

Ju Ting

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Exhibition in Lucerne: 13.9.–30.10.2018

Opening: Thursday, September 13, 5.30–7.30pm

Galerie Urs Meile is pleased to announce the opening of the first solo exhibition in the west of the emerging Chinese artist Ju Ting (*1983). Her works are characterized by coalescing two conventional art media: painting and sculpture, and obscuring the boundary between the two. Being made of paint and occupying a two-dimensional picture plane, Ju Ting's works seem to align themselves with the category of painting. However, they have a clear feel for the sculptural in both form and texture deconstructing the realms of painting.

Graduating in printmaking from the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing in 2013, Ju Ting assumed the role of an independent artist with an orientation towards painting. However, far from committed to conventional expression, she began to experiment with manipulating images and familiar motifs using printmaking tools and techniques to carve not copper plates or woodblocks, but thick layers of paint slathered onto the flat surface of a wooden board. Working on the *Pearl* series with the skill and precision of an engraver, Ju Ting cuts through the paint, and shovels up fine strings from the surface to partially reveal what lies beneath. One example is *Pearl 042418* (2018, acrylic on board, 97 x 97 x 7 cm). Permeating the depth of multiple layers of acrylic paint, a tactile visual synesthesia is created. Sharing the feature of starkly patterned reliefs, the *+/-* series differs such that the artist doesn't remove strings entirely from the surface, but re-lays them upwards on the uncut portion of the paint surface.

As her language evolved, Ju Ting became more comfortable with her abstract visual idiom. Given the malleable plasticity of acrylic paint, she is able to manage layers of paint in a more intuitive and sensory way. Thus, the *Untitled* series finds its form. Various single tones of acrylic paint are applied on a board lying flat on the floor. The paint is applied with a printmaking squeegee as a brush or palette knife and then left to dry without fully hardening. The combination is then ready to be peeled off and transformed into a new composition. In appearance, the *Untitled* series holds the richness of acrylic pigment – on occasion, top layers are as glossy as a well-varnished masterpiece. A fine example is *Untitled 071618* (2018, acrylic on board, 195 x 240 x 9 cm), an arresting medley of cold tones. Bright cool green, lavender and pink lie beneath a film of deep cadmium blue that has a seductive sheen sharing the qualities of dark chocolate. *Untitled 062218* (2018, acrylic on board, 190 x 156 x 9 cm), a medley of intense cobalt blue contrasting cadmium yellow, together with milder shades of green and violet. *Untitled 062318* (2018, acrylic on board, 190 x 167 x 9 cm) foregrounds a sombre Chinese bronze against the recurrent green and violet in different hues. Entering a different key, *Untitled 062118* (2018, acrylic on board, 110 x 109 x 7 cm) blends a layer of acid green against dark lavender and cerulean, which like the tiny slit of amber on the right edge of the surface, are colours that the artist is fond of using.

Tones in Ju Ting's oeuvre are used in a way that combines nostalgia with the clarity of contemporary machine production. Ju Ting has always been partial towards pigments that denote the past. These combinations exude moods which can be subtle, and also dramatically different. Given the sensuous charge of dynamic tones in the works, one can hardly ignore the texture- one of butter cream-meets-silica gel. Acrylic is dense, and when used in this manner, accumulates a substantial weight. As the layers are built, they seem almost too heavy to bear their own weight. At the same time, after applying the different layers, Ju Ting occasionally deconstructs the surface by removing or manipulating parts of it. Her technique adopts a working process that embraces incidental accidents and seemingly runs up against the idea of perfectionism. She subsumes them masterfully into the surface texture as a functioning element of her aesthetics. It allows her to raise the picture plane inches in thickness, whilst retaining a sense of lightness, of light passing through the surfaces, even as each piece accumulates a mass and weight far beyond what they suggest.

(The above text includes excerpts from Karen Smith's essay *Ju Ting: Onion Skins* written for this exhibition.)

GALERIE URS MEILE 麦勒画廊

Ju Ting was born in Shandong in 1983. She graduated from the Printmaking Department with a BA in 2007, and with a master in 2013. She lives and works in Beijing. Her solo shows include: *Peeling an Onion*, OCT Contemporary Art Terminal, Xi'an, China (2017); *Color Has the Answer*, YISHU 8, Beijing, China (2013). Recent group exhibitions include: *Extended Ground*, Galerie Urs Meile, Lucerne, Switzerland (2017); *The First Exhibition of Young Artists at the National Art Museum of China*, National Art Museum of China, Beijing, China (2016); *A New Generation of Chinese Women Artists*, Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University, East Lansing, USA (2016); *Painting as Strait Gate: Post-80s Artists Invitation Exhibition*, Hive Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China (2016); *It's Not Right But it's Okay*, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China (2015).