



# “The Circle of Life Is Endless”: Shih Li-Jen’s “King Kong Rhino” in Venice and beyond

Jackie Dickenson

Before completing her PhD in History at the University of Melbourne, Jackie Dickenson worked in the advertising industry in Britain and Australia, and taught creative advertising at RMIT University (1997–2006). Her PhD thesis was published as *Renegades and Rats: Betrayal and the Remaking of Radical Organisations in Britain and Australia* (MUP 2006). She is also the author of *Trust Me: Australians and their Politicians* (New South Publishing 2013) and *Australian Women in Advertising in the Twentieth Century* (Palgrave Macmillan 2016), and (with Robert Crawford of RMIT University) *Behind Glass Doors: The World of Australian Advertising Agencies 1959-1989* (UWAP 2016).  
[jackied@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:jackied@unimelb.edu.au)

**ABSTRACT** When “King Kong Rhino”—the monumental-sculpture by the Taiwanese artist Shih Li-Jen (1955–) left Venice for Bassano del Grappa in December 2018, it joined a distinguished line of rhinoceroses to have embarked on a European tour. This article examines the place of Shih’s rhinoceros sculptures in this “Endless Circle of Life,” beginning with the European journeys of two historical rhinoceroses, Ganda who arrived in Portugal in 1515, and Clara who was displayed in Venice in 1751. The article outlines Shih’s idiosyncratic collage of themes from Eastern and Western history, philosophy, spirituality and mythology, and his perception of the rhinoceros as powerful but threatened, as expressed in his motto “Strength and Vulnerability.” The animal’s vulnerability has been fuelled by its long history of exploitation for profit. Though it remains an object of commodification today—in some societies rhinoceros

horn is revered as the ultimate gift—there has recently been a discernible shift in the way these magnificent animals are viewed, a shift away from exploitation and which Shih claims drives his work. Despite his expressed intentions, however, this paper suggests that, perhaps unwittingly, the marketing of his work serves to extend the long history of human exploitation of the rhinoceros. Finally, the commodification of Venice and its Biennale, at which “King Kong Rhino” was exhibited, is discussed in the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic.

KEYWORDS: Shih Li-Jen, “Mr Rhino,” rhinoceros, Venice, luxury

When “King Kong Rhino”—the monumental sculpture by the Taiwanese artist Shih Li-Jen (1955–)—left Venice for Bassano del Grappa, some 90 kilometres to the north of the city, in December 2018, it joined a distinguished line of rhinoceroses to have embarked on a European tour (Figure 1).<sup>1</sup> The experiences of rhinoceroses brought from Asia to Europe between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries have been well-documented.<sup>2</sup> At least eight animals—all Indian rhinoceroses—are believed to have arrived in Europe in this period, some as gifts for and between rulers, others to be displayed as curiosities at fairs and menageries across the Continent.<sup>3</sup> The rhinoceros remains an object of commodification today, displayed at a price in zoological parks for our edification and amusement, and, in some societies, its horn revered as the ultimate gift. In recent decades, however, there has been a discernible shift in the way we humans view these magnificent animals. This article explores this shift through an examination of the cultural meanings of Shih’s rhinoceros sculptures and their place in what he has called the “Endless Circle of Life”.<sup>4</sup>

The travels of Shih’s rhinoceros sculpture in Europe resonate with those of two animals displayed in early modern Europe in particular. In May 1515, the first live rhinoceros to be seen in Europe since Roman times arrived in Portugal.<sup>5</sup> Brought to Lisbon as a gift from the Portuguese governor of Goa, Alfonso de Albuquerque, to his overlord King Manuel I of Portugal, Ganda—as the Indian rhinoceros was known by the Portuguese—spent just seven months in the city before being sent on to Rome as a gift for the Pope. The rhinoceros was shipped via Marseilles where it was inspected by the King of France.<sup>6</sup> Soon after leaving Marseilles, the unfortunate animal drowned in a shipwreck and is believed to have completed its journey to Rome as a taxidermal specimen, although there is no record of its acquisition in the Vatican archives.<sup>7</sup> Memorialised in the famous woodcut (1515) by Albrecht Dürer, Ganda has continued its



