Breakdown, Mistake, Discontinuity [- a reset of how language represents.]

by

Xi Jin

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Master of Fine Arts

[in Printmaking]

Department of Art and Design
University of Alberta

In my experimental practice I use my experience as a language learner as a way of exploring the boundaries at which language systems are prevented from capturing and communicating meaning. I started these projects in my thesis exhibition by focusing more on how language is created, developed and structured, and this was my original source of inspiration. In addition, I am also interested in investigating its extensibility, especially when layers of language build up to interrupt the ways we perceive reality. As someone who is learning a new language the entrance into it is clumsy and disruptive, the process of learning is itself is filled with many mistakes - I would like to think of it as a creative moment and a space of critique.

In the installation of *google maps mumbled 2020,* the images are screenshots from Google Maps made into customized prints on everyday accessories, familiar from daily life, which include a window that jumps off drywall, cellular blinds allowing light to shine through, and rugs arranged in a line. However, on these 'standard' objects, each of the images look non-standard, with a dissonant quality that might at first remind you of a computer programming glitch. You would not be wrong to make that connection, for on a screen desktop that is part of this installation there are several folders waiting to be opened, including a folder named "black polygon." It contains hundreds of errors in the Google Maps algorithm transformed into black shapes that look like alien script form. A huge black geometric abstraction is printed on the wall, which itself takes on a simulated feel, as if it is a real scenario featuring one piece of screenshot image.

Like the work described above, an earlier work, called *a-z-Distorting 2018*, not only presents a writing system made with everyday, mass-produced objects, but also explores my personal experience with language by exploring contrasting methods of writing - the non-alphabetic (Chinese) and western-alphabetic (English). *a-z-Distorting 2018* was created by collecting multisyllabic words (English) and breaking these words up in a manner that parallels ideogram characters (Chinese). In this way, the original meaning of the English words is disrupted, and the fragile relationship between language and reality is underscored. Later, the 3D installation *(hell)o 2020*, which is made using 2D elements from *a-z-Distorting 2018*, is a kind of visual poetry that critiques how language shapes capitalism's perception of labour. For example, the image of an ant is chosen to guide the audience to think of a conceptual relationship between

an "ant" and "anthropology". In some cultures, ants are used as a metaphor for working night and day. And in other cultures, having a job is regarded as an essential social responsibility. Does this overlapping of words and metaphors trap the way we think about labour?

We are constantly constructing reality through language and at the same time, it is also revealing a spectacle of the collapse of the real. Is it the case that the more you know a language system the less flexible it becomes? If a language system is conceptual, what is it like, how does it play a role in defining our everyday realities? And how does it work with us in shaping the way we think and act? Nowadays, we get around in the world, we relate to other people, we communicate, but a large number of languages don't seem to translate easily and they all are not well aligned for us. Not everything is translatable, the space for misunderstanding is vast. We're comfortable, even passive, in our own language environments. Perhaps there will be moment of loss when language navigates to us to become standardized.

In my practice, creating a role for myself as if I were a child, I use *breakdown* as a method, *mistakes* as experience, and degrade the complexity and continuity of language to uncover its strange black shapes, its poetry, its embeddedness in the everyday and its strangeness as well. No matter what imagery I use in my work, it explores how we jump out of the manipulation of language we live in, sometimes just its form, sometimes its meaning. It is as linguist *Noam Chomsky* proposes, that "some random mutation took place, maybe after some strange cosmic ray shower, and it reorganized the brain, implanting a language organ in an otherwise primate brain." I think I may be involved in a strange space, imitating these evolutionary processes, and resetting what and how language represents.

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Geary, James. *I Is an Other: the Secret Life of Metaphor and How It Shapes the Way We See the World*. Harper Perennial, 2012.

Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. *Metaphors We Live By*. University of Chicago Press, 2017.

Steyerl, Hito, and Franco Berardi. *Hito Steyerl: the Wretched of the Screen*. Sternberg Press, 2012.

