

# Feelings of the Season

Exhibition in Lucerne: 7.12.22 - 4.2.2023  
Opening: Wednesday, 7. December, 5.30 - 7.30 p.m.  
Opening hours: Tue - Fri, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

At the end of the year, Galerie Urs Meile presents a group exhibition with a special aura - *Feelings of the Season* subtly balances between mood, atmosphere and feeling.

The exhibition brings together works from the media of sculpture, object and painting by established and young artists from China, Switzerland and Italy: Wang Xingwei, Wang Jin, Qiu Shihua, Li Gang, Hu Qingyan, Ju Ting, Cao Yu, Miao Miao, Chen Zuo, Marion Baruch, Urs Lüthi, Rebekka Steiger and Mirko Baselgia.

Upon entering the gallery, viewers first find themselves face to face with a large canvas work by Chinese artist **Qiu Shihua** (b. 1940), one of China's oldest contemporary artists. Exploring with an inner calm, a spiritual vocabulary best describes his work. Viewers best let the stream of associations come casually, abandoning reason and intention in favor of intuitive, acquiescent perception. Qiu combines a reduced color palette with the art of contemplation. His subjects, often referred to as "white landscapes," are only revealed through patient viewing.

The group of works by the Grisons-based artist **Mirko Baselgia** (b. 1982) captivates the viewer with its delicacy. The relief of hundreds of shingles is inspired by the tranquility of a Japanese Zen Garden. On the surface different shapes of shingles made of pine wood alternate denser and wildly layered areas. The color and grain of the wooden shingles add dynamism and depth in addition to the light coming from above. Baselgia appreciates this typical wood of its region for its aromatic scent and its heart rate lowering effect. The shingles form the basic elements of a formal language that, with their different orientations, tell of a changing landscape. The tripartite shingles with jagged edges symbolize water, while the triangular ones represent wind. The pointed shingles evoke vegetation, the angular ones represent earth and sand, and the round ones represent stone.

Also versed in the science of materials is Chinese artist **Miao Miao** (b. 1986), whose enigmatic works on paper and canvas are characterized by offbeat compositions, a mesmerizing use of color and form, and surprising pictorial ideas. Her works are often inspired by a particular moment in life, a specific color, impression, action, or thought, which may well prove challenging for viewers. At the same time, this kind of presentation reflects a superimposition of space and time that is crucial to Miao Miao's work. Thus, by reproducing episodes of her everyday life, the artist attempts to create a reconstruction of time and space in her own mind through her paintings and ends up presenting a kaleidoscope of this vision.

A color, an object, a memory or even a feeling can become the inspiration for a new painting of **Chen Zuo** (b. 1990). His paintings are not only characterized by precise technique and balanced composition, but also full of emotion. *Nightwalker in Pines* is part of Chen Zuo's Snowscapes, a series he pursues since 2021. Being from the south of China and encountering cold temperatures late in life, winter has a special meaning for him and embodies an exceptional, sensual experience. Chen Zuo does not see winter as gloomy and lonely, but full of romance. The snow depicted is by no means a single white, but rich, thick, warm and full of colors, which the artist skillfully expresses through the overpainting technique of classical painting. He knows how to layer natural and translucent colors to increase the thickness of the work and create a relationship between form and color and the different layers.

The delicate ink paintings of Swiss artist **Rebekka Steiger** (b. 1993) also exude a calming, almost meditative effect. Steiger, who achieves unexpected visual results through the interplay of chance/control and intuition/safety, is an artist who embodies painting as a state of mind, determined to go with the flow without being constrained by conceptualism and overthinking. During her artist residency in Beijing, she was inspired by Japanese ink painting and the linguistic ambiguities of Chinese. Since then, she has experimented with ink, tempera and oil paint, creating unique effects due to the different textures of the

materials. The fusion of shapes and colors results in a fascinating world. Her visual language suggests a progression into the unknown and sets no limits to one's imagination. At the moment, Steiger is staying in Vietnam as an artist in residence.

