

STORYTELLING

Fondazione Prada presents "Storytelling", a solo show by Chinese painter Liu Ye curated by Udo Kittelmann. On view from 30 January to 28 September 2020, it will take place in Nord gallery at Fondazione Prada's Milan venue. Following the first iteration held in 2018 at Prada Rong Zhai in Shanghai, the exhibition travels to Milan for a new presentation, featuring a selection of 35 paintings realized from 1992 onwards.

In Shanghai Liu Ye's works related harmoniously with the 1918 historical residence's original furnishings, decorations and colours, creating a symbiotic relationship with the intimate spaces and small rooms of Prada Rong Zhai. In Milan the paintings will generate a chromatic and material contrast with the concrete walls and the industrial environment of Fondazione Prada's venue, in order to activate a new narrative sequence and an enigmatic contrast with these large exhibition spaces. The geographical dislocation will contribute to focus on the ability of Liu Ye to create a personal pictorial universe, which does not align with any particular artistic movement.

Liu Ye expresses an intimate and sensual imagination, that feeds on heterogeneous sources related to literature, history of art and popular culture from the Western and Eastern world, giving rise to atmospheres which evoke introspection, purity and suspension. In the artist's body of works the stylistic features of fairy-tales coexist with a sense of humor and a parodic vein. Referring to his own artistic production, Liu Ye underlined that "every work is my selfportrait".

Combining different elements and sources, his paintings are generated by a plurality of creative forces: memory, observation, imagination and artistic education. All his works are pervaded by a certain ambiguity as they seem suspended between two worlds: reality and invention. During his career he created a personal domain, at the same time accessible and impenetrable to others, which can be described as a subjective reality. One of the most distinctive feature of Liu Ye's initial approach was the collision of anachronisms, typical of an individual immersed in a foreign culture: modern art motives combined with old masters' quotations, western cultural references associated to Chinese cultural icons. The autobiographical nature of his work assumed another connotation after his return to his homeland from Europe in the late nineties. He employed his art as a mean of self-exploration and discovery, in a context in which artistic creation and daily life mutually influenced each other. As he specified, "Even though I have never become an abstract artist, I am nonetheless interested in stripping down narrative and simplifying." His visual narratives don't progress linearly or logically; they are based on contrast as a collage of different forms and languages.

As Udo Kittelmann highlights, “I experienced his paintings as sensitive pictorial messages relayed between two worlds that are often viewed as contradictory: Western cultures versus Asian cultures. Even back then, Liu Ye’s paintings struck me as manifesting a dialectical constellation, for his work is not only interwoven in many ways with China’s manifold cultural developments; it also bears witness to a profound knowledge of the history of European culture and painting. His pictures are grounded equally in traditional Eastern and Western intellectual and artistic trends, conjoining the strengths of the past and the future.”

Biographical notes

Liu Ye was born in 1964 in Beijing, China where he currently lives and works. He studied mural painting at the Central Academy of Fine Arts from 1986 to 1989 and industrial design at the School of Arts & Crafts, both in Beijing, China. He received his Master of Fine Arts from the Academy of Fine Arts in Berlin in 1994. In 1998, he was Artist in Residence at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam. Recent solo shows and group exhibitions include: *Liu Ye: Storytelling*, Prada Rong Zhai, Shanghai (2018); *Hello World. Revising a Collection*, Nationalgalerie im Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin (2018); *57th Venice Biennale VIVA ARTE VIVA* curated by Christine Macel (2017); *Mondriaan and Liu Ye*, Mondriaanhuis, Amersfoort (2016); *The World in 2015*, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing (2015); *Focus Beijing: De Heus-Zomer Collection*, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam (2014); *Re-View*, opening exhibition of Long Museum West Bund, Shanghai (2014); *MYTH/HISTORY: Yuz Collection of Contemporary Art*, Yuz Museum, Shanghai (2014); *Hans van Dijk: 5000 names*, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing (2014); *Through All Ages*, opening exhibition of Long Museum, Shanghai (2012); *In Time – 2012 Chinese Oil Painting Biennale*, National Art Museum of China, Beijing (2012) *Future Pass – From Asia to the World*, Wereldmuseum, Rotterdam (2011); *Chinamania*, Arken Museum of Modern Art, Ishøj (2009); *Mahjong: Contemporary Chinese Art from the Sigg Collection*, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, University of California, Berkeley (2008). Liu Ye’s works are part of permanent collections of the China Art Museum, Shanghai; the Long Museum, Shanghai; the M+ Sigg Collection, Hong Kong, the Yuz Museum, Shanghai and Today Art Museum, Beijing among other international institutions.

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