**Figure 1**

Shih Li-Jen, *King Kong Rhino*, stainless mirror-steel, 8.88<sup>68</sup> × 5 m, exhibited in the Giardino della Marinaressa, Venice, 2017-2018. © Shih Li-Jen.

peregrination: prints from the eight editions of the woodcut produced in the century after its design are kept in museums across Europe and the United States, and are frequently transported to museums in other cities for public display.<sup>8</sup>

The second rhinoceros Shih's work brings to mind is Clara, known as the Dutch rhinoceros, who arrived in London in 1741 before being taken to the Continent where, for the next decade, she was displayed in numerous cities and towns, including Berlin, Frankfurt, Leipzig, Stuttgart, Rheims, Paris, Vienna, Rome, Bologna and, early in 1751, Venice, where she was immortalised in a painting by the artist Pietro Longhi (1710–1785), which was commissioned by the Venetian nobleman Giovanni Grimani.<sup>9</sup> The crowds of curious Venetians and tourists that queued to view the rare rhinoceros during her sojourn in the city have been described elsewhere in this issue.<sup>10</sup> Clara then continued on her journey through Europe, visiting Verona, before returning to her "home" in Leiden,<sup>11</sup> though her image remained in Venice where it can be viewed today, at the Ca' Rezzonico museum.<sup>12</sup>

The cultural meanings attached by Europeans to these rhinoceroses resonate strongly with the themes explored in Shih Li-Jen's work. Though such meanings shift with the changing contexts in which these rhinoceroses were encountered—their journeys took place hundreds of years apart, after all—there are obvious continuities. Then, as now, the rhinoceros symbolised power and strength, hence its suitability as a gift for the powerful elite.<sup>13</sup> In her study of the rhinoceros in America, Kelly Enright has shown that the animal was wrongly perceived as an aggressive beast, possibly because it was less available to be anthropomorphised than its cousin, the elephant, although, as Enright notes, this perception was rather undermined by European encounters with the gentle Clara, whose favourite snack was an orange handed to her by her keeper.<sup>14</sup> But



**Figure 2**

Cup in the shape of an archaic vessel with feline dragons, Rhinoceros horn, 10.2 cm, Qing dynasty, 17<sup>th</sup> century, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Accession no. 08.212.8.

the value of any wild animal in what has been called “the gift economy”<sup>15</sup> of the early modern period lay not only in its perceived power—or in its thrilling “otherness” for that matter<sup>16</sup>—but also in its vulnerability, that the animal was a “living and therefore more fragile display, more valuable than the most valuable work of art because of its ephemeral nature.”<sup>17</sup>

Natasha Heller, an Asian Languages scholar, has explored the presence of the rhinoceros in Buddhism in the Tang Dynasty (618–906 C. E.), which she describes as the greatest imperial dynasty in the history of ancient China. The rhinoceros seems to have been observable in China during the earlier Han Dynasty (202 B. C. E.–220 C. E.), which Heller argues explains the more realistic representations in Tang Dynasty China, when compared to Western depictions of the same period.<sup>18</sup> Hunted for its hide (to be used as shields) and for its horn (for drinking vessels), the rhinoceros came under pressure during the Han Dynasty, as driving it out of China was seen to be “part of the civilizing process” (Figure 2).<sup>19</sup>

The animal disappeared from China, possibly as the result of cooling temperatures and deforestation, and, pushed back to remote regions, became exoticised in China. Rhinoceros horn became an elite item of consumption, endowed with supernatural and curative powers: it was believed for example, that the horn could heal wounds and detect poisons.<sup>20</sup>

Its association with remote regions also meant that when a rhinoceros was captured and brought to China, like Ganda and Clara in their voyages to Europe, it had travelled across great distances. A poem from the Tang period referred with tenderness to the suffering of the captive rhinoceros:

In the Zhenyuan reign, a tame rhinoceros was brought in tribute.  
It was put in a pen in the Shanlin park, under government care

...

