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Wu Silin | The World Goes on Like This for a Long Time
9.7-10.19, 2024

White Space is pleased to present “The World Goes on Like This for a Long Time,” an exhibition of new acrylic paintings by Wu Silin. This exhibition marks Wu’s second solo presentation with the gallery and is open from September 7 to October 19, 2024.

In contrast to her previous works, Wu’s recent body of paintings did not source its inspiration from any specific text. Instead, she has turned her focus to the subject of disasters. In recent years, the frequent occurrence of man-made or natural disasters has become impossible to ignore. On her canvas, the artist captures and responds to these catastrophic events: war machines storm the earth, floods swamping our land, leaving behind a trail of devastation ...

Working under this theme, Wu depicts the world that deeply concerns her from multiple perspectives, filling it with her distinctive use of imaginative details. These vignettes offer viewers moments of reflection, such as in *Air Strike*, the gently outlined silhouette of a fighter aircraft glides across the composition; through the tattered curtain lies a war-torn landscape. A child’s wind chime swings among the wreckage, calling for an already broken home. *Wreckage* exaggerates the difference in sizes to an extreme: a gigantic tank bulldozes the earth with its sheer mass, rendering the soldiers and trees on the ground as diminutive as mantises, who, vainly resisting the absolute power, pulverize under its force. *Somewhere in the World* conjures a wartime panorama through intricate details and nuanced storytelling. Wu’s child-like brushstrokes seem to have lightened these “macabre” subjects, when, in reality, they intensify the cruelty.

The incorporation of picture frames into paintings has been characteristic of Wu’s practice. In this exhibition, the artist has deliberately furthered this thread, as she continues to alter the shapes of the frames, even adding sculptural elements. These modifications often transform our experience of looking and, by integrating into the paintings, strengthen the images themselves. In *After Human Moved Out*, the addition of sculptural objects to the left side of the frame creates a vivid scene in which the ground is plowed up by shellfire, while switching the original parallel perspective into an overhead view. The four extending edges in *Net* are a continuation of the web-like composition, accentuating the mirroring of the subjects and their reflections in the painting. Scattering along the frame, the sculptural accents further disorient the viewer in the illusive world of the painting. Meanwhile, in *Wreckage*, a blossoming rose thrusts out from the tank’s barrel. It secretly embodies the artist’s persisting hope against the brutality painted.

Trees are a recurring motif in many of the works on view. A solitary trunk or a dense forest, trees preserve, despite the ravages of calamity. In a sense, they are the echoes of Wu’s understanding, as well as her reflection, of this tumultuous world: the world operates on consistent principles, and even in this moment of simultaneous despair and hope, the diverted path will one day make its return through the common yearning for life.

About the artist

Wu Silin's paintings embody the experiences and traditions of both Eastern and Western paintings while blending in her whimsical ideas, empathy, and introspection on the individual state of existence. Her paintings exhibit rich color flow, unexpected lines, and strokes, while the figures are transformed into ethereal and abstract scenes. While the pictorial perspective changes freely and unrestrainedly at the artist’s will, her artistic sensibilities land on every subtle detail. The characters and their surroundings form an unexpected theater, and as the creative process moves forward, the works of art shape into a uniquely rich, complete, and fascinating world of the artist.

Wu Silin was born in Chongqing, China in 1992 and now lives and works in Beijing. She received her bachelor from the School of Experimental Art of the Central Academy of Fine Arts in 2015 and master degree from the Printmaking Department of the Central Academy of Fine Arts in 2021.