

HIDE & SE

Mingzhang Sun

“Hide and Seek” unfolds as a captivating series of wearable art pieces and soft sculptures meticulously crafted for a live performance and short film. Enveloped by a haunting violin score, this series narrates the poignant story of a once healthy and happy young man, aptly named “The Boy,” whose life takes a dramatic turn upon contracting HIV. The work is born from the artist, Mingzhang Sun’s, own experience. He was diagnosed as HIV+ 10 years ago. The narrative explores how the disease came to dominate his entire identity.

The costumes within “Hide and Seek” are a vibrant tapestry of colours and inspiration drawn from DNA molecules and pharmaceutical pills. The materials used in this creative endeavour span a spectrum, including paintings digitally printed onto fabrics, laser-shaved acrylic, wool, polyester, neoprene, and over 50,000 hand-pressed buttons.

At the outset of the performance, The Boy dons a garment of pure, innocent white. However, as the story unfolds, a haunting transformation occurs. By the performance’s conclusion, The Boy is enveloped from head to toe in a chilling costume reminiscent of an executioner’s outfit. This horrifying ensemble is covered in over 50,000 brightly coloured hand-pressed buttons, visually conveying how the perception of The Boy has evolved. What once was an innocent figure now becomes a manifestation of the horror associated with the disease.

“Hide and Seek” goes beyond the aesthetic realm, transcending into a narrative that communicates the profound impact of HIV on one’s identity. It serves as a poignant exploration of the visible and invisible layers of illness, using wearable art as a medium to convey the emotional and psychological complexities inherent in such experiences.



*Candy ,
London, Hide and Seek, 2017, digital print on fabric*

Candy

Inspired by HIV Medications, Candy is a wearable artwork made from a digital print on neoprene, 11m. One of the the biggest changes that the artist encountered after being diagnosed with HIV was having to incorporate medications into his daily routine. He disliked swallowing tablets. At the doctor's office there is a chart of all the different types of HIV medications. The tablets on the chart look like brightly coloured candied jelly beans or mints, the colours look artificial not real. That was the basis of the bright, artificial colours for "Candy." The folds and pleats in the jacket represent the daily routine of pills and tablets necessary just to stay alive after contracting HIV. Like a rain jacket protects you from the elements, it is this daily medication routine that protects us from the virus regaining control.

HIDE AND SEEK

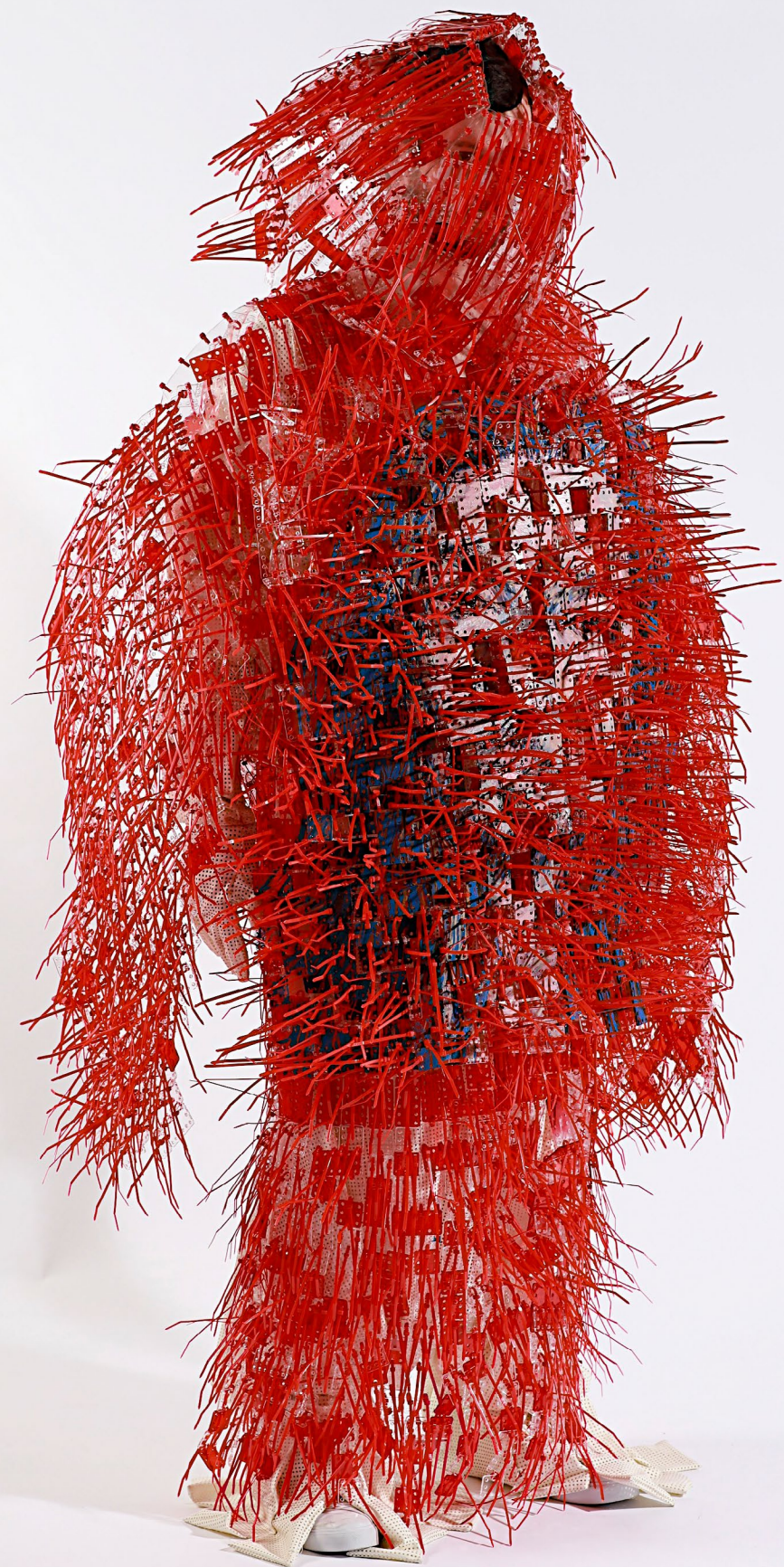


The Boy
London, Hide and Seek, 2018, Buttons on wool



The Boy

Inspired by HIV, 'The Boy' is a wearable artwork piece covered by over 50, 000 buttons. The childlike, colourful element was a response to the trauma of being diagnosed with the virus. With the positive side of the button attached to the garment, the negative allows for future positive elements to be added onto the garment in future. From a distance the swirling patterns look like DNA or the HIV virus but if you look closer you will see that they are in the pattern of different animals representing the food chain. Humans are supposed to be the top of the food chain. But as the costume shows the patient is being eaten from within by the virus. So, who really is the Apex predator in this world? No matter how strong or powerful a person is there is always something dangerous hiding just out of sight.



Me
London, Hide and Seek, 2017, acrylic laser cutting



Me

Inspired by the HIV virus, "Me" is a wearable artwork piece made from acrylic cable ties. There was a time when the artist felt the virus would go through his body like tree roots. He was afraid but once he got used to the daily routine, even the virus could be a playful element. The starting point for this piece was a laser cut print of the artists face made when he was a finalist on China's top fashion show. He had just graduated from the top art school in China and was everyone's golden boy. But a month later he was in the hospital being told by his family that he should die as soon as possible. He perforated the print of his face with the red cable ties like the virus perforated his identity, so that just like in life, all anyone can see now is the virus.



Mr Seed
London, cord and acrylic, 2017

Bibliography

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