The rhinoceros coiled its scaly body, then forever departed.  
It had walked endless lands, in vain transferred from post-station  
to post-station,  
The strange “communicating with heaven” creature met with  
injustice.<sup>21</sup>

The rhinoceros has retained its association with power and strength, as well as its vulnerability as a living creature that can be commodified—hunted, captured, and killed—across the centuries. No doubt, in that time, many more humans have viewed the fate of the rhinoceros with the tenderness expressed in this ancient poem. Developments in the past fifty years, however, have shifted the relationship between the rhinoceros and human beings.

Rhinoceros populations were vulnerable before the twenty-first century, threatened by trophy hunters and land clearance, and persecuted as agricultural pests. In the late nineteenth century, the African southern white rhinoceros, for example, was thought to have become extinct before a small population was discovered.<sup>22</sup> The greater one-horned rhinoceros—the Indian rhinoceros—also came close to extinction before steps were taken to protect the species.<sup>23</sup> Today, the highly lucrative and illegal trade in rhinoceros horn threatens the animal’s survival.<sup>24</sup> The rhinoceros might continue to symbolise strength and power, but its increasing commodification within the global market has pushed its inherent vulnerability to the point of the species’ extinction.<sup>25</sup>

The rhinoceros sculptures of Shih Li-Jen try to address this dichotomy directly: in Chinese characters (施力仁) Shih’s own name encapsulates “Strength with Vulnerability,” and this motto is often stamped on his sculptures.<sup>26</sup> His rhinoceroses are said to represent the power of the live animal but also to draw attention to its increasing vulnerability, and the creation of these sculptures represents Shih’s desire to “inspire people to help save these creatures.”<sup>27</sup> The artist has explained that, in creating public artworks, he aims “to change people’s perspectives about animal welfare and wildlife conservation.”<sup>28</sup>

A former gallery entrepreneur, Shih has placed the rhinoceros at the centre of his artistic investigations for the past twenty years. After experimenting with different forms and techniques, he recalls being “thunderstruck” by what he labels “a Copernican Revolution,” in which he discovered the “Sun” in the rhinoceros.<sup>29</sup> “Mr Rhino” (as he is known to his avid collectors<sup>30</sup>) has worked with the rhinoceros ever since, embarking on “extensive historical, anthropological, artistic, and biological research” to develop a deep understanding of the animal and its relationship with humans.<sup>31</sup>

Shih's rhinoceros sculptures are inspired by the cultural meaning of the rhinoceros across the world's civilisations.<sup>32</sup> He has scoured the iconography of various civilisations and their mythologies—East and West—looking for the presence of rhinoceroses. From these studies, Shih has developed his own composite mythological world, a veritable collage of seemingly disconnected tropes that lacks coherence. His work features the pyramid, what he views as the first symbol of human civilisation, representing the civilisation of Ancient Egyptians, as well as that of the Mayan civilisation of the Americas. The civilisations of mainland China are represented too: the philosophical thought of Taoism is one prominent example, in which the rhinoceros represents the continuity between man and nature, and the animal's body becomes the seat of the representations of the civilisations of the globe.

Influential too has been the culture of the Shang Dynasty (2nd millennium B.C.E.), when rhino-shaped wine vessels marked the prestige of the powerful, and the ancient philosophy of Lao Tzu who argued that the Ten Thousand Beings of Chinese cosmology were created by the interaction between yin and yang, the male and the female. Shih's use of studs aims to remind the spectator of the bolts that hold together the rhinoceros-leather armour of the world-famous terracotta warriors—the archers, crossbowmen, infantrymen, and halberdiers from the magnificent tomb complex of Emperor Qin Shi Huang, the first Chinese emperor of the Western Han Dynasty (202 B.C.E.–220 C.E.).

