

Wallace Chan: Vessels of Other Worlds

The Dual-Site Exhibition Premieres During the Venice Biennale at the Chapel of Santa Maria della Pietà and Long Museum in Shanghai



Wallace Chan, *Vessels of Other Worlds*, work in progress

September 24, 2025—Renowned artist **Wallace Chan** will unveil ***Vessels of Other Worlds***, his most ambitious and visceral project to date, in a landmark **dual-site exhibition across Venice and Shanghai** in 2026, coinciding with his 70th birthday. Curated by James Putnam, this major exhibition introduces a striking new series of monumental titanium sculptures, expanding both the spatial and conceptual dimensions of Chan’s practice.

Following the success of his three previous exhibitions during the Venice Biennale – *Titans* (2021) and *Totem* (2022) at Fondaco Marcello; and the Brian Eno-soundscaped *Transcendence* (2024) at the Chapel of Santa Maria della Pietà, which attracted over 30,000 visitors in just three months, *Vessels of Other Worlds* marks a bold new chapter in the artist’s oeuvre.

The first exhibition **opens on 8 May 2026 at the Chapel of Santa Maria della Pietà**, coinciding with the 61st International Art Exhibition of **La Biennale di Venezia**. The second and parallel exhibition will open at the **Long Museum, Shanghai**, on 18 July 2026.

The exhibition in Venice will feature three titanium sculptures inspired by the Olea Sancta, the three sacred oils used in Catholic blessing rituals. Positioned on the altar of the Pietà Chapel,

three video screens form a triptych, acting as a secret portal to reveal the monumental counterparts on view at the Long Museum. Symbolising the three stages of life – birth, growth, and death – these intricate, fantastical forms draw inspiration from Hieronymus Bosch’s *The Garden of Earthly Delights*. Surrounding the three central works, a constellation of suspended titanium sculptures suggests oil drops in motion, imbuing the chapel with a sense of fluidity and transcendence.

At the **Long Museum, Shanghai**, visitors will encounter the same three vessels on a dramatically larger scale, standing at seven, eight, and ten metres high. The central sculpture will feature a doorway, inviting audiences to step inside and experience its kaleidoscopic interior, with mirrored apertures referencing Chan’s celebrated gemstone-carving technique, the Wallace Cut. Works from Chan’s earlier Venice exhibitions including the Brian Eno–soundscaped *Transcendence*, as well as *Titans* and *Totem*, will also be presented, creating a dialogue that connects the two cities conceptually and experientially.

Footage of the two exhibitions will be transmitted to both sites, offering audiences a portal to the vessels of the other world.

Wallace Chan says, “Both Venice and Shanghai are closely tied to water, its changing states, and its capacity to hold, reflect, and transform. *Vessels of Other Worlds* is my way of unfolding a tale of two cities through the reimagination of fluidity and form. I am grateful to my curator James Putnam and to the Long Museum for their confidence in and support of my work.

The Chapel of Santa Maria della Pietà, with its centuries of history, music, and prayer, offers the perfect setting in which to explore life’s most elemental mysteries. At the Long Museum, the vessels will rise to their full monumental scale, extending the conversation across continents.

These vessels are containers of memory, spirit, and transformation; sculpted and carved in the material closest to eternity, titanium. Like water, they hold what cannot be held -- moments, emotions, the passage of time. By placing them in two distinct spaces, I hope to create a dialogue between distant places and between our inner and outer worlds, inviting viewers to contemplate the cycle of birth, growth, and death, and to imagine that beyond these passages lie other worlds yet to be discovered.”

By connecting Venice and Shanghai, Chan extends the presence of his sculptures across space and time, creating an experience that is at once physical, spiritual, and transcendental.

Wallace Chan: Vessels of Other Worlds

Pieta Chapel, Venice | 8 May – 18 October 2026

Long Museum (West Bund), Shanghai | 18 July – 25 October 2026

Please [click here](#) for the press kit.

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About the Artist

Wallace Chan (b. 1956) is a Hong Kong-based, self-trained artist whose practice encompasses jewellery, sculpture, and carving. He has been carving gemstones since the age of 16, drawing his inspiration from nature and Chinese motifs. He developed his skills and learnt the art of Western sculpture by visiting Christian cemeteries and admiring the marble sculptures of saints

and angels. After six months of devoted monkhood in the early 2000s and having given up all his possessions, Chan found himself in the complete absence of artistic resources. However, his passion for sculpture compelled him to create works using affordable materials like concrete, copper, and stainless steel. After many years of careful research and experimentation, Chan developed a method of working with titanium, initially for his jewellery and more recently for his large-scale sculptures.

