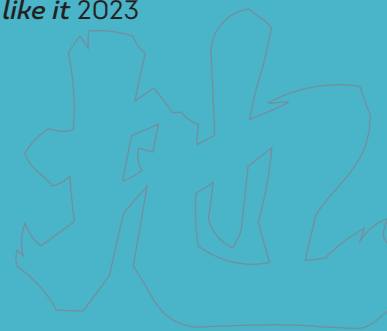
Louise Zhang  
***Blood pool with lotuses*** 2023  
Acrylic on linen



Louise Zhang  
***Ghost/Spirit*** 2023  
Acrylic on linen

Louise Zhang  
***In search of the place between the clouds and mountains*** 2023  
Acrylic on linen

Louise Zhang  
***If I get to heaven, I want to meet Old Man of the South Pole. His head looks like a peach. maybe it also tastes like it*** 2023  
Acrylic on canvas





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# See You in Hell Jess Bradford and Louise Zhang

Wagga Wagga Art Gallery  
16 December 2023 – 25 February 2024

## Wagga Wagga Art Gallery

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Wagga Wagga Art Gallery is supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW.

Wagga Wagga Art Gallery is a cultural facility of Wagga Wagga City Council.