



# VILE BODIES

WHITE RABBIT GALLERY // 9 SEPTEMBER 2016 — 5 FEBRUARY 2017







Numbered, branded and trussed like carcasses in a slaughterhouse, Zhang Dali's naked bodies represent the millions of rural Chinese whose move to the cities in hope of work and a better life robs them of civic rights and consigns them to the status of stray sheep or cattle. The quest for security leaves them pitifully vulnerable; the quest for financial freedom shackles them to a fickle economy. "Nobody will help them," the artist says; they are "*dào xuán*", upside down in limbo.

But in his view the urbanites who scorn these outsiders are more like them than they know. Chinese people have "a coward's temperament", he says. "Their character is inert and lacks a sense of rebellion. They follow the herd." Zhang Dali hopes the 30 illiterate workers who, for \$50 (a week's pay), let him stick breathing tubes in their noses and encase them in plaster for his moulds will make their fellow citizens think. Their plight shows the cost of going it alone in collectivist China. But what is the cost of staying in the well-fed, obedient herd?

**Zhang Dali** b.1963

***Chinese Offspring***, 2005

resin, 30 figures, life size



