

HE SEN

Reinventing traditional Chinese art

Exhibition time: November 8th, 2018 - January 7th, 2019



OPENING

Thursday, November 8th 2018
6.00 pm

OPENING HOURS:

Monday - Friday 10.00 am - 6.00 pm
Saturday by appointment

PRESS RELEASE

On Thursday, November 8th (6.00 pm), Primae Noctis art gallery of Lugano is pleased to present the first solo exhibition in Switzerland of the artist He Sen.

The reflection born from the will to go back to traditions is the heart of a new search of He Sen, who wants to create a connection between the contemporary world and the ancient one. It is a figurative experimentation which is in sharp contrast with the formal perfection and the hyperrealism of his previous works. This shows the desire to go back to the past which has long been forgotten and dominated by the development and the modernization of China. Through a formal rework, He Sen appropriates the uniqueness of the images of the great masters of Chinese tradition by selecting elements and by giving them new solemnity. Xu Wei and Zhu Da are the main sources of inspiration. The first one, who has been defined “father of modern Chinese Painting”, was a painter of Ming dynasty, age in which arts re-flourished and national identity was very important. Zhu Da, artist of the century after, belonging to Qing dynasty, was famous for his ability to create images with few defined brushstrokes. He Sen exploration path starts here: ancient images of small dimensions made with black and white ink, to which he gives new authority and solemnity, by redesigning them on big canvases in which the colour becomes prevailing and symbol of He Sen’ new artistic path.

This is a completely new artistic research based on the use of colour and its endless chromatic combinations. The surprising juxtaposition of horizontal or vertical strips seem to outline different space-time dimensions in the same surface on which the subjects are and this refers to the studies of chromatic contrast of the American minimalists or the German geometrical abstraction, referring to artists like Gunther Förg. Oil paints are drawn with brush or with spatula with a stylistic alternation, which is a central theme of research for the artist. In the same image we can see very diluted brush strokes which date back to the ancient tradition of Chinese ink decoration, thick brush strokes inspired by Impressionist painting and coats of paint made with spatula which derive from the investigation of the modern American painting. If on one hand the delicacy and the sign enhance the ancient tradition, on the other the original and various technical experimentation, gives an unprecedented materiality and tridimensionality to the past.

The fascination of nature, which has always been the primary source of inspiration for Chinese art, is the subject of these works. Flowers, trees and landscapes blend with royal images and they are represented through the use of intense colours which have no long connection with the reality but which follow the ancient Chinese model. In this series of works He Sen abandons the ideological aim made of political and social allusions to contemporary world, in favour of a research of originality and of the creation of a direct connection with his ancestors which projects traditional Chinese art till contemporary world in order to preserve it for the future.



Born 1968 in Kaiyuan, in Chinese Yunnan province, He Sen graduated from the Sichuan Academy of Fine Arts and then in Germany at Kunsthochschule Kassel. He started to exhibit in the early 90s, mostly in China, and, since 2003, all over the world with solo or group exhibitions. He took part in the Biennial of Venice in 2009 in the Chinese Pavilion and, during the last years he exhibited at Meridian International Center of Washington, at the Biennial of Guiyang, at Japanese Fukuoka Museum with “Pure Views” and with the exhibition “Cina. Rinascita contemporanea” at Palazzo Reale in Milan. At present, he teaches at the Academy of Fine Art in the Department of Photography and Digital Media of Beijing, where he lives since 2003.

Solo exhibitions (selected)

- 2018 Reinventing traditional Chinese art, Primae Noctis Art gallery, Lugano
- 2017 Journey to the East, Longmen Art Projects, Shanghai, CN
- 2012 Conversing with the Moon, Today Art Museum, Pechino, CN
- 2010 Scene illusory, Marella Art Contemporary, Milano, IT
- 2009 Best Print Collection of He Sen, A Story Gallery, Busan, KR
Painting, Art Now Gallery, Pechino, CN
- 2008 Come Together, Jack Tilton Gallery, New York, US
Do You Have Time Tonight, Galerie Frank Schlag & Cie, Essen, DE
- 2007 Now and Then, Art Now Gallery, Pechino, CN
- 2004 Shadow Shaped, Art Now Gallery, Pechino, CN
- 2003 Girl . Toy . Smoke, Red Gate Gallery, Pechino, CN
He Sen Solo Exhibition, Marella Art Contemporary, Milano, IT