jin_001

Title: **(hell)o**
Date: 2020
Medium: images & text, sculpture, sound
Materials: papers, acrylic, wood, found objects
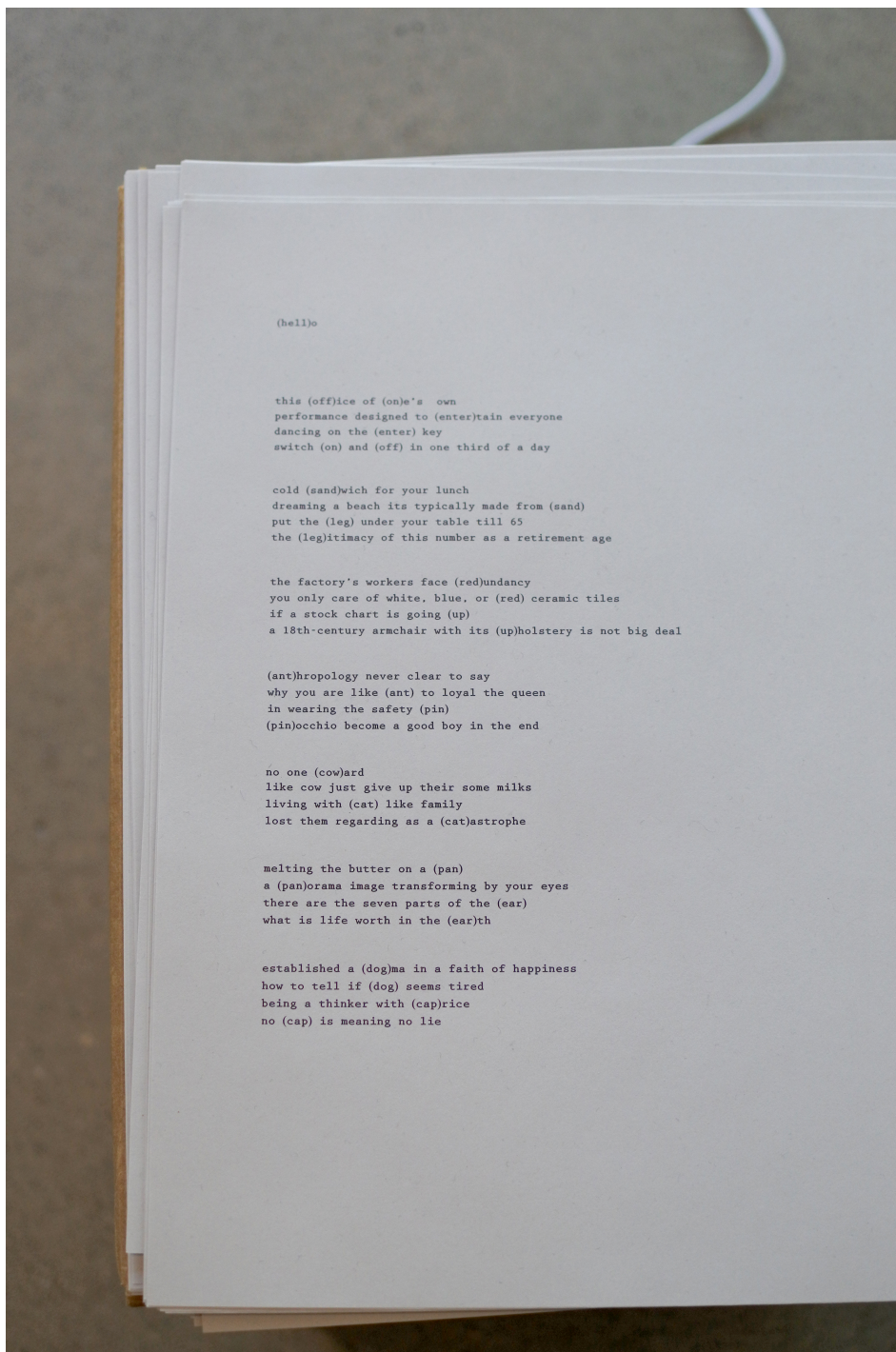Dimensions: 8.5in x 11in x height various

jin_002

Title: **(*hell*)o** (details)
Date: 2020
Medium: images & text, sculpture, sound
Materials: papers, acrylic, wood, found objects
Dimensions: 8.5in x 11in x height various

(hell)o

this (off)ice of (on)e's own
performance designed to (enter)tain everyone
dancing on the (enter) key
switch (on) and (off) in one third of a day

cold (sand)wich for your lunch
dreaming a beach its typically made from (sand)
put the (leg) under your table till 65
the (leg)itimacy of this number as a retirement age

the factory's workers face (red)undancy
you only care of white, blue, or (red) ceramic tiles
if a stock chart is going (up)
a 18th-century armchair with its (up)holstery is not big deal

(ant)hropology never clear to say
why you are like (ant) to loyal the queen
in wearing the safety (pin)
(pin)occhio become a good boy in the end

no one (cow)ard
like cow just give up their some milks
living with (cat) like family
lost them regarding as a (cat)astrophe

melting the butter on a (pan)
a (pan)orama image transforming by your eyes
there are the seven parts of the (ear)
what is life worth in the (ear)th

established a (dog)ma in a faith of happiness
how to tell if (dog) seems tired
being a thinker with (cap)rice
no (cap) is meaning no lie

jin_003

Title: **(hell)o** (details)
Date: 2020
Medium: images & text, sculpture, sound
Materials: papers, acrylic, wood, found objects
Dimensions: 8.5in x 11in x height various

jin_004

Title: **(hell)o** (details)
Date: 2020
Medium: images & text, sculpture, sound
Materials: papers, acrylic, wood, found objects
Dimensions: 8.5in x 11in x height various

