LIU SHIMING

ARCHIVES

THOMAS SAUVIN

Foreword

The Liu Shiming Art Gallery presents *Archives*, an exhibition in which photographs and sculptures enter into dialogue to offer a renewed perspective on everyday life. The attention given to the ordinary and the unseen invites us to rediscover a form of beauty that resides in simplicity and in what surrounds us each day. The everyday becomes a subject for reflection, and the most fleeting moments are transformed into lasting testimonies of a collective memory.

The prints by Thomas Sauvin come from his extensive project Beijing Silvermine,through which he recovered and preserved negatives abandoned in a recycling factory in Beijing. Drawn from a body of hundreds of thousands of images produced by amateurs between 1985 and 2005, these photographs form a unique corpus through which to observe the social, aesthetic, and cultural transformations of contemporary China. These works are handmade C type silver prints, an artisanal process that grants each image a singular presence. Printing becomes an act of re creation: light, contrast, and the texture of the paper bring almost forgotten moments back to life, offering them a renewed materiality and a timeless duration. Through street scenes, family portraits,celebrations, and everyday objects, Thomas Sauvin brings to light an emerging collective memory, revealing how a society in transition represents itself. His gesture is not that of a simple archivist. He proposes a sensitive and analytical perspective on vernacular culture, uncovering within the banal a documentary, emotional, and historical depth.

It is within this shared attention to the everyday that the works of Liu Shiming meet and extend Thomas Sauvin's approach. Where the photographs reveal the intimacy of an era, Liu Shiming's works offer an artistic resonance that translates these gestures and attitudes into a more timeless dimension. One collects, the other interprets. One reveals the living diversity of existences, the other explores their essential forms. Together, their works illuminate different modes of constructing memory: the instantaneous image and the crafted object, the archive and the act of transfiguration.

Liu Shiming is likewise interested in simple gestures and modest figures, children,animals, workers, which he approaches for their expressive power rather than for formal exactitude. His works, animated by a dense presence, bear witness to a sustained reflection on popular forms and on the ordinary gestures that run through daily life. They invite the viewer to recognize the sensitivity inherent in these discreet scenes and to perceive their continuity and human depth.

Where photography captures a moment and fixes it in time, sculpture and drawing materialize these same gestures within the three dimensionality of the present. Through the modeling of bronze or ceramic, and at times through the spontaneity of drawing, Liu Shiming gives form to vernacular attitudes that find a natural echo in the images of Thomas Sauvin. This encounter creates a space of circulation between mediums, where photographed and sculpted forms seem to respond to one another, anunintentional mimetic relationship between prints and sculptures. Certain gestures and postures identified on film appear to re emerge in volume, as if they belonged to a shared grammar inscribed in the collective unconscious. This phenomenon reveals the persistence of human behaviors, regardless of their context of capture or creation.

This parallel establishes a subtle tension between chance and intention, between documentary observation and artistic interpretation. It offers the viewer a sensoryexperience in which attitudes find their resonance in sculptural presentation. *Archives* thus becomes a celebration of everyday life, a tribute to the traces we leave behind and to those we choose to preserve. The exhibition reaffirms the value of the gaze directed toward the ordinary and invites us to rediscover a beauty that unfolds in the simplicity of the real.

Maëlle Ebelle
Gallery Director
December 2025

Thomas Sauvin
Beijing Silvermine, A‑6296‑26, 1993
C-type hand print, 2025
Image size: 22.44 x 14.96 in.
Print size: 26.77 x 19.39 in.

Liu Shiming
Female Model (Sitting), 1983
Bronze
7.9 x 5.5 x 5.5 in.
Edition

Thomas Sauvin
Beijing Silvermine, A‑0660‑14, n.d.
C-type hand print, 2025
Image size: 14.96 × 22.44 in.
Print size: 19.39 × 26.77 in.

Liu Shiming
Beijing Lovers, 1983
Ceramic
8¼ × 3½ × 3⅜ in.

Thomas Sauvin
Beijing Silvermine, E‑1046‑11, n.d.
C-type hand print, 2025
Image size: 14.96 × 22.44 in.
Print size: 19.39 × 26.77 in.

