INTRODUCTION
Enter the disorientating and darkly humorous worlds created by the highly acclaimed multimedia artist LuYang (b. 1984, Shanghai) for their first solo exhibition in the UK. Immersed in the cultures of anime, video games and sci-fi, LuYang combines motifs from Buddhist philosophy with aspects of neuroscience and digital technology to investigate the mysteries and mechanics of the human body and mind. The title *LuYang NetiNeti* incorporates the Sanskrit expression ‘neti neti’, meaning ‘neither this, nor that’. In their work LuYang seeks to destabilise the binaries of past and future, human and machine, life and death.

The exhibition centres on LuYang’s own ‘digital reincarnation’, an avatar called DOKU. Named after the phrase ‘dokusho dokushi’, which translates as ‘we are born alone, and we die alone’, DOKU exists in a realm beyond the limitations of material bodily reality. LuYang has created six versions of the DOKU avatar to date, corresponding to the six paths of reincarnation as described in Buddhism: Hell, Heaven, Hungry Ghost, Animal, Asura and Human. The movements assigned to these characters have been created using CGI animation and motion tracking (of human dancers, including contemporary Japanese pop dancers and the hand and eye movements of legong dancers from Bali, Indonesia). The still-evolving DOKU series is a meditation on simulated realities and the fragility and transience of the physical bodies we inhabit.

Our Back Gallery is transformed into an interactive arcade, with the ambitious *Material World Knight* project at its centre. Visitors can navigate LuYang’s universes first-hand through a number of playable video games. Characters from earlier video works often appear, accompanying viewers through techno-psychedelic worlds populated by deities, digital avatars and anime-style characters. Entertaining, thought-provoking and sometimes grotesque, LuYang’s fantastical spaces don’t shy away from themes such as disease, death and the nature of reality itself.

Please be aware that the exhibition contains flashing lights, loud noise, and themes and images some viewers may find distressing. Under-14s must be accompanied by an adult, and young children should be supervised at all times.
MAIN HALL
LuYang has created a temple-themed installation in reference to the chapel architecture of the gallery and their long-standing exploration of religious ideas and motifs. *DOKU – Binary conflicts invert illusions* (2022) is a new video commissioned by Zabludowicz Collection. It features the characters Heaven and Hell in a choreographed dance to an intense metal soundtrack. The interaction between these characters from opposing realms, featuring scenes in burning cities and forest shrines, leads to the formation of a new hybrid DOKU character, the binary god.

Also in the Main Hall is *DOKU the Self* (2022), which premiered at the 59th Venice Biennale 2022 and is LuYang’s first narrative film in the DOKU series. The story blends LuYang’s own personal experiences and memories with their interest in the concept of reincarnation and the mysteries of consciousness. The film follows DOKU on a passenger aeroplane moving through numerous states of perception and encountering six character-versions of themself, corresponding to the six Buddhist paths of reincarnation. The narrator ponders the cycle of death and rebirth of humanity over countless ages, and how the concept of ‘the self’ relates to the physical body.

The large mandala on the altar wall is LuYang’s version of the Wheel of Life (‘bhavachakra’ in Sanskrit). It represents the cycle of birth and rebirth, depicting the six realms into which a soul can be reborn. The demon holding the wheel is Yama, a wrathful deity who represents impermanence and who is devoted to protecting Buddhism and Buddhists.

MEZZANINE
*Electromagnetic Brainology* (2017) is a video installation that reflects LuYang’s ongoing fascination with religion, medicine and neuroscience. The artist imagines a new belief system based on the idea that pain is a psychological perception that can be alleviated via electromagnetic deep brain stimulation. Four invented deities, representing the elements of earth, air, fire and water, dance on either side of a central video. LuYang links these deities to different functions of the human nervous system, and these supernatural beings are strengthened through the use of real-world medical devices such as Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation wands. In their upgraded form, the gods perform healing procedures, curing people of illness and increasing their happiness.
**MIDDLE GALLERY**
The Middle Gallery acts as a screening room, showing key works by the artist, produced with numerous collaborators over the past decade.

**Uterus Man, 2013, 11:20 mins**
Riding on his skeletal pelvis chariot or using a winged sanitary pad as a skateboard, Uterus Man is an anime-style superhero who subverts the often distinctly sexualised genre. While the character is identified as male, the source of his powers is the female reproductive system. He has a variety of unique forms of attack: he infects his enemies with genetic diseases and fights them with monstrous babies. LuYang’s works often contain provocative contradictions, questioning categories and labels. The artist themself has expressed a desire to escape the confines of gender.

