

MAI 36 GALERIE

ZANG KUNKUN

Artist reception: Thursday, January 18, 2018, 6 p.m.
Duration of exhibition: January 19 through March 3, 2018
Opening hours: Tues-Fri 11 a.m. to 6.30 p.m., Sat 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Mai 36 Galerie is pleased to announce the first solo exhibition of artist Zang Kunkun (*1986 in Qingdao, China) with the gallery and the first solo exhibition outside Asia. The show, comprising of works from 2015-2017, will span two floors, including the main gallery as well as the newly opened spaces above on the second floor.

Despite his tender age, Zang has been artistically productive even before his admission to the Tianjin Academy of Fine Arts in 2004. Soon after graduating, renowned Chinese art critics, such as Zhuzhu and, later on, Lu Mingjun (recipient of the CCAA critic award 2017), wrote about his works, noticing that the style as well as the content strongly differed from a mainstream, a safe(r) direction many new artists first moved towards as a phenomenon posed by a young contemporary art scene in China.

At first glance, it is perhaps Zang's painstakingly meticulous way of planning and executing each single step of his work rather than a signature style to his name that holds his oeuvre together. Indeed, the artist prefers working sequentially rather than serially, leading to a spectrum of visually different work groups existing at once. However, his conceptual approach that contains a deep artistic revelation, his unconventional perspective and use of materials, and the technique of continuously editing his works until they reach his standard of perfection, form an overall theme that leave his works with his fingerprint. Thus, each work could be looked at as a coherent object in itself and, simultaneously, as a meaningful link in the context as a whole.

Zang's artistic expression is a universal one, enabling an easy access to appreciate his work. Yet the material he uses are mostly typical for his immediate surrounding in Beijing. Since what he finds and includes are mostly industrial materials, such as aluminum, bricks, ropes, wood, leather and sand cloth amongst others, he lets these vehicles document and describe the state of a build-up nation and the people being engulfed by it. At the same time, he wants to question *everything*. On a philosophical and societal level, it is the state of man in a fast-paced world, experiencing the pressure of his own doing and having to live in his self-created anthropogenic world. On a material-related level, it is the rigid definitions of traditional media, such as paintings and sculptures, that he breaks through by subtly and satirically altering their forms and, consequentially, challenges our understanding thereof. He calculates compositions and draws, he paints and moulds, he mounts and assembles, he screws and pastes. As a result, he does not want the beholder to categorise what they see or feel. It is precisely here where the ambitions of Zang lie; maintaining the power to imagine *and* to control.

The artist reception will be held on Thursday, January 18, 2018, 6 p.m. Zang Kunkun will be present.
Visual material is available on request (office@mai36.com).

We look forward to seeing you at the gallery and thank you for your interest.

Mai 36 Galerie
Victor Gisler

January 2018