

**Wu Yiming: *Painting the Banal***

Opening: 2018/09/08, 16:00-18:00

Duration: 2018/09/08 – 2018/10/21 (Tue.-Sun. 11:00-18:00, Mon. Closed)

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www.shanghARTgallery.com

This September, ShanghART Gallery is honored to host an exhibition of works by Wu Yiming, “Painting the Banal”. These works are a continuation of the artist's experiments in the use of a spare and refined painting style over the past few years. Full of expressiveness, they reveal the feelings, the literary sensibility and the spiritual value of contemporary imagery as it is shaped by the ink.

Thanks to creative efforts that have grown increasingly personal in recent years, Wu Yiming's works have blazed for themselves a “Third Way” in between contemporary pictorial consciousness and the traditional spirit of Chinese painting. By depicting scenes of everyday life, they pierce through to the deepest sensorial layer of our experience of the present. Although these works appear to reference the frankness and concision of traditional freehand brushwork, there is more to them. In the ordinary glimpses of life that Wu depicts, flowers, tree shadows or city lights are no longer presented before our eyes with the matter-of-factness of “objects”; indeed, they are replaced with experience itself, directly rendered and laid bare with the vividness and the expressive power of ink and brush strokes.

In the words of Italian curator Monica Dematte, “by choosing the medium that he feels he is most in tune with, and by considering the reason behind this choice, the artist engages in a deep self-analysis that allows him to view himself more clearly and to formulate a unique, subjective interpretation of the world.”

As a result, “Painting the Banal” refers both to the production of a visual representation within the painting, but also to a reiteration on the picture plane of the artist's experience of painting itself. What it reflects is rather a subjective visual consciousness than a result; it stands for the resistance of an

individual being, by means of his concrete experience of reality and of his own emotions, against the spiritual crisis so evidently manifested by contemporary life.

It is also on this level that one may notice most clearly the new strides accomplished by Wu Yiming in his practice over recent years. While his early works would always make both the public and art critics waver between the Chinese tradition, Western contemporaneity, "New Ink" or other movements in choosing the frame of historical judgment or theoretical awareness to consider them, Wu's recent works increasingly elude such constraining frameworks, and instead, display a mature tranquility in which the artist is free to do as he pleases, without ever going astray.

"A flower is a flower, a tree is a tree": this is precisely the self-sufficient state that is brought about by an abundant experience of painting—and it constitutes the deepest spiritual core of the "Painting the Banal" However, on the other hand, the "freehand-painted" things, sceneries, light, or shadows are but depicted objects; the actual subject, hidden behind the canvass, is in fact the artist himself. Therefore, the "Painting the Banal" can be viewed to large extent as the collision and the fusion on the picture plane of "minor" painted objects with a "major" human. Indeed, for the artist, the poetry of everyday life is evoked in between the frankness of brush strokes and the unspeakableness of experience.

In the *Shepherd's Purse* series, which gathers new works from 2018 that form part of this exhibition, the public is granted a glimpse of the artist's depiction and understanding of objects, in between being and nothingness. This wild vegetable, beloved of the Chinese, has a most simple and unadorned appearance; however, drawn in Wu's ink, it is endowed with a blooming, enchanting vitality, and expands like a voice suddenly resonating through silent space. As for the *Curtains* series, it displays a scenery of a different spirit altogether: the perspective of these paintings brings to mind the most ordinary moments of life, as if they were corridors of time, their shapes at once blurry and mottled, shuttling back and forth within our consciousness.

Besides those meticulously depicted colors and patterns of curtains and vegetables, in Wu's *Light* series and in his representations of urban sceneries, which he has worked on continuously over the past two years, one can also clearly sense this "slowness" of time. It is experience itself, revealed on the canvass, but also an act of contemplation and introspection carried out by the artist in the silence of his solitary corner.

## About the Artist

WU Yiming, born in 1966 in Shanghai, graduated from the Fine Arts Department of East China Normal University. He now lives and works in Shanghai. The selected exhibitions include: *Light in the Dark*, Mind Set Art Center, Taipei (2017); *WU Yiming Recent Works*, ShanghART, Beijing (2015); *The Beginning of Good Life*, Wu Yiming solo exhibition, Mind Set Art Center, Taipei (2014); *The Other Side of Time - WU Yiming Solo Exhibition*, ShanghART Gallery, Shanghai (2012); *Growing Up*, Exhibition Celebrating SWFC 3rd & ShanghART Gallery 15th Anniversary, Shanghai World Financial Center, Shanghai (2011); *Portrait*, ShanghART Gallery, Shanghai (2010); *Another Scene - Artists' Projects, Concepts and Ideas*, ShanghART H-Space, Shanghai (2009); *The World of Other's: A Contemporary Art Exhibition*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Shanghai (2008); *Harmony and Difference*, East China Contemporary Sculpture Invitational Exhibition, Shanghai (2007); *Contemporary Chinese Art*, Gallery Karsten Greve, Cologne, Germany (2006); *FOCUS: Wu Yiming's Works on Paper and Sculptures*, ShanghART Gallery, Shanghai (2006); *Time Ex.*, UMA Gallery, Hong Kong (2005); *China, Contemporary Painting*, Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio, Bologna, Italy (2005); *Dreaming of the Dragon's Nation, Contemporary Art from China*, IMMA (Irish Museum of Modern Art), Dublin, Ireland (2004), etc.

### About ShanghART Gallery

Founded in 1996, ShanghART Gallery is one of the first contemporary art galleries established in China now maintaining spaces in Shanghai, Beijing and Singapore. For the past twenty years, ShanghART has kept devoting to the development of contemporary art in China and also kept close and long-term cooperation with more than 60 artists. Sustaining the highest-quality in presenting contemporary art exhibitions and projects, ShanghART regularly participates in the major international art fairs and collaborates with important art institutions in China and from all over the world.

Lorenz Helbling, founder of ShanghART Gallery, was honoured with the "Shanghai Magnolia Award" in 2017, and has been listed in the *ArtReview Power 100* for years. ShanghART Gallery has been respectively awarded with 2017, Special Award of "Art Power 100 2016" by L'OFFICIEL Art; 2012 & 2015 No.1 among Top 10 Influential Galleries in China by Bazaar Art; 2010 Best Gallery / Curator by Best of Shanghai 2010 Lifestyle Awards; and solely selected in China for the book of *International Art*

*Galleries: Post-War to Post-millennium* in 2005 (the book includes the world's 75 most influential galleries); last but not least, participated in the world renowned art fair "Art Basel" as the only and first gallery in China etc.