**LuYang Delusional Mandala, 2015, 16:26 mins**
In this animation, LuYang explores the workings of the human brain. The artist scans their own face and from this builds an asexual digital avatar. This figure dances to high-energy music while being subjected to neuroscientific procedures, their brain prodded and poked while a robotic voiceover coldly describes the mechanisms of the body. The video reflects on the origin of human consciousness, how this consciousness might reach a god-like state, and, finally, death. The video can be seen as an elaborate staging of LuYang’s demise, and it concludes with images of a golden multimedia hearse bearing images of the artist’s grinning face.

**Electromagnetic Brainology Brain Control Messenger, 2018, 10:07 mins**
When a schoolgirl, played by Japanese idol Chanmomo from the girl group Band Ja Naimon!, puts on LuYang’s Deep Brain Stimulation crown, she transforms into an anime-style character and is transported to a cityscape. Armed with a special remote control based on Galvanic Vestibular Stimulation (a real-world technology that can influence a person’s balance by sending electric signals to the brain), she fights a villain in a kaiju-style dance-off, a genre of Japanese film and television featuring giant monsters.

**LuYang Delusional Crime and Punishment, 2016, 14:37 mins**
Why does the continuation of our physical bodies play a role in the afterlife? Why is physical torture the main rule of governance in hell? To explore these questions, LuYang sends their own digital likeness on a horrifying journey through multiple imaginary realms of hell, including gyms, laboratories and fairground rides. Helplessly flailing around, the digital versions of the artist are subjected to countless forms of violence, set to a hip-hop soundtrack by GAMEFACE. The video offers a darkly comic reflection on the desire to transcend physical suffering, and in its excess it points to the absurdity of traditional visions of hell.

**Wrathful King Kong Core, 2011, 14:47 mins**
This video was LuYang’s first attempt at bringing together biology, neuroscience and religion in a single work. The artist considers Yamantaka, the most wrathful Buddhist deity, and offers a scientific analysis of the god’s state of mind, superimposing onto the patient what is known about the transmission of anger in the human brain.
LIST OF WORKS
All works courtesy the artist unless otherwise stated.

**Main Hall**

*DOKU – Binary conflicts invert illusions*, 2022  
Single-channel 4K video  
4:33 mins  
Commissioned by Zabludowicz Collection

*DOKU – Heaven*, 2021  
Single-channel 4K video  
4:37 mins

*DOKU – Hell*, 2021  
Single-channel 4K video  
4:32 mins

*DOKU the Self*, 2022  
Single-channel 4K video  
36:00 mins

*DOKU facial capture documentary*, 2021  
Single-channel HD video  
3:02 mins

*DOKU behind-the-scenes documentary*, 2021  
Single-channel HD video  
2:40 mins

**Mezzanine**

*Electromagnetic Brainology*, 2017  
Five-channel 4K video installation  
13:34 mins  
White Rabbit Collection, Sydney.  
Donated through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program by Judith Neilson.

*DOKU – Hello World – Human*, 2021  
Single-channel 4K video  
3:25 mins

*DOKU – Asura*, 2021  
Single-channel 4K video  
4:30 mins

*DOKU – Animal*, 2021  
Single-channel 4K video  
4:37 mins

*DOKU – Hungry Ghost*, 2021  
Single-channel 4K video  
4:35 mins

**BACK GALLERY**

Step into a retro-futurist arcade to experience the ambitious *Material World Knight* project. Characters from earlier works make an appearance, highlighting the seriality and world-building that play key elements in LuYang’s practice. The first instalment, *Material World Knight* (2018), is a three-channel video presenting a future in which three types of intelligent living beings will evolve: cloned humans, exoskeleton-enhanced cyborgs and AI robots. These beings debate the origin of consciousness and argue over which life form is superior: organisms, mechanical organisms or robots. Ultimately, they combine their powers to create a new character: the Material World Knight.

Two further works in the series can be experienced here: *The Great Adventure of Material World – Game Film* and the playable video game *The Great Adventure of Material World* (both 2020). The works chart the Knight’s journey through different realms of the universe, on a quest to deepen their understanding of fundamental Buddhist teachings such as the illusory nature of the self and the physical world. The narrative is driven by pop-up text boxes containing philosophical questions, queries and paradoxes.

