

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

## China's latest obsession: Performance art livestreaming

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*Chinese rock star Pang Kuan is now China's top livestreamer, thanks to his performance art exhibition. But how can luxury brands benefit? Image credit: Weibo*

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Just when you thought China had reached peak celebrity, it has now become obsessed with performance art livestreaming from celebrities.

April 23 saw the launch of a two-week performance art exhibition by Pang Kuan a member of the well-known Chinese rock band, New Pants. The event is being live-streamed on the Internet through the Star Gallery's official WeChat video account and Weibo.

### What it is

Since debuting, the experimental livestream has gained more than 3.7 million views, and many hashtags about the rock star have topped Weibo's trending list such as #PangKuanonthetoilet, #PangKuangetupquickly and #PangKuanlivestream.

In it, a lone and silent Pang Kuan has only water, food, wine and some personal belongings to amuse himself, as well as an armchair and a toilet.

### Why it matters

Performance art has a volatile history in China, but this latest outing shows the extraordinary velocity of change in the country's culture. It also offers a source of amusement to citizens who are still locked down due to the country's zero-COVID policy.

Mr. Pang spends time playing on his mobile phone, or reading and writing, but numerous curious netizens are simply more concerned about his toilet habits.

Fashion is also top of their mind too. Mr. Pang often wears stylish garments and changes outfits at least three times a day. Audiences are eager to find out what brand he has been opting for.

### Bottom line

Art has always been a significant inspiration for luxury houses and holds particular relevance in China.

There are countless cases where luxury brands have collaborated with fine artists, from Louis Vuitton and Takashi Murakami in 2003 to Dior and KAWS in 2018.

Thus, it has been standard practice for houses to use art to embellish their reputation whether through designs on ready-to-wear and accessories, or as the basis for window displays and offline exhibitions.

But as times change and consumer demand advances, performance art may open new possibilities.

Livestreaming offers an immediacy to the medium of which luxury names need to take note.

Imagine this: Pang Kuan wearing a Gucci suit to dance in every night, or playing with his Fendi phone accessory as he works out on his Dior exercise machine. If so, they have the possibility to reach millions of curious viewers in a tale of art and commerce.

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