Liu Shiming
Lovers, 1983
Ceramic
3½ × 6¾ × 4 in.

Thomas Sauvin
Beijing Silvermine, A - 10801 - 22, n.d.
C-type hand print, 2025
Image size: 14.96 × 22.44 in.
Print size: 19.39 × 26.77 in.

Liu Shiming
Wrestling, 1988
Bronze
14⅛ × 11 × 13 in.
Edition

Thomas Sauvin
Beijing Silvermine, A - 6397 - 04, 2003
C-type hand print, 2025
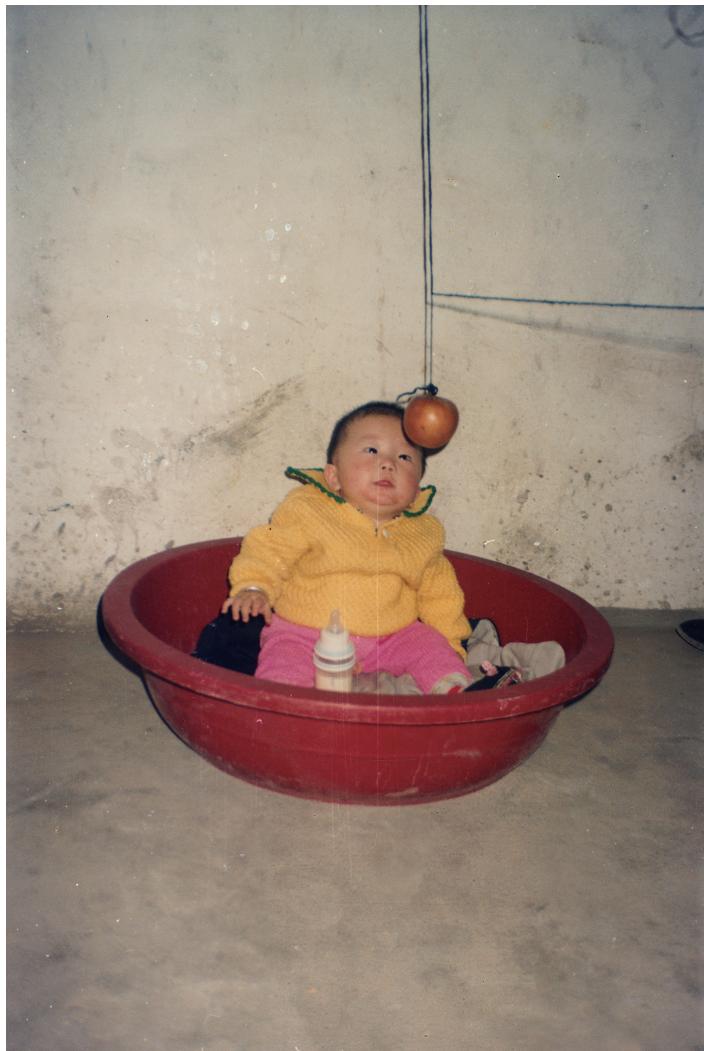Image size: 14.96 × 22.44 in.
Print size: 19.39 × 26.77 in.

Liu Shiming
Reclining Female Model, 1989
Bronze
2.3 × 12.7 × 3.9 in.
Edition

Thomas Sauvin
Beijing Silvermine, A‑11468‑15, n.d.
C-type hand print, 2025
Image size: 14.96 × 22.44 in.
Print size: 19.39 × 26.77 in.

Liu Shiming
Little boy with a milk bottle, 2005
Wood
15 x 5 x 4 in.
Edition

Thomas Sauvin
Beijing Silvermine, A‑2271‑34, n.d.
C-type hand print, 2025
Image size: 22.44 x 14.96 in.
Print size: 26.77 x 19.39 in.

Liu Shiming
Mengmeng (Sitting), 2006
Bronze
3.5 × 2 × 2 in.
Edition

Thomas Sauvin
Beijing Silvermine, A‑2481‑05, n.d.
C-type hand print, 2025
Image size: 14.96 × 22.44 in.
Print size: 19.39 × 26.77 in.