Other games in the arcade allow you to climb on a motorbike to fight villains as Uterus Man, and play the *Space Invader*-style *Cancer Baby* game (2014), in which LuYang inverts the usual view of death and disease by transforming cancer cells into cute kawaii-style animated characters.
SELECTED EVENTS
All events are FREE, unless indicated otherwise. Booking recommended. More information and additional events can be found on our website: zabludowiczcollection.com/events

In Conversation: LuYang
Friday 23 September, 7pm
Join us inside the exhibition for a live talk with the artist, to discuss their avatar DOKU, their interests, from Buddhism to biotech, and what it means to live on the internet.

Families Create: Futuristic Bodies
Saturday 1 October, 2pm
Bring the family to a workshop led by artist Rosemary Cronin, in which you can create a collaborative glow-in-the-dark drawing installation, inspired by LuYang’s futuristic bodies.

Curator Tour: Paul Luckraft
Saturday 22 October, 3pm
The Senior Curator of LuYang NetiNeti introduces the works and themes of the immersive and sensory exhibition, and discusses the process of producing the new commission.

Invites Artist Presentation: Shinuk Suh
Sunday 30 October, 3pm
Suh presents a unique event, inspired by his current exhibition, to give further insight into his practice.

Families Create Half-Term Special: Code Ninjas
Saturday 29 October, 3pm & 4.30pm
Imagine new virtual characters and learn how to create and code your own digital avatar in Scratch in this workshop led by Code Ninjas, inspired by LuYang’s show. Suitable for children aged 7 to 14. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

Curator Tour: Anna Bonsink
Saturday 19 November, 3pm
Join one of the Programme team as she discusses key works and explores the major themes of the show.

Invites Artist Presentation: Rebecca Parkin
Sunday 11 December, 3pm
The artist gives an illustrated talk that explores the cultural influences behind her ‘green women’ series of paintings.

Curator Tour: Julia Greenway
Saturday 14 January 2023, 3pm
Join one of the curators of LuYang’s exhibition as she discusses the artist’s process and interests, then introduces selected works and the site-specific gaming arcade.

Taster Tours
Saturdays, 4pm
Join one of our gallery assistants for a short introduction to our current exhibitions.

Middle Room, screening room
Uterus Man, 2013
Single-channel HD video
11:20 mins

LuYang Delusional Mandala, 2015
Single-channel HD video
16:26 mins

Electromagnetic Brainology Brain Control Messenger, 2018
Single-channel HD video
10:07 mins

LuYang Delusional Crime and Punishment, 2016
Single-channel HD video
14:37 mins
Zabludowicz Collection

Wrathful King Kong Core, 2011
Single-channel HD video
14:47 mins

Back Gallery
Material World Knight, 2018
Three-channel HD video
22:14 mins

The Great Adventure of Material World – Game Film, 2020
Single-channel HD video
26:22 mins

The Great Adventure of Material World, 2020
Playable video game with nine levels

LuYang Delusional World x LuYang Delusional Hell, 2021
Single-channel HD video
Motion-capture performance recording from Chronus Art Centre, Shanghai, 2021
30:57 mins

LuYang Delusional Hell, 2021
Arcade game version

Uterus Man, 2014
Arcade game version

Cancer Baby, 2014
Arcade game version

Cancer Baby, 2014
Single-channel video,
2:21 mins

LuYang Dance Dance Revolution, 2018
Arcade game version

Electromagnetic Brainology Brain Control Messenger, 2018
Single-channel HD video
10:07 mins

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LuYang (b. 1984, Shanghai) creates fantastical, and often shocking, images that represent an interdisciplinary blend of religion, philosophy, neuroscience, psychology and modern technology. Their artistic practice spans 3D animated films, video game installations and game engines, holograms, motion-capture performances, virtual and augmented reality, and software manipulation. The artist also collaborates with acclaimed scientists, psychologists, performers, designers, experimental composers, music producers, robotics companies and pop stars.

LuYang graduated with a BA and MA from the New Media Art department of the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou. They are the winner of the Deutsche Bank Artist of the Year 2022 award, and are presenting a solo exhibition at PalaisPopulaire in Berlin (10 September 2022 to 13 February 2023).

LuYang is represented by Societé, Berlin; Jane Lombard Gallery, New York; and COMA, Sydney.

A catalogue will be published to accompany LuYang NetiNeti. Please ask at the front desk for more information.

Zabludowicz Collection is an independent philanthropic organisation that is home to a growing collection of contemporary art and a programme of exhibitions, events and residencies, in collaboration with leading British and international artists. Since its foundation in 1994 the Collection has been dedicated to fostering new audiences and a sustainable environment for contemporary art by creating developmental opportunities and support for emerging and mid-career artists, curators and organisations.

Admission is FREE
Thursday–Sunday, 12–6pm or by appointment
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