

Li Hui

ULLENS CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ART | 尤伦斯当代艺术中心

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Li Hui's latest installation, *V*, is composed of two ephemeral elements and one tangible one: red lasers, smoke, and a mirror. The mass of laser beams form the shape of a *V* as they shine down onto the mirror, which is propped up at an angle from the floor. The mirror then reflects the rays back up through the smoke-filled room: They trace lines in space en route to the ceiling far above, where they seem to congeal as a cluster of little red dots. Puzzled at first by this object that strikes through the darkened room, many visitors then begin to wave their arms through the laser beams, causing their moving silhouettes to register on the ceiling as the dots of light blink and reappear.



Li Hui, *V*, 2011, lasers, mirror, smoke, dimensions variable.

Lasers and mirrors have long been integral to Li's work. The thirty-four-year-old multimedia artist aims to communicate with his audience on a mental and spiritual level by creating a powerfully atmospheric environments with his "light sculptures." *Cage*, 2006, for example, uses a mirror and green lasers to construct a 3-D box in the air. And 2007's *Door*—comprising a mirror and a cluster of red laser beams for visitors to walk through—prefigured *V* even more directly.

While *V* arguably constitutes more a reassembly of media than evidence of formal development in terms of Li's artistic practice, it nonetheless retains an ability to mystify its audience. This mystique has cushioned Li's works with a cultish admiration, and like his previous installations, *V* certainly occupies the realm of spectacle, pointing to the artist himself as director of intense sensory experiences. Ultimately, however, the most compelling aspect of Li's work is the questions it provokes about the boundaries between art and technology and between creativity and skill.

— Iona Whittaker