Liu Shiming
Eji and the Orphans, 2004
Bronze
4⅞ × 14⅞ × 5⅞ in.
Edition

Thomas Sauvin
Beijing Silvermine, A ‑ 11348 ‑ 31, n.d.
C-type hand print, 2025
Image size: 14.96 × 22.44 in.
Print size: 19.39 × 26.77 in.

Liu Shiming
Mengmeng, 1989
Bronze
7⅛ × 7⅝ × 8⅜ in.
Edition

Thomas Sauvin
Beijing Silvermine, A‑13164‑05, n.d.
C-type hand print, 2025
Image size: 14.96 × 22.44 in.
Print size: 19.39 × 26.77 in.

Liu Shiming
Fish Sketch, n.d.
Original sketch - Ink on paper
Chinese text within the drawing reads : "Crucian carp has a very strong fishy smell"
7½ × 7½ in.

Thomas Sauvin
Beijing Silvermine, A‑2523‑19, n.d.
C-type hand print, 2025
Image size: 14.96 × 22.44 in.
Print size: 19.39 × 26.77 in.

Liu Shiming
Human-shaped Jar #1, 1980
Ceramic
9¼ x 5¼ x 3 in.

Liu Shiming
Sketch of an African Figurine Pottery, n.d.
Original sketch
Chinese text within the drawing reads
"African Figurine Pottery"
7¼ × 10⅜ in.

Thomas Sauvin
Beijing Silvermine, A‑1688‑06, n.d.
C-type hand print, 2025
Image size: 22.44 x 14.96 in.
Print size: 26.77 x 19.39 in.

Liu Shiming
Mengmeng as an Infant, 1989
Bronze
18½ × 4⅝ × 3¾ in.
Edition

Liu Shiming
Sketch of a Swaddled Child, n.d.
Original sketch - Ink on paper
Chinese text with the drawing reads:
"Mengmeng in a swaddle/Wood carving"
7¼ × 10 in.
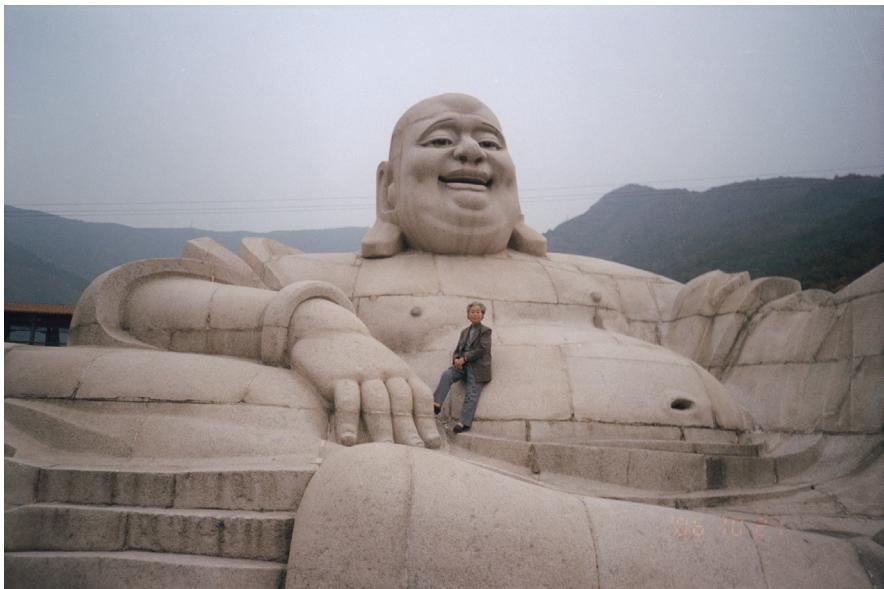
Thomas Sauvin
Beijing Silvermine, A‑4175‑10, 2006
C-type hand print, 2025
Image size: 14.96 × 22.44 in.
Print size: 19.39 × 26.77 in.

