

XIAO JIANG *Ordinary Days*

We proudly present the first exhibition in Europe of work by the artist Xiao Jiang (b. 1977, Jingtangshan, Jiangxi Province, China). This exhibition spans a broad selection of works from different periods and formats, focusing on two subjects central to his artistic production: landscapes and interiors. In these scenes, which are at once far and near and real and imaginary, human presence is occasional, mostly implied, insinuated by the emptiness left in the spaces people inhabit or pass through. These atmospheric paintings portray unhurried and silent environments, inviting reflection and the viewer's own interpretation.

Xiao comes from a mountainous region of southeastern China, and he has consistently depicted its forested expanses, precipitous mountain ranges, and rugged trails since he began a series of *plein air* landscapes in 2013. He relocated to Shanghai in 2006. Through his memories and the practice of painting, he traverses the distance both physical (about a thousand kilometres) and emotional (between youth and adulthood) that separates the two cities.

In these works, different temporal axes converge: the past is projected into the present through the artist's own memory and the photographs from which he paints. In the artist's focus on universal elemental aspects, both Xiao's domestic scenes—in which figures engage in everyday activity and routine gestures—and his landscapes could belong to another era, or even to locations other than the artist's country. His images represent everyday moments, the ordinary days that give the title of the exhibition and also of two works in it.

The painter often uses burlap as a support for oil paint, and the fibrous and resistant material forces him to apply pigment with meditative brushstrokes, moving slowly as if ascending an irregular or steep path. This calm, introspective process is in keeping with his use of muted colours—predominantly the two primary, complementary hues of red and green—which imbue his works with a sense of harmony and serenity. Xiao is interested in tonal shifts, depth, and the ways in which colours filtered by memory establish an emotional connection between figure and landscape.

Xiao's compositions are structured through careful contrasting between light and shade, colour planes sometimes punctuated by intense tones, geometrical shapes with a tendency towards abstraction, and slightly imprecise perspectives. His figures are solid, as are the angular contours of their surroundings, but they are isolated, faceless, or looking away, while gusts of wind blow or mist cover a twilight horizon.

Xiao's large-format works allow for panoramic immersion, while his smaller canvases generate a sense of intimacy. His well-balanced scenes, sometimes inspired by film stills, resemble sets prepared for narrative: rooms either empty or populated with austere furnishings and mundane objects, places where the action has stopped and what is implied may be evocative or disconcerting, but is always suggestive.

Xiao studied at the China Academy of Art in 2003. Recent solo exhibitions included Karma, New York (2022); Vanguard Gallery, Shanghai (2021 and 2018); LEO Gallery, Hong Kong (2020); and MOCUBE, Beijing (2017). His work can be found in the collections of the Dallas Museum of Art, Texas; EMDASH Foundation, Berlin; Aishti Foundation, Beirut; and The Arts Club, Dubai, among others.

Please contact us if you would like to request more information or images.