

XU ZHEN[®]: *Alien*

Curator: LU Mingjun

Opening: 2018/05/26, 16:00

Duration: 2018/05/26 – 2018/07/26 (Tue.-Sun. 11:00-18:00, Mon. Closed)

Address: ShanghART Shanghai, West Bund, Bldg.10, 2555 Longteng Avenue, Xuhui District, Shanghai, China 200232

www.shanghartgallery.com

“Art is alien.” (XU ZHEN[®])

ShanghART Gallery is pleased to present XU ZHEN[®]'s solo exhibition: “Alien” in May 2018. This exhibition will present the large-scale installations XU ZHEN[®] made especially for the ShanghART Gallery space, along with his recent paintings and sculptures. This exhibition extends XU ZHEN[®]'s persistent interest in subjects such as transforming, iterating and evolving the civilisation within the context of post-globalisation. As “Alien” is constructing an impression of the thrilling and the unknown, this exhibition will inspire the viewers' imagination about future and primitivity.

As the founder of XU ZHEN[®], Xu Zhen has made a career in art for twenty years since 1998. Initially expressing the intimacy and emotion of individuals, then shifting to social issues, Xu Zhen is recently focusing on the difference and creativity among human beings. While his artistic strategies have undergone several changes, it is always moving towards the dynamics of culture. XU ZHEN[®]'s art has reached issues such as how art deals with the passage of time, and how to create new possibilities while discovering new experience. The three main themes in globalisation, “trade and capital”, “conflict and war”, “evolution and variation” are gradually becoming sharp focused in Xu Zhen's works. Accordingly, the collision among three topics results in the figures of “extreme alienation” and “super variant” in his works. For Xu Zhen, “Alien” is not only a representation of the real world, but also an allegory of the future community.

This exhibition will truly reflect the core of XU ZHEN[®]'s art through exhibiting how he deals with cultural subjects and their contexts, as well as the new associations and plans he came up with under these circumstances. As the most representative art brand of the period, XU ZHEN[®] is running the one and only MadeIn Company. Established after the economic crisis in 2008, MadeIn Company is representing a kind of possibility by internalising current circumstances into ideas, and speeding up the art making process in the form of a company, in response to the “symptom of globalisation”.

The two pieces of sculptures, *Alien 1* and *Alien 2*, can be traced back to the “Eternity” series of 2013, which combines classical figures of Eastern and Western cultures in a conflicting and integrating way. The aesthetic symbols of eternity and spirituality from the East and West has developed through rich metaphors of colonial history, international configurations, and the future of globalisation in the

process of collision. *Alien 2* in the same vein of *Eternity-(Buddha in Nirvana)* juxtaposes two sculpture figures: an “hermaphrodite” from Greek mythology and a servant figure from the Han Dynasty. Moreover, *Alien 1* is decoding and recombining the cultural elements to its extreme by recoloring those sculptures, thus the ‘aliens’ and the terrifying power therein are released intensely. By these means XU ZHEN[®] created a spiritually interactive installation, directing the viewers to a sensitive historic moment; the pressure brought on by those ideological symbols will situate the viewers in conditions that force them to make a choice and a statement. The other section of the exhibition includes several paintings used by XU ZHEN[®] as installing elements. The “Evolution” series which started in 2007 combines the cultural elements from Dunhuang Mogao Cave paintings and African masks. By painting the ancient civilisation and primitivity still remaining in modern society on the canvas at the same time, this series of paintings create the beauty of harmonious blending across time. The “Fortune” series started from the same period of the “Evolution” series; these painting series, which reconstructs the Neolithic ceremonial jades, opens a path for XU ZHEN[®] towards abstract expressionism.

As “Civilisation Iteration” (solo exhibition in 2017) declares, XU ZHEN[®] is fulfilling his visions in a progress of repeated feedback. The corporate-typed art production will finally result in a leak in the reality – the unknown condition of getting away from logic and language. The aliens hidden in the exhibition will present infinite possibilities.

About the Artist

Xu Zhen, born in 1977, currently resides and works in Shanghai. In 1998 he co-founded the BizArt Art Center, the first non-profit art organization in Shanghai. In the same year, he started making and curating art with a group of artists. Xu Zhen's extensive body of work includes installation art, photography, painting and performance. In 2001 he exhibited at the 49th Venice Biennale as the youngest Chinese artist then he won the top prize at the China Contemporary Art Award in 2004. He was one of the initiators of Art-Ba-Ba, a leading online forum for discussion and critique of contemporary art established in Shanghai, 2006. Meanwhile, he founded the MadeIn Company as a contemporary art creation corporate, focused on the production of creativity, and devoted to the research of contemporary culture's infinite possibilities. In 2013, the launch of ‘XU ZHEN[®]’ was announced, a brand produced by MadeIn Company. In November 2016, the first “Xu Zhen Store” was opened in Shanghai; XU ZHEN[®] has entered in a new stage. XU ZHEN[®]'s work is exhibited worldwide, including the La Biennale de Lyon, Lyon (2013), The Armory Show, New York (2014), the Long Museum, Shanghai (2015), the Al Riwaq Art Space, Qatar (2016), Biennale of Sydney, Sydney (2016), the Guggenheim Museum, New York (2017), etc..