

Exhibition 7 May – 24 July 2010

Opening: Friday, 7 May 2010, 18.00 – 20.00 O'clock

Xia Xiaowan - "Three Dimensional"

Xia Xiaowan, (*1959 in Peking) who was exposed to realism from Europe when he was still quite young, asked himself in 2002 – when China was pervaded with an atmosphere of internationalisation - more than simply how painting could be better individualised. Searching for a possibility to spatialise the flat medium, he wanted to develop a form of expression which more closely conforms to human perception. He wanted to transcend not only the limits of optical perception as it had hitherto been cultivated but also the constraints imposed by the two-dimensionality of painting, in order to better give unmistakeable expression to his own experiences.

Since he was a student at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing Xia Xiaowan has been occupied with the human body. As for him a person is not an absolute being cut off from the world, but rather one residing between earth and sky, he initially embedded the human body in landscapes. In this context, the sky stands for the immaterial, interior realm and the human figure for life in general. With regards to content, Xia Xiaowan by no means endeavours to make his own life situation his central theme, but rather focuses on the instantly understandable, immediate expression of general humanity in the arrangement of space. He places body and space within an