

Art Basel in Basel

2019.6.13 – 6.16

Galleries | S24

LIU WEI, ZHAO GANG

Long March Space will present recent works of Liu Wei and Zhao Gang at the Galleries sector, Art Basel in Basel 2019. As one of the 79 artists participating in this year's Venice Biennale's theme show, "May You Live in Interesting Times", Liu Wei is showing *Devourment* (2019) at the Giardini and *Micorworld* (2018) at the Arsenale. Meanwhile on May 24<sup>th</sup>, Zhao Gang's solo show, "History Painting", opens at Perez Art Museum Miami. The exhibition consists of fourteen paintings that bring together the radically multicultural aspects of Gang's art and identity.

### **Liu Wei "Outdoor Beyond"**

In his recent practice of painting, Liu Wei has realized the restitution of organic forms. Saying that the past series of "Purple" reflected the picture of urban development with an endless amount of possibilities by digitized details, the latest series of "Outdoor" reexamines what is Nature under the anthropocentric view and its natural principles and sequences. The plain yet bold and unrestraint brushstrokes merge into a solid mass of maelstrom, which readily engages the audience and makes them feel drowned. By such a sensorial dilemma, Liu Wei reflects upon painting as being lost, unprepared and reoriented.

Liu Wei starts from his own visual experience to re-examine a structure of thought and discourse that subtends the Anthropocene. He combines various shapes and geometric figures into a rhetoric device that directly opens up the fresh modes of thought and action about the ecological issue. In his solo exhibition entitled "Shadows" (2018) at Long March Space, Liu Wei has installed a kinetic composition of circles, spheres, and globes of different kinds, thus presenting a picture of the world – earth as a planet, a scope of the confined knowledge – earth as a mapping, and the position in which we are placed. In the cyclical process of human civilization, the round form does not only exist as an abstraction that emblemizes succession and recursion. The much work and continuous effort for further "rounding" of things also integrates the loops of feeling, sense, and thinking, which has itself

marked as the limit of existence.

The becoming of “Outdoor” does not necessarily refer to the plane transposition of the three-dimensional space. Its progression rather gives birth to the series of sculptures named to Microworld – by a deconstructive view to alter the round, Liu Wei demonstrates the capability to see things, thanks to technical rationalism.

### **Zhao Gang “Apprehended Allegories of Song-Yuan Times”**

In his latest practice of painting, Zhao Gang attempts to describe and introspect the historical course of “literati painting,” the ideal form throughout the development of traditional Chinese painting. He chooses the Song-Yuan time as a witness to the appreciation of scholastic qualities and the pursuit of ancient styles, especially the earlier grand manners of the Northern Song Dynasty and the supra-representational expressions during the beginning of the Yuan Dynasty, so that his reflection upon his own identity as a Manchu descendant, the year-after-year migration experience, the impact of recent social events and the new reality of life can find a place to dwell.

Zhao Gang has long been focusing on the issue of Chinese intelligentsia over the transitional period. Many of his previous works touch upon the key figures that substantially influenced the country’s changing modernity of the past century. In this vein, the situation of the classical scholar-bureaucrats from the decline of the Southern Song with rise of the Mongol to the unified Yuan leads to more associations. He fabricates and parodies lots of persons, animals and plant landscapes by allegorizing, thus to accommodate the rich content of his autobiography.

At this point, Song imperial clan member and survivor, Yuan official, calligrapher and painter Zhao Mengfu (1254—1322) of blue blood and great attainments appeals to Zhao Gang and resonates with his intellectual account. Zhao Mengfu switched back and forth between entering and outing official career also secular life, which was transformed into the imposing composition trapped in a dilemma in his Shanshui works. And just as Zhao Gang, he engaged with some religious themes. Nevertheless, Zhao Gang refers to several significant schemas created by Zhao Mengfu and then starts to unfold his conceptual critique beyond individual narrative and time consciousness.