jin_005

Title: **(hell)o** (details)
Date: 2020
Medium: images & text, sculpture, sound
Materials: papers, acrylic, wood, found objects
Dimensions: 8.5in x 11in x height various
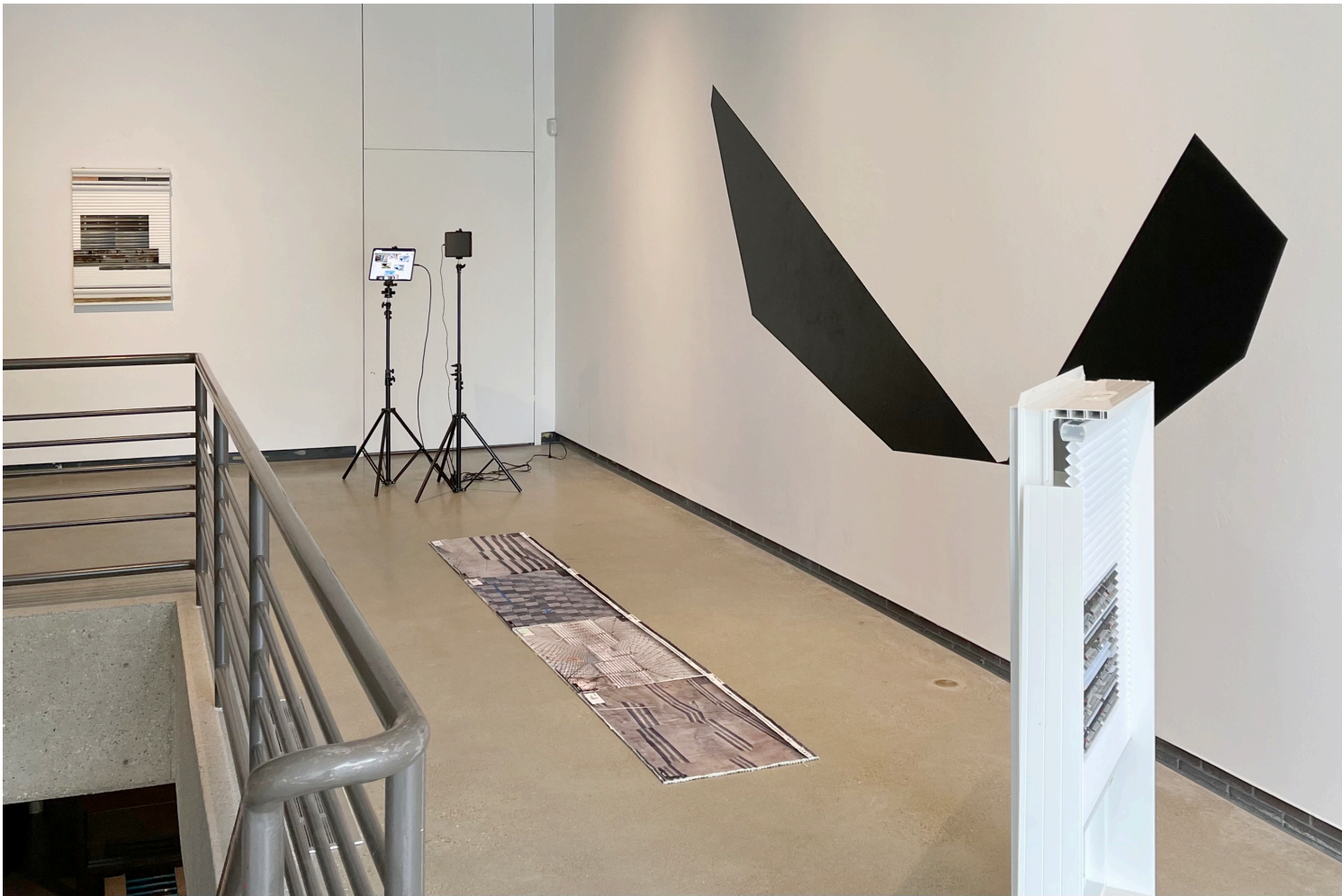
jin_006

Title: ***google map mumbled!***
Date: 2020/21
Medium: print-based multimedia installation
Materials: screen display, paper, rug, blind, various
Dimensions: various

jin_007

Title: ***google map mumbled!*** (details)
Date: 2020/21
Medium: print-based multimedia installation
Materials: screen display, paper, rug, blind, various
Dimensions: various

jin_008

Title: ***google map mumbled!*** (details)
Date: 2020/21
Medium: print-based multimedia installation
Materials: screen display, paper, rug, blind, various
Dimensions: various