Shih's mythology also references symbols of civilisations that, though less familiar to Western eyes, are well known in the Asian collective imagination. The mask of his rhinoceros's face with its convex eyes, for example, recalls the Neolithic civilisation of Sanxindui. Just one of the little-known cultures that have populated southern China in history, Sanxindui is a relatively recent archaeological discovery situated in Sichuan and is yet to be fully studied.<sup>33</sup> The *phurba*, the ritual knife of Lamaism or Tibetan Buddhism forms the tail of Shih's rhinoceros, and its back represents the *qilin* (also known as Kirin), a mythical hooved animal that can be found in the classic mythology book of China, the *Shanhaijing* 山海經 or *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*.<sup>34</sup> The rhinoceroses embody a spiritual message, too, bearing elements derived from the world's spiritual traditions. The "finger-horn"<sup>35</sup> pointing at the sky, for instance, indicates that this animal's destiny is tied to that of man. The rhinoceros leads man to contemplate the sky, the *tian*, that eminent centre of spirituality of Chinese civilisation; it leads us towards the sky, while, at the same time, representing the earth, *di*, the sky's complementary divinity, with its heavy and massive body. According to Sabrina Ardizzoni, the Chinese language scholar and the principal commentator on the work of Shih Li-Jen in English, Shih's rhinoceros oeuvre asks: "Is he the King, *wang*, who mediates communication between the earth and the sky? Is he man's mount? Is he Nandi, the bull upon which Shiva rides in Indian iconography?"<sup>36</sup> In this way, the rhinoceros

becomes a magical vehicle that allows us to communicate with the sky between man and the highest representative of Chinese spirituality, Heaven<sup>37</sup> — “the strange ‘communicating with heaven’ creature” of the Tang Dynasty poem above.

Shih’s rhinoceroses continue the historical cultural meaning of the rhinoceros as both powerful and vulnerable at the same time, but they are also claimed to embody a fresh dimension to the animal’s cultural meaning. Anthropomorphising Shih’s sculptures, Ardizzoni has described the “expressions” on the faces of the giant rhinoceroses that are housed in the artist’s studios in Taipei and Beijing: each of these sculptures, “young and old,” is said to have “a distinct personality.”<sup>38</sup> The expressions of some are “joyous,” but others seem “more worried, as they contemplate the human behaviours that are forcing them into extinction.”<sup>39</sup>

In the wake of the emergence of what is known broadly as “identity politics,” combined with growing anxieties about the impact of climate change and environmental degradation, these exploitative human behaviours now attract a new level of criticism. The attention to individual human rights, especially in terms of race, gender and sexual identity that has gained strength since the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s, has in recent decades led to increasing acknowledgement that, as sentient beings, animals, too, must surely have rights.<sup>40</sup>

Perceptions of the vulnerability of animals as something that humans can (and should) exploit has shifted; that vulnerability is now often seen as something that must instead be nurtured and protected.<sup>41</sup> In other words, increasing numbers of human beings now care about the vulnerability and fate of animals such as the rhinoceros, rather than seeing that vulnerability only as something to be exploited for their own benefit.<sup>42</sup> Responses on social media to the posts of wild animal hunters posing with their “trophies” are just one prominent example of this.<sup>43</sup> There is an increased tenderness abroad.

According to Ardizzoni, this relatively novel concern for the welfare of animals and the environmental message it contains is embodied in Shih’s work. He reinvents his rhinoceros along the long timeline of history and in the relationship between the animal and the human world, so they become what Ardizzoni has called “a container of messages that come from an ideal space-time, a studied and non-linear anthropobiological metaphor.”<sup>44</sup> In prehistoric times, the rhinoceros could be found across our planet and, according to some palaeontologists, men were feeding on rhinoceros meat between 90,000 and 70,000 years ago. As Ardizzoni puts it, “these hardy animals survived glaciation and terrible predators, but from the very first moment of the advent of man, men became the primary cause of their extinction” (Figure 3).<sup>45</sup>

At the same time that Shih’s work is deeply-rooted in his interpretation of the global past and its various histories and mythologies, it is also unapologetically modern. Over the years, the work has



**Figure 3**  
 Shih Li-Jen with *No Trade, No Harm*, fibreglass, 92 × 40 × 80 cm. 2018.  
 © Shih Li-Jen.

undergone a stylistic transformation from a “rigorously realistic representation” to “aesthetically modern sculptures.”<sup>46</sup> While he initially focused on creating accurate depictions of rhinoceroses, Shih’s more recent pieces are characterised by the use of geometric shapes and external symbols of industrial construction techniques, such as riveting and metal plating. As Huang Hai-yun, a professor in the Department of Fine Arts at Tunghai University in Taichung, has observed, Shih’s use of modern materials, such as stainless steel, conveys the advance of industrial civilisation. In a revealing convergence of art and commerce, some of his pieces also serve practical functions, such as his 2014 work “Rhino Vessel” (Figure 4), which consists of two rhino-shaped wine bottle holders, which Shih claims evoke their ancient use as libation cups.<sup>47</sup>

