

# ZHANG YINGNAN | MELTING

KÖNIG SEOUL

9 MARCH – 12 APRIL 2024

KÖNIG SEOUL is pleased to present, MELTING, a new solo exhibition by Zhang Yingnan, his second-ever show in Korea, and first in 10 years. This presentation is comprised of 11 new paintings, all made within the last year, showcasing the Beijing-based artist's near-photorealist take on architecture of interior spaces, always devoid of human subjects.

Melting, also known as erosion, is a process in which solid objects gradually change to liquid states. This process can occur in various different materials, such as melting icebergs, rocks, and metals. These processes are important parts of the natural cycle of matter and energy and have a significant impact on the formation and evolution of ecological systems as well as on the survival and development of both humans and nature.

According to the traditional Chinese I Ching (Book of Changes), melting is a natural process that represents a gradual, natural transformation and change. The process of erosion can be associated with the principles of Yin and Yang and the Five Elements. Yang represents birth, while Yin represents death, and erosion is the process of transformation from Yang to Yin. Specifically, erosion means a process of gradual reduction and disappearance; it is an irreversible process. In this process, the old form gradually disappears, and a new form gradually emerges. In I Ching, the process of melting can be explained through the laws of the mutual generation of the Five Elements, where one element gradually transforms into another – water can transform into wood, wood can transform into fire, fire can transform into earth, earth can transform into metal, and metal can transform back into water. This transformational process is that of erosion, which is also the process of the birth of a new form, a natural state of change and development.

According to the artist, "I hope to show through the works in this exhibition the interweaving and transformation of memories in the past history and the outlook for the future in the temporal dimension, to form a narrative that transcends time and space. Melting expresses a change in a material state, symbolizing the blurred boundaries between material and spirit, reality and surreality, history and future."

The works in this show are full of classical elegance, with strict, orderly, calm, and reserved composition; in terms of content, his works are often full of wonder, giving ordinary spaces a dreamy texture, building imaginary spatial relations on the canvas. Whether it is the warm golden sun shining into the cold blue glacier inside a room in MELTING, 2023, or the dark and silent blue glass door revealing the dazzling white light of the future in FUTURE, 2023, or the warm yellow majestic theater reflecting the pale vast grassland and the lonely figure walking away in SIT BY MY SIDE, 2023, the works are both real and absurd.

For Zhang Yingnan, the pervasive sense of loss in his paintings comes from his observation of human relationships. The empty and desolate spaces in his paintings point to lost memories, symbolizing the emptiness of people's spiritual and psychological states, but also the imaginary space where artists can carry their thoughts, emotions, and memories. Although living in a rapidly developing era, Zhang Yingnan's paintings depict a state of inner peace.

— Shi Zheng

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