jin_009

Title: *google map mumbled!* (details)
Date: 2020/21
Medium: print-based multimedia installation
Materials: screen display, paper, rug, blind, various
Dimensions: various
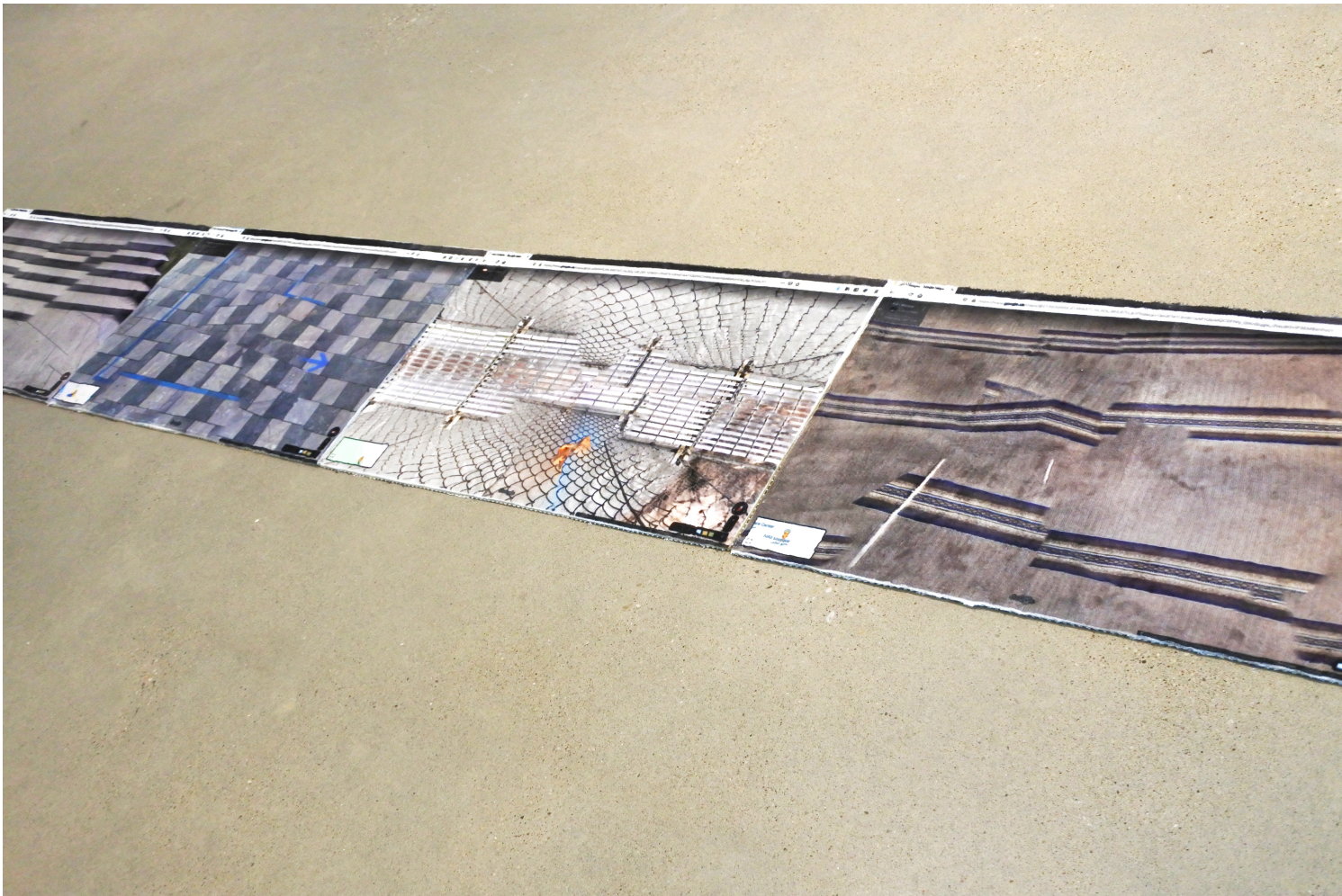
jin_010