Chan's works are in the permanent collections of the Shanghai Museum, Shanghai (2024), Victoria and Albert Museum, London (2024), Long Museum, Shanghai (2023), Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (2023), British Museum (2019), the Capital Museum of China (2010), the Ningbo Museum (2010) and more.

He has had solo exhibitions at the Shanghai Museum (Shanghai, 2024), Pieta Chapel (Venice, 2024), Christie's (London, 2023); Canary Wharf (London, 2022); Fondaco Marcello (Venice, 2021 & 2022); Asia House (London, 2019); Christie's (Hong Kong, 2019; Shanghai, 2021), the Gemological Institute of America Museum (Carlsbad, 2011); the Capital Museum (Beijing, 2010); Kaohsiung Museum of History (Taiwan, 1999), and Deutsches Edelsteinmuseum (Idar-Oberstein, 1992) among others.

Chan has given lectures and speeches at prestigious institutions, including TEDxNYU Shanghai (Shanghai, 2025), Harvard University (Cambridge, 2017, 2023 & 2025), Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing (Beijing, 2024), Shanghai Museum (Shanghai, 2024), Victoria and Albert Museum (London, 2016 & 2023), The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (Hong Kong, 2022), DIVA Museum (Antwerp, 2021), Tongji University (Shanghai, 2021), Christie's (Shanghai, 2020 & 2021), the De Maastricht Academy of Fine Arts and Design (Maastricht, 2020), the British Museum (London, 2019), the Royal College of Art (London, 2019), the University of Hong Kong (Hong Kong, 2019), Christie's Education (Hong Kong, 2019), the Gemmological Association of Great Britain (London, 2018), the Sarabande Foundation (London, 2018), Sciences Po (Paris, 2018), Central Saint Martins (London, 2017), and Christie's (Paris, 2014).

About the Long Museum

The Long Museum is a private art museum founded by husband-and-wife art collectors, Mr. Liu Yiqian and Ms. Wang Wei. The museum is located in three iconic sites in the city of Shanghai and Chongqing – the Long Museum Pudong, the Long Museum West Bund, and the Long Museum Chongqing. They form a unique ecosystem of "one museum, two cities, three locations." The Long Museum is one of the finest private art museums in China and houses a large collection of artworks spanning across countries and generations.

As world-renowned art collectors, Liu and Wang's collection at the Long Museum covers multiple categories, including traditional and contemporary Chinese art, Chinese revolutionary art, as well as other contemporary artworks that originate from the various parts of the world, including Asia, Europe, and the United States. The collection is all-encompassing and vast in number. The Long Museum is committed to art exhibitions, research work, collecting, and the promotion of public education. The museum believes that it is their responsibility to advance the development and legacy of art. At the same time, they focus a large part of their research on the exciting connections that emerge between ancient and modern art, eastern and western art, presenting the nuanced diversities found in art from a global perspective. The museum aims to show the brilliant achievements of Chinese art history alongside the new perspective that contemporary Chinese art brings to the world. Their endeavours have made the museum into a world-class private museum.

About James Putnam

James Putnam is an independent curator and writer. He founded and was curator of the British Museum's Contemporary Arts and Cultures Programme from 1999 to 2003. Since 1994, he has organised a number of critically acclaimed exhibitions for major museums, such as the 'Time Machine' exhibition at the British Museum and Daydreaming with [Stanley Kubrick](#) at Somerset House. In the last decade, he has regularly curated projects for biennials, both in Asia and Venice.

Putnam studied Art History at London University, was Visiting Scholar in Museum Studies at New York University, and Senior Lecturer in Curating at Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts, London (2004-2011) and Senior Research Fellow: Exhibitions at University of the Arts, London (2010-2021). His book 'Art and Artifact – The Museum as Medium' (Thames & Hudson, 2000/10) surveys the interaction between contemporary artists and the museum.

About Santa Maria della Pietà

The Church of Santa Maria della Pietà was designed by Giorgio Massari and built between 1745 and 1760. It is also known as "Vivaldi's church", as Antonio Vivaldi composed some of his world-famous music there. The Chapel of Santa Maria della Pietà is one of the four spaces in the Pietà Complex which regularly plays host to exhibitions during the Venice Biennale.

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