

空白空间 WHITE SPACE

ZHAI Liang | What I Don't Understand is What I Understand

WHITE SPACE (Shunyi)

5.27-7.7, 2023

Zhai Liang's latest solo exhibition, "What I Don't Understand Is What I Understand," will open at White Space (Shunyi) on May 27, 2023.

In his series *The Garden of Forking Paths* (2011-2015) and *Night Vessel*, shown at exhibitions such as "Catalogue: Babel Library" (2013), "Notes" (2015), and "Finding Hermits" (2018), Zhai Liang excelled at using ambiguous symbols to lead viewers into literary moments. He always cleverly combined humorous vignettes from short stories and comedy films and ambiguous perceptions and visions from everyday life with the contemplation of social relationships.

The 14 all-new oil paintings in "What I Don't Understand Is What I Understand" mark a bold departure from his previous work, reflecting a new round of destruction and creation from a long-time lover of literature and painting. Zhai takes a relaxed approach as he gives form to personal memories, but he also imbues the images with the woven textures of narratives that seem nearly—but not quite—over. His trademark humor continues in these paintings, but he no longer relies solely on comedic figures and their gestures from real life and media; instead, he transforms them into towering, jelly-like shapes comprised of countless curved lines and restless rounded surfaces. In other pieces, Zhai secretly grafts rural carnival scenes painted by Pieter Bruegel the Elder and his son and images from a trip to India a few years ago that had an immense influence on his subsequent work onto spontaneous Chinese experience. Nostalgic variants of legendary works of literature, the romance of colleagues riding their bicycles home from the factory, and the sophistication of the pair dancing era are deeply implanted in still other paintings.

Zhai Liang (b. 1983, Shanxi Province, China) received his BFA from the Oil Painting Department of the Sichuan Fine Arts Institute (SFAI) in 2006, he graduated with a Master's degree from the Oil Painting Department of the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) in 2009. Recent solo exhibitions include *What I Don't Understand is What I Understand*, WHITE SPACE (Shunyi), Beijing, China (2023); *Imaginary Comedy*, A Thousand Plateaus Art Space, Chengdu, China (2020); *Writing Will Make Your Body Warm and Thumb Pain*, Plate Space, Beijing, China (2019); *Finding Hermits*, WHITE SPACE, Beijing, China (2018); *Slow*, A Thousand Plateaus Art Space, Chengdu, China (2017); *Zhai Liang: Living Room*, Fou Gallery, New York, US (2016); *Notes*, WHITE SPACE, Beijing, China (2015). Recent group exhibitions include 2022 Beijing Biennial *Symbiosis*, Friendship Art Community, Beijing, China (2022); *The Intertextuality of Art and Poetry*, OCAT Shenzhen, Shenzhen, China (2019); *Hack Space*, K11 Art Foundation Pop-up Space, Hong Kong, China (2016); *Luo Zhongli Scholarship 10th Anniversary Retrospective Exhibition*, CAFA Art Museum, Beijing, China (2016); *1199 People: Collection from Long Museum*, Long Museum, Shanghai, China (2014). Zhai Liang currently lives and works in Beijing, China.