Title: ***google map mumbled!*** (details)
Date: 2020/21
Medium: print-based multimedia installation
Materials: screen display, paper, rug, blind, various
Dimensions: various
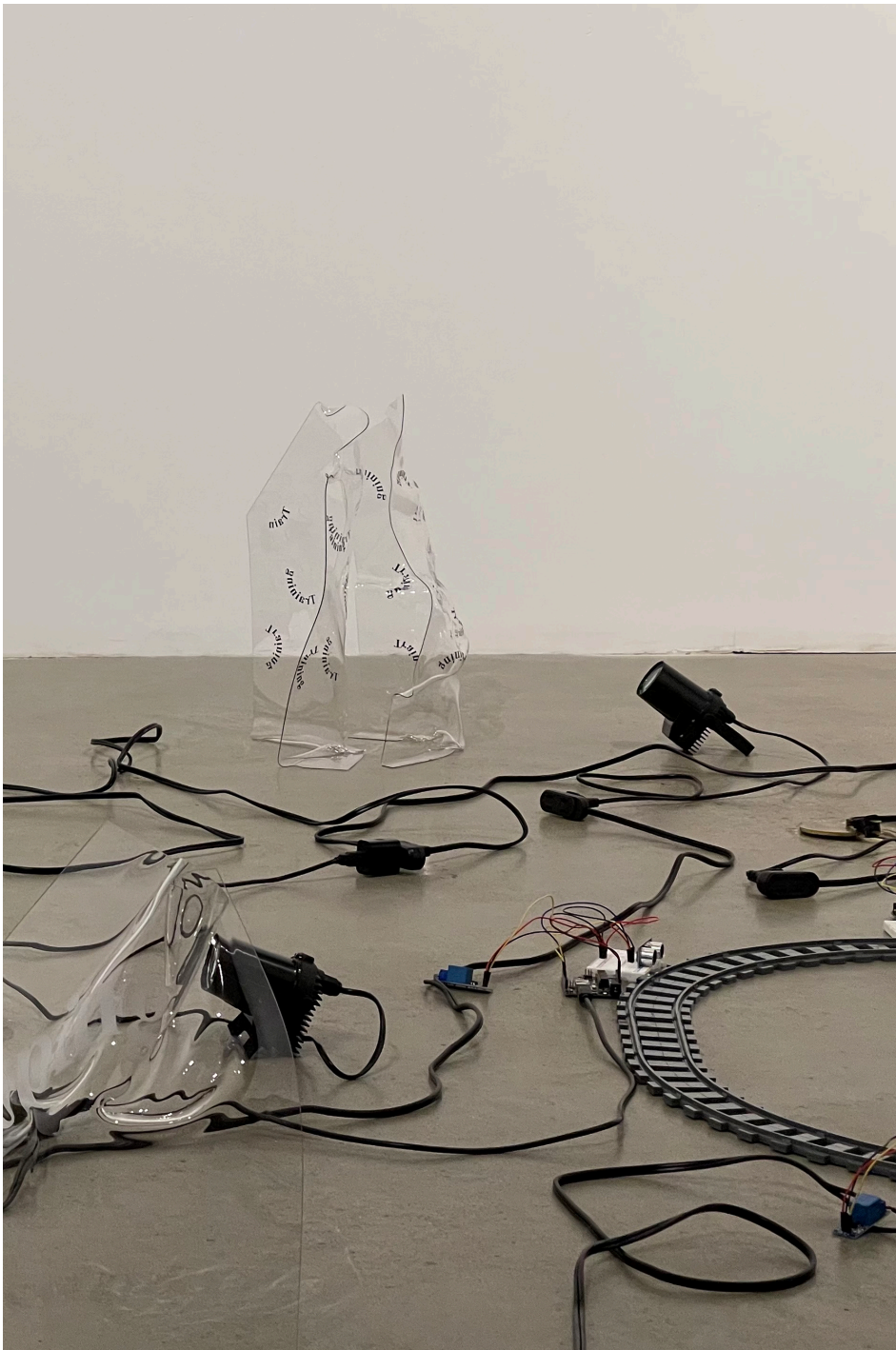
jin_011