Shih’s massive sculpture dominated the Lagoon for the duration of the 57th Venice Art Biennale in 2017.<sup>48</sup> Its presence in the city—itsself increasingly vulnerable because of climate change, environmental degradation and excessive tourism—drew attention to the power that art has to bring together seemingly unconnected phenomena, in this case an endangered animal and an overwhelmed city, to spark new understandings of their individual plights.<sup>49</sup>

That these phenomena were brought together under the rubric of an event such as the Venice Art Biennale only adds a further dimension to the complexities involved in trying to understand the cultural meanings of this historic meeting between Shih’s rhinoceros and *La Serenissima*. This relates directly to the value that was placed on



**Figure 4**

Shih Li-Jen, *Rhino Vessel (Male)* and *Rhino Vessel (Female)*, each 36 × 12 × 18 cm  
Bronze, 2014. © Shih Li-Jen.

the presence and display of the rhinoceroses that were brought to Europe, to Ganda and to Clara, as well as the others. These animals were valued as gifts and spectacle all the more because of their fragility,<sup>50</sup> and the value of that fragility was underpinned by the animal's rarity: the degree to which they were considered "exotic." Once the demand for the spectacle of the rhinoceros had been established in Europe, the supply of these animals had to be carefully managed to ensure the animal retained its exclusivity. This exclusivity ensured the rhinoceros maintained its value as an object of "magnificence" for elites, those wealthy enough to possess the original with its unique qualities and rarity. In this time of mass consumption, when we are presented with distinct entry points for different levels of consumption, rhinoceros horn (ironically composed entirely of worthless keratin) has become a debased version of "magnificence"; it is now an "object of luxury," endowed with the aura of the original animal<sup>51</sup> and attainable by aspirational non-elites.<sup>52</sup> The closer the rhinoceros moves to extinction, the more valued its horn becomes; it is now "one of the world's most costly luxury objects."<sup>53</sup>

This all resonates strongly with Shih Li-Jen's artistic offering. His rhinoceroses are offered at distinct entry points, priced from the aspirational US\$1,347 to the exclusive US\$79,720, depending on the sculpture's size and whether or not precious stones have been used.<sup>54</sup> Like Clara, Shih's rhinoceroses are available to be viewed by all, fleetingly, on the banks of the Lagoon or in a public exhibition—those at the lower end of the price scale might even be owned by the moderately well-off—but only the very wealthy can possess the top-of-the-range rhinoceroses, buying the privilege to hide them away from public view, to be enjoyed in private, thereby increasing the sculptures' value.<sup>55</sup> In short, in Shih's body

of work the commodification of the rhinoceros is both reflected *and* made manifest.

The historian Catherine Kovesi has observed that both Venice and the rhinoceros have become victims of their desirability and objectification as luxury objects, consumed without discrimination by an ever-expanding consumer class.<sup>56</sup> The same could be said of the Venice Art Biennale and other international arts events: making art might be a necessity for the artist, but possessing it is for most a luxury.<sup>57</sup> Only the wealthiest—in global terms—can afford to attend the Biennale, and in this way, the event itself can be understood as luxurious. If luxuries proclaim value, as has been argued, then the Biennale is indeed a luxury event: studies show the value of inclusion in the event to the prices an artist can ask for their work.<sup>58</sup> The role of the city is crucial in this process. Its intense beauty, fading grandeur and, like the rhinoceros, its increasing fragility only add to the exclusivity of the event and its location. This process is exacerbated by one of the dynamics of luxury, described by the sociologist Mike Featherstone, which is to produce copies and cheaper substitutes to extend the market, thereby heightening the value of the original.<sup>59</sup> This “democratisation of luxury” can be seen in Venice in the daily incursion of thousands of tourists arriving in the Lagoon on monstrous cruise ships, tourists who stay only for a few hours, experiencing vicariously the “luxury” of Venice—not a substitute, perhaps, but a cheaper ‘Disneyfied’ version of the original. Their exclusion from an “authentic” Venice serves to enhance (and to fund) the city’s exclusivity, while also exacerbating its fragility and propelling it towards crisis.