Liu Shiming
Maitreya Buddha, 1980
Bronze
4 × 9.1 × 5.3 in.
Edition

Thomas Sauvin
Beijing Silvermine, A - 1139 - 39, n.d.
C-type hand print, 2025
Image size: 14.96 × 22.44 in.
Print size: 19.39 × 26.77 in.

Liu Shiming
Ox, 2004
Bronze
3⅜ × 6⅜ × 2⅛ in.
Edition

Thomas Sauvin
Beijing Silvermine, A‑10954‑25, 1997
C-type hand print, 2025
Image size: 14.96 × 22.44 in.
Print size: 19.39 × 26.77 in.

Liu Shiming
Seal, 1986
Bronze
6¼ × 7 × 3⅞ in.
Edition

Thomas Sauvin
Beijing Silvermine, A‑2315‑31, n.d.
C-type hand print, 2025
Image size: 14.96 × 22.44 in.
Print size: 19.39 × 26.77 in.

Thomas Sauvin
Beijing Silvermine, A‑0351‑06, 2004
C‑type hand print, 2025
Image size: 14.96 × 22.44 in.
Print size: 19.39 × 26.77 in.

Liu Shiming
Sketch of Master and Disciples Crossing the Sea
Original sketch Ink on math exercise paper
Chinese text within the drawing reads:
"Retrieving scriptures, Purples-sand pottery, Four masters and disciples, Crossing the Sea"
10⅜ × 7⅜ in.

Thomas Sauvin

Thomas Sauvin (France, 1983) is a Paris- and Beijing-based artist. Since 2009, he has developed Beijing Silvermine, a large-scale archival project born from the rescue of hundreds of thousands of color negatives that were bound for destruction in a recycling plant on the outskirts of Beijing. Now comprising more than one million anonymous photographs produced between 1985 and 2005, the archive offers an unprecedented record of vernacular photography in China at the end of the twentieth century. Constantly expanding, it functions as a platform for artistic, historical, and cross-cultural inquiry, while contributing to a broader reflection on collective memory.

Sauvin's work has been exhibited at the Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago, the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, and the Guangdong Museum of Art, among other venues.

Over the past decade, he has published fifteen photobooks with publishers including the Archive of Modern Conflict (UK), Jiazazhi (China), Skinnerboox (Italy), The(M) Editions (France), and VOID (Greece), alongside multiple self-published artist books. His publications are held in the collections of the MET, the Tate, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Bibliothèque nationale de France, and the Centre Pompidou.
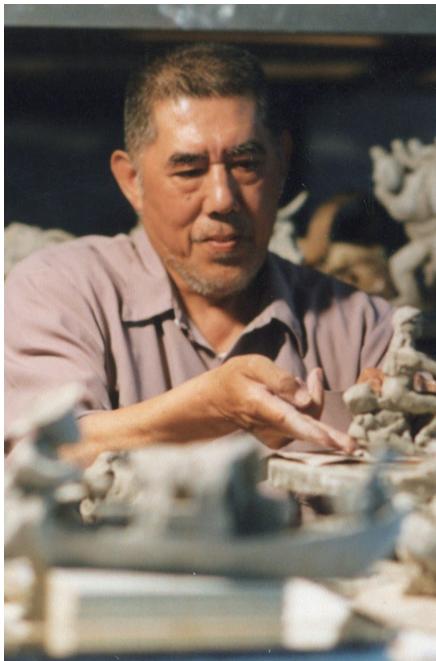
Liu Shiming

Liu Shiming (1926-2010) studied at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing. In his works, he skillfully blended Chinese tradition with European modernist influences. Deeply rooted in the everyday life and cultural heritage, Liu Shiming is recognized as a visionary figure with a very distinct humanist style. Exhibited worldwide, his legacy continues through the Liu Shiming Sculpture Museum in Beijing and the Liu Shiming Art Foundation in New York.

FEBRUARY 24 – MAY 17, 2026

15 E 40TH STREET, 5TH FLOOR
NEW YORK, NY 10016

11 AM - 5PM (MON - FRI)

LiuShiming *Art* Gallery