Title: ***cloud = speak***
Date: 2020/21
Medium: print-based multimedia installation
Materials: PETG, screen print, ultrasonic-sensor, circuit, light, cable, Lego-modular
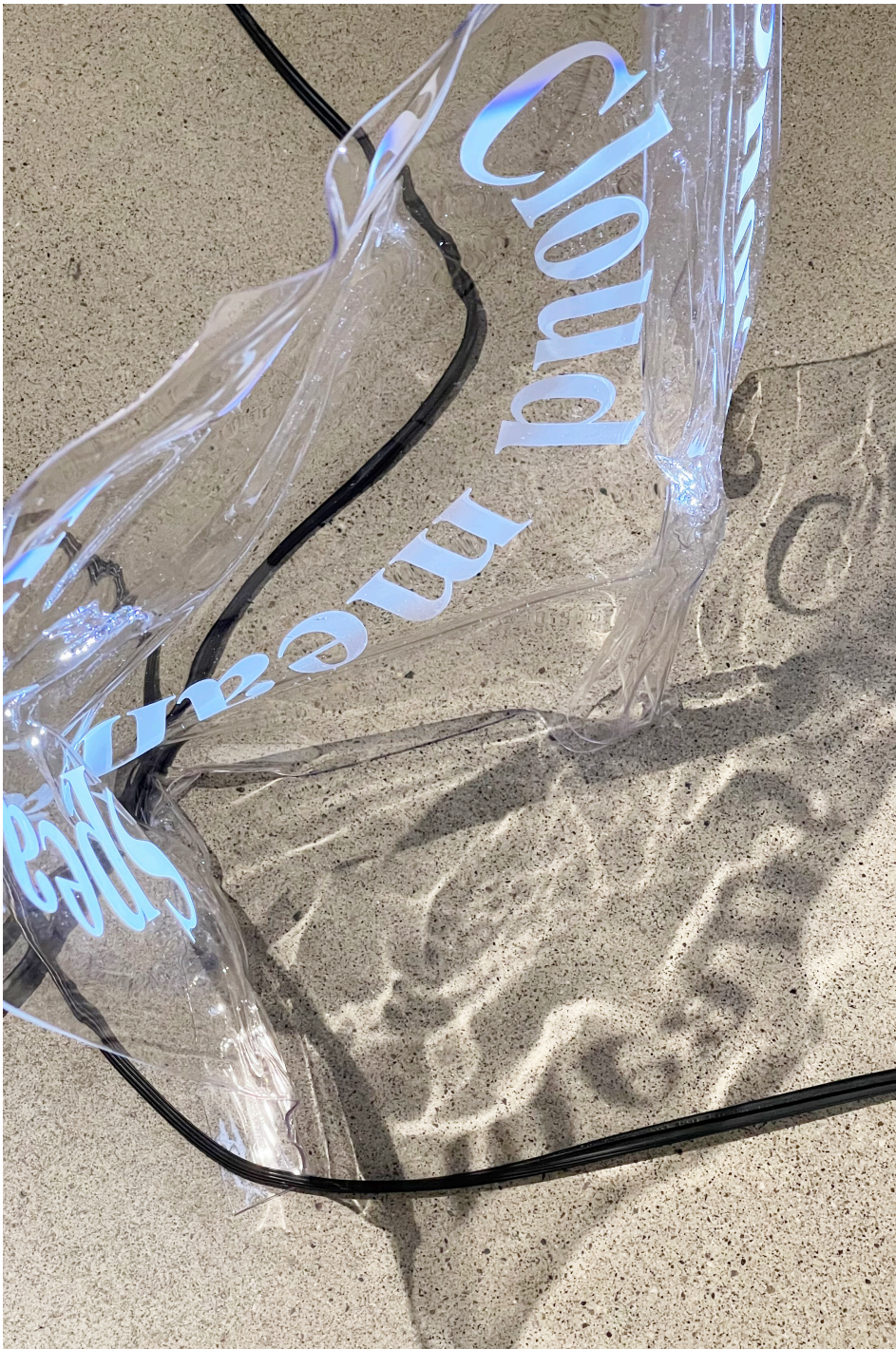Dimensions: various
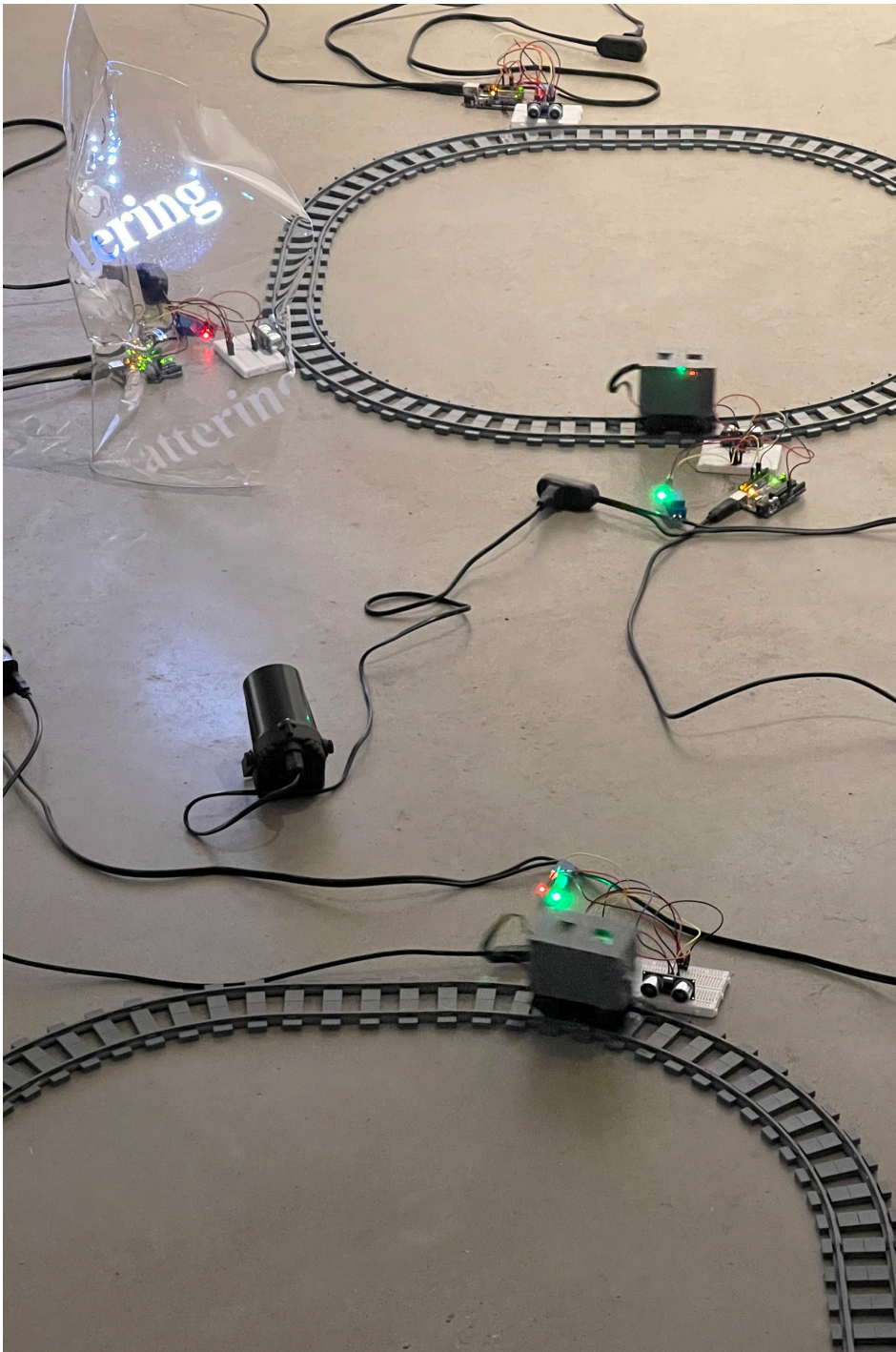
jin_012