**Li Gang** (b. 1986) transforms materials from art, nature and everyday life: canvas, pedestals, stones, trees, money and pollution. The *Lollipop* series (2015) is the first series in which Li Gang works with human hair and plaster. The hair comes from Chinese migrant workers, which Li Gang collects from local barbers. He uses the traditional Chinese wall-building method to create the work. Hair and plaster mix to form a hard composite material that not only gives the work its shape, but also allows the strangers' hair to function as a kind of metaphor for the identity hidden within the work. A sharpened rebar pierces the work, evoking an act of violence that destroys the harmony of the plaster sculpture. It is sabotage, but at the same time sustainable, combines organic and industrial.

Since 2013, **Marion Baruch** (b. 1929) has been creating sculptures from scraps of fabric from Milan's fashion industry, questioning how language constructs perception and realities. *Mr Horror (ou l'éternel retour)* is a series from 2015 and is based on the attacks in Paris on the Bataclan theater, among others. Shocked by the terrorist attacks, Baruch creates works that can be formally described as an X formed by two strips of stretched black fabric intersecting in the middle. These are meant to serve as a reminder of the trauma suffered. Baruch understands the straight line, the diagonal or the X as dynamic and pre-symbolic forms. Everything depends on two simple laws, gravity and tension.

In his experimental approach, Swiss artist **Urs Lüthi** (b. 1947) expands the traditional conventions of the self-portrait. He elevates it to the status of a grand gesture and creates projection surfaces for emotional stimuli by placing them somewhat on the sidelines through humorous details, everyday curiosities, or proximity to kitsch. Ultimately, the artist uses all self-portraits to refer to nothing less than the "human condition," asking, "Are we unique or are we not?" The portrait series "Selfportait (The Love of Mothers)" (1987/88) can be interpreted as a summary of the history of visual communication. Breaking the boundary between kitsch and pure beauty, Lüthi here combines stick figures with the classical portrait. This is Lüthi's way of adding his own phrases to the fixed vocabulary of painting.

**Wang Xingwei** (b. 1969) *Chance* (2001) shows two tree trunks in a snow field with two random cuts above the roots. Apart from a reminiscence of Fontana's canvas cuts, a technique Wang has also appropriated in other works, the plot of *Chance* remains hidden. Upon closer inspection of the expansive white area that mysteriously covers the entire lower portion of the painting, one realizes that the artist is trying to hide something from the audience. Originally, Wang painted the outline of a Magritte-like detective observing the two cuts like a crime scene. Later, the artist decided to whitewash the figure to keep the audience in the dark. It's a strategy Wang Xingwei has employed in a number of works throughout his career.

**Wang Jin** (b. 1962) is one of the few Chinese artists to turn to conceptual art early on and is at home in any medium: whether sculpture, photography, object or performance, Wang Jin plays with irony, operates with sublimity or places himself at the center. In addition, he often seeks a dialogue with the audience. With his sculpture group *My Teeth* (2001), the artist shows huge, glazed ceramic copies of teeth, which resemble the results of a prehistoric excavation. However, by making them his own, they become part of his personal history, in which he moves outside of time and beyond the boundaries of physical normality. Anonymous yet personal, superhuman yet not man-made, Wang Jin's dental sculptures are at once relics of times past and projections into the future.

**Cao Yu's** (b. 1988) interdisciplinary body of work astutely reflects on the role of women and artists in Chinese society. Her works, both provocative and self-reflexive, explore our complicated relationships to the natural world, to each other, and to finding meaning in our lives. The range, diversity, and conceptual depth of her works are distinguished by the materials she uses, which range from the more conventional - marble, linen, digital media - to the surprising, such as the artist's own hair, breast milk, and urine. In September 2022, Cao Yu will take part in the international group exhibition "Empowerment" at the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg (D), which gathers different, feminist approaches and at the same time sees them as progressive methods to analyze the societies of the world through the means of art. In the series of works *Everything is Left Behind*, white canvases are embroidered with statements that were brought to the artist by third parties - be it about her role as a daughter, artist or mother. Cao Yu uses her own long black hair as a thread.