Is it possible that the COVID-19 pandemic that has swept the globe in 2020 might help to break these links between luxury, over-consumption and fragility? Little positive can be said about the crisis so far, though it does seem to be proving a beneficial intervention for the rhinoceros: thanks to the COVID-19 lockdown, the poaching of the animal in South Africa is reported to have halved in the six months to August 2020.<sup>60</sup>

Across the globe, however, the crisis has drawn attention to the flaws in the systems and institutions of the pre-pandemic world, and people everywhere are reflecting on the impact the crisis might have on our future ways of living.<sup>61</sup> This includes in Venice, where the 59th International Art Exhibition, the next Venice Art Biennale now rescheduled for April to November 2022, is viewed by many as a lifeline for the city to drag itself out of its dire financial situation, which has been caused by the impact of the pandemic on global tourism. In the event of no vaccine being available before the rescheduled event, some have suggested taking it online. Many museums have already expanded their online activities in response to the COVID-19 crisis, but this shift raises significant questions about the affordability of access to art, questions that are crucial for the industry and for an exclusive event such as the Biennale.<sup>62</sup>



**Figure 5**

The Journey of Shih Li-Jen's *King Kong Rhino* from the Giardino della Marinaressa, Venice, to the Belvedere of Palazzo Sturm, Bassano del Grappa.  
Photo Interlinea SRL.

Those raising these questions argue that despite the abundance of cultural offerings on the Internet—virtual tours and exhibitions, for example—access to culture has not become more democratic. Indeed “the social gap between rich and poor has instead widened,” because the technical equipment required for a virtual visit to a museum is not available to all.<sup>63</sup> Thus the necessity of social distancing has the potential to create a space even more exclusive than the prestigious art event before the pandemic: “a reassuring sanitized space ready to welcome the rich global elite of potential buyers.”<sup>64</sup> But neither should there be a return to the pre-pandemic situation should a vaccine be forthcoming, it is argued. Instead of resurrecting the way things were before the pandemic, some call for a radical rethinking of the social role of the arts and art institutions, that instead of “more boosters for uncontrolled financial growth,” new

aesthetic and political structures and institutions are required to turn cities such as Venice into *caring cities*.<sup>65</sup> Like the rhinoceros, a post-pandemic Venice might benefit from embracing a new era, one in which tenderness is privileged over profit.

### **Conclusion: the Journey Continues**

Early in 2019, long after the last of the Biennale patrons had left Venice, Shih Li-Jen's "King Kong Rhino" embarked on the next stage of his journey across Europe. Extracted carefully from the Giardino della Marinaressa, the stainless-steel beast was placed on a barge and transported across the Lagoon to the mainland. From there, he travelled on the back of a flatbed truck, to the picturesque town of Bassano del Grappa (Figure 5).<sup>66</sup>

There, in the foothills of the Dolomite Mountains, various threads explored in this article came together in a satisfyingly serendipitous manner. The Palazzo Sturm at Bassano del Grappa is home to one of the world's largest collections of Dürer prints, including his famous woodcut based on descriptions of Ganda, the Indian rhinoceros that drowned off Marseilles in 1515. From April to December 2019, the town held an exhibition of this collection and Shih Li-Jen's "King Kong Rhino" dominated the Palazzo Sturm Belvedere for the duration of this contemporary tribute.<sup>67</sup> In this way Shih's sculpture—a travelling rhinoceros, rare and highly prized, its luxurious status reinforced by the fragility of the animal it represents—came into poignant dialogue with its ancient and tragic precursor, and so completed another stage in "the Endless Circle of Life."

### **Disclosure statement**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

### **Notes**

1. <https://liJenshih.wordpress.com/king-kong-rhino-%E9%87%91%E9%8B%BC%E7%8A%80%E7%89%9B/king-kong-rhino-5/>
2. Rookmaaker, "Captive Rhinoceroses in Europe"; Pequignot, "The Rhinoceros," 213–27; Grigson, "New Information on Indian Rhinoceroses," 76–84; Rookmaaker, "The Lives of Three Rhinoceroses," 279–300; Rhino Resource Centre, <http://www.rhinosourcecenter.com/>; Pimentel, *The Rhinoceros and the Megatherium*, 15–44.
3. Bending, "Improving Conservation Outcomes," 162–70; Rookmaaker, "Captive Rhinoceroses in Europe," 39–40. The capture and import of rhinoceroses for Roman entertainments had created perilously low levels of them, and the north African trade in rhinoceroses had ceased since Roman times.
4. Shih, "Concept of Creation Philosophy," 11.
5. Rookmaaker, "Captive Rhinoceroses in Europe," 39–40; Pimental, *The Rhinoceros and the Megatherium*, 15–16.
6. Rookmaaker, "Captive Rhinoceroses in Europe," 40.
7. Kovesi, "The Rhinoceros as "Mid-Wife to Divine Wonderment," 10–12.

8. Rookmaaker, "Captive Rhinoceroses in Europe," 41; Rookmaaker, "Specimens of Rhinoceros," 59–80; [http://www.rhinosourcecenter.com/images/no-name-yet\\_i1339712349.php?type=tax\\_images&taxon=6&sort\\_order=desc&sort\\_key=name](http://www.rhinosourcecenter.com/images/no-name-yet_i1339712349.php?type=tax_images&taxon=6&sort_order=desc&sort_key=name); [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P\\_1895-0122-714](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1895-0122-714); <https://www.rct.uk/collection/800198/a-rhinoceros>; <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/356497>; <https://www.loc.gov/preservation/conservators/durer/index.html>
9. Rookmaaker, "Captive Rhinoceroses in Europe," 55.
10. Ridley, "One of a Kind."
11. Clara died in 1758, on her final tour, to London, Ridley "One of a Kind," 17.
12. Rookmaaker, "Captive Rhinoceroses in Europe," 65; <https://carezzonico.visitmuve.it/it/il-museo/percorsi-e-collezioni/piano-secondo/sala-longhi/>. Longhi later painted a second version of this scene, commissioned by Girolamo Mocenigo, which is now in the National Gallery, London: <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/pietro-longhi-exhibition-of-a-rhinoceros-at-venice>.
13. Pequignot, "The Rhinoceros" 213–227; Freidman, "Dürer's Rhinoceros," 273–297.
14. Enright, *Rhinoceros*, 37; Enright, "Why the Rhinoceros Doesn't Talk," 108–26.
15. Pimentel, *The Rhinoceros and the Megatherium*, 21; See also Mauss, *The Gift*, 31, and the recent work on diplomatic gift-giving as part of the luxury economy in the early modern period, Roberts, "Luxury, Technology," 215–238.
16. Pimentel, *The Rhinoceros and the Megatherium*, 33.
17. *Ibid.*, 33.
18. Heller, "Why has the Rhinoceros?" 357, n.28
19. *Ibid.*, 354–355.
20. Heller, "Why has the Rhinoceros?" 355, 358.
21. *Ibid.*, 361.
22. <https://www.worldwildlife.org/species/white-rhino>
23. <https://www.worldwildlife.org/species/greater-one-horned-rhino>.
24. Johnson, "the five remaining species of rhinoceros are estimated to number 28,000 (estimated 72 individuals) Sumatran (estimated 80 individuals)"; <https://www.worldwildlife.org/species/greater-one-horned-rhino>; <https://www.worldwildlife.org/species/rhino>
25. Kovesi, *Rhinoceros*, 12.
26. Ardizzoni, "Rhino Arts Bring Issues," 16–17; Kovesi, "Rhinoceros," 16.
27. Ardizzoni, "Rhino Arts Bring Issues."
28. Her, "The Art of Rhino Conservation."
29. Ardizzoni, "Rhino Arts Bring Issues."
30. The horn of his rhinoceroses are sculptured as thumbs with a fingerprint of concentric circles symbolising life and growth, which is often mistaken for the artist's own thumbprint.
31. Ardizzoni, "Rhino Arts Bring Issues."
32. Heller, "Why Has the Rhinoceros Come from the West?" 353–70.
33. Ardizzoni, "Rhino Arts Bring Issues."
34. *The Handbook of Tibetan Buddhist Symbols*. Serindia Publications, 2003; Wilson. "The Emperor's Giraffe," 10–12; Birrell, *Chinese Mythology*, 123–25; Strassberg. *A Chinese Bestiary*; Lihui Yang. *Handbook of Chinese Mythology*; Parker, *The Mythic Chinese Unicorn*.
35. Ardizzoni uses the term "finger-horn" to describe the "pointing" horn, Ardizzoni, "Shih Li-Jen – Mr Rhino," <http://www.smagtw.org/SHHLi-Jen/Article/texts/ShihLi-JenMrRhinoE.html>, accessed 23 November 2020.
36. Ardizzoni, "Shih Li-Jen – Mr Rhino," 59.
37. Ardizzoni, "Shih Li-Jen: His Oeuvre."
38. Sabrina Ardizzoni is the principle commentator on the work of Shih Li-Jen in English.
39. Ardizzoni, "Shih Li-Jen: His Oeuvre."

40. Singer, *Animal Liberation*; Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals*; Safran Foer, *Eating Animals*.
41. Johnson, "Re-Inventing Magnificence"; Bending, "Improving Conservation Outcomes."
42. Bending, "Improving Conservation Outcomes."
43. <https://www.onegreenplanet.org/animalsandnature/list-of-donald-trump-jr-s-shameful-hunting-escapades-around-the-world/>; <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/news/2016/06/cecil-african-lion-anniversary-death-trophy-hunting-zimbabwe/>; <https://protectallwildlifeblog.com/the-texas-trophy-hunter-whose-wall-of-death-sent-social-media-into-meltdown/>
44. Ardizzoni, "Rhino Arts Bring Issues."
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. Her, "The Art of Rhino Conservation."
48. This was also complemented by his large-scale exhibition in Palazzo Bembo during the same period: <https://lijenshih.wordpress.com>. Accessed 24 August 2020.
49. Kovesi, *Rhinoceros*, 12.
50. Pimentel, *The Rhinoceros and the Megatherium*, 33.
51. Kovesi, "The Aura of Luxury," 109.
52. Kovesi, "What is Luxury?" 28–29.
53. Kovesi, *Rhinoceros*, 12.
54. <https://www.saatchiart.com/account/artworks/1056546> (accessed 5 August 2020). <https://www.saatchiart.com/art/Sculpture-Head-of-King-Kong-Rhino/1056546/4029222/view>
55. <https://www.dw.com/en/art-for-everybody-or-is-it-a-luxury/a-37271992>
56. Kovesi, *Rhinoceros*, 12.
57. Zorloni, *The Economics of Contemporary Art*, v, 119–20.
58. Zorloni, *The Economics of Contemporary Art*, 55, 62, 92.
59. Featherstone, "The Object and Art of Luxury Consumption," 108.
60. "South African Rhino Poaching."
61. Nyuon, "From the Wreck of the Pandemic."
62. <https://www.dw.com/en/germanys-venice-biennale-curator-talks-about-the-future-of-the-festival-after-covid-19/a-53401047>
63. Baravelle, "On the Biennale's Ruins?"
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid.
66. "The Journey of 'King Kong Rhino' by Li-Jen Shih," <http://www.interlinea-venezia.com/w/the-journey-of-king-kong-rhino-by-li-jen-shih/>
67. Ibid; <https://www.artsupp.com/en/palazzosturm.museibassano/Exhibitions/Albrecht-D%C3%BCrer-The-Remondini-collection/756>; <https://www.iguzzini.com/projects/project-gallery/albrecht-durer-the-complete-remondini-collection/>. The sculpture will remain on display in Bassano del Grappa until December 2020, <http://www.museibassano.it/mostra/king-kong-rhino>. Accessed 26 August 2020.
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