Title: ***cloud = speak*** (details)
Date: 2020/21
Medium: print-based multimedia installation
Materials: PETG, screen print, ultrasonic-sensor, circuit, light, cable, Lego-modular
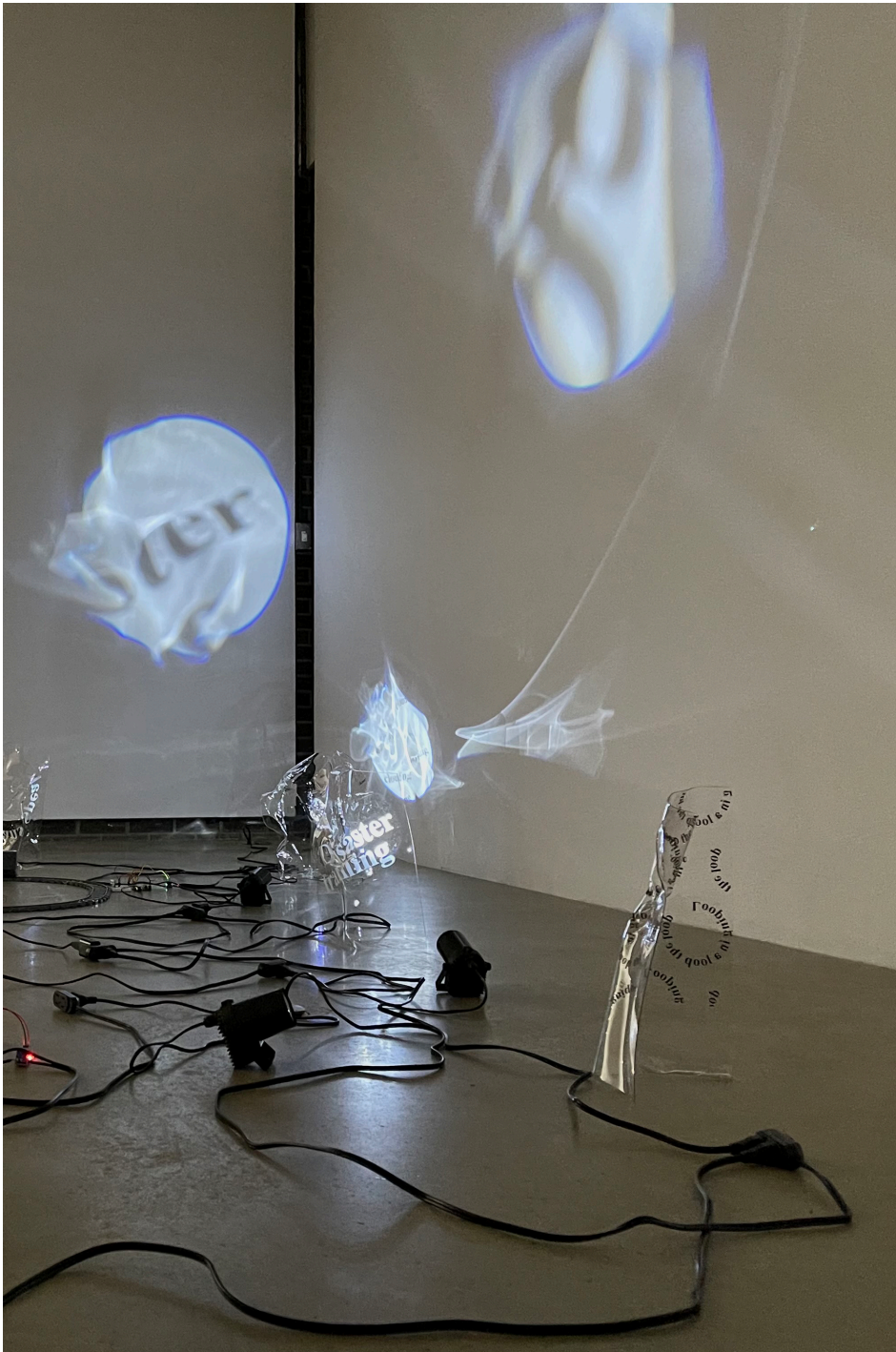Dimensions: various

