

The Rite of Spring

Wang You

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MASSIMODECARLO is pleased to present Chinese artist Wang You's project with the gallery in Beijing, entitled *The Rite of Spring*.

As a self-taught artist, Wang You's art touches people with keen sensitivity, bright and lively colours, as well as free and innocent visual elements. The scenes and characters she portrays often have a strong sense of theatricality, intertwined with realistic narratives and illusory fantasies. With extremely detailed observations, she paints drunken friends, strangers passing by, and teddy bears abandoned in corners for a long time... She pays attention to the complex and ever-changing human emotions around her, such as sensitivity, uncertainty, desire, and fear.

The Rite of Spring continues the artist's treatment of these pictorial themes whilst directing her attention to dance and music, and her relationship as a ballet dancer with her paintings. *The Rite of Spring* is a ballet and orchestral concert by Russian composer Igor Stravinsky, written between 1910 and 1913. Its wild primitiveness was questioned by mainstream society at the time and is now seen as the beginning of neoclassical music. "The first time I saw *The Rite of Spring* was the performance of Pina Bausch (1940-2009), which totally shocked me. I felt my heart was about to jump out of my chest. Barbaric vitality and collective hypnotic carnival can be presented in a ballet! It can be so unbridled, completely independent from elegance."

Unlike before, most characters in this exhibition are dancers that Wang You has never seen. "Although I paint dancers, I don't portray the difficult dance movements and gestures, nor do I draw the best moments. I wanted to paint a neutral state, an off-stage state, a state with no cameras surrounding. The dancers' bodies are their faces. They do not need to use too many facial expressions to express themselves, so I try to paint their fingertips with the same sincerity as drawing their eyes, where the emotions and feelings are also present: fragile, sad, neurotic, powerful, spirited, ambitious..." Just like in *The Rite of Spring*, there is no splendid clothing or spectacular scenery: it purely praises human instincts and nature.

Wang You has empathetic feelings when depicting the characters. "I learned ballet when I was a child. I understand the dancers' bodies and the pain. With the same muscle memory, I paint with confidence. Even when there were deformations sometimes, I know how to change and I know where the joints are." Through dramatic imagination and her personal background as a dancer, Wang You integrates these two experiences into her work, creating a unique language and style of her own.

Wang You (b.1988, Harbin) grows up in Shenzhen and graduated from the Directing Department of Shanghai Theatre Academy in 2009. She now lives and works in Beijing.

Wang You's art includes various forms, such as oil painting, watercolor, and sketching. Drawing inspiration from daily life, she loves observing people and objects and then improvising and reshaping real-life images in a way similar to a movie montage. By jumping through images and changing the visual language, viewers' gazes will constantly encounter surprises. The paintings are highly expressive, recording the complex human emotions of the current era. The artist does not reproduce the scene of a certain image but invites people or objects from different times and spaces to share emotions in the same moment and space.

The artist often leaves random white spaces on the canvas. Figures, animals, plants, patterns, and symbols, as well as clear lines and some laboriously detailed shapes, all break the conventional composition. Her vivid colours and creative approaches are playful and lively. The depiction of the scenes wanders between concrete and abstract, mixed with fantasy imagination and narrative, resulting in a confusing yet captivating oasis.

Recent exhibitions include: *Blooming in Spring*, Bvlgari Hotel, Beijing (2023); *Sensation of Touch: The Irreplaceability of Painting*, Yongle Art Space, Beijing (2022); *Everyone Comes for the Donut*, WishinART, Beijing (2022); *Feelings on Paper*, MASSIMODECARLO VSPACE (2021).