jin_013

Title: ***cloud = speak*** (details)
Date: 2020/21
Medium: print-based multimedia installation
Materials: PETG, screen print, ultrasonic-sensor, circuit, light, cable, Lego-modular
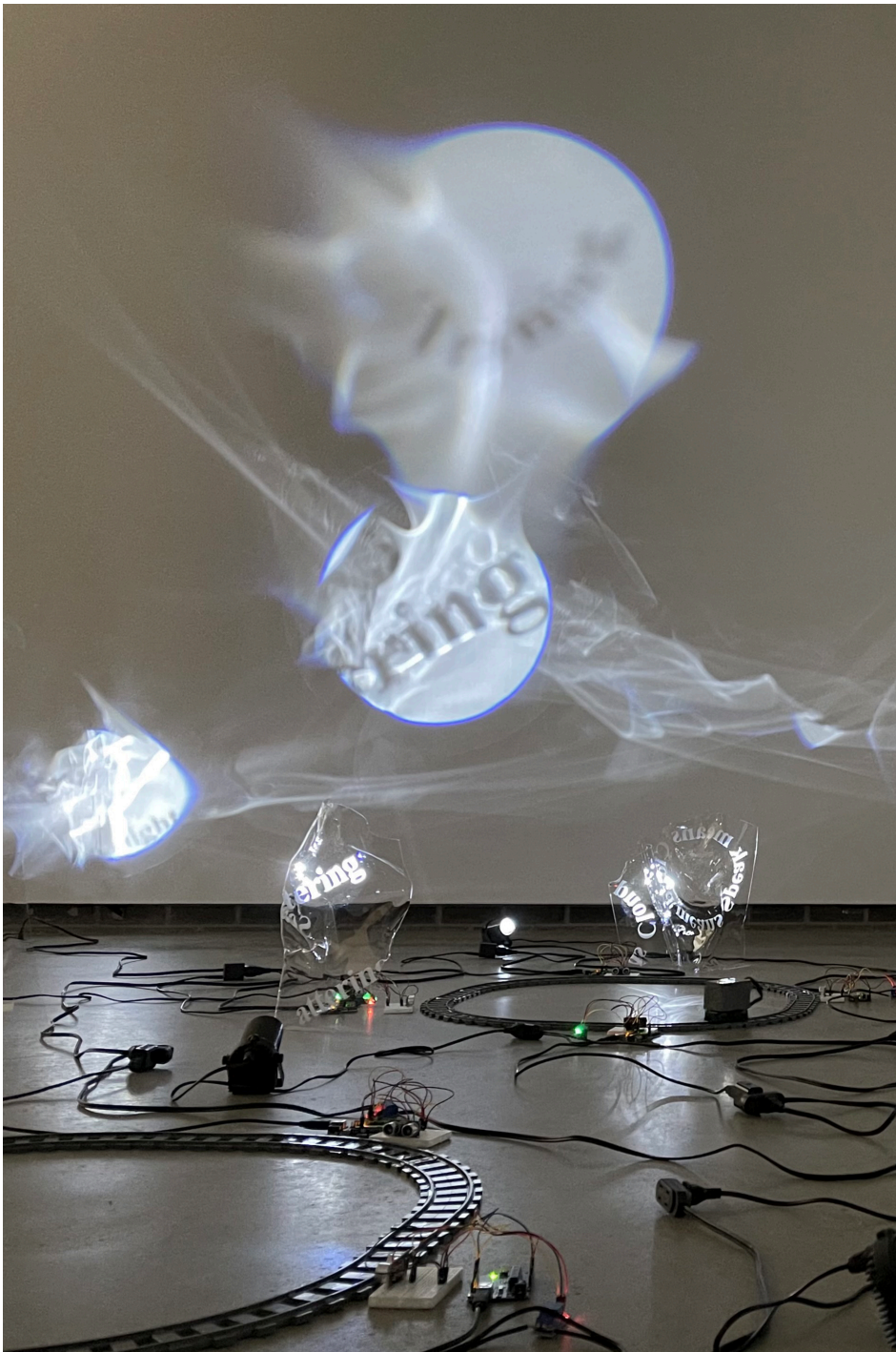Dimensions: various

jin_014

Title: ***cloud = speak*** (details)
Date: 2020/21
Medium: print-based multimedia installation
Materials: PETG, screen print, ultrasonic-sensor, circuit, light, cable, Lego-modular
Dimensions: various

jin_015

Title: ***cloud = speak*** (details)
Date: 2020/21
Medium: print-based multimedia installation
Materials: PETG, screen print, ultrasonic-sensor, circuit, light, cable, Lego-modular
Dimensions: various

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated with respect to

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For looking for more works please link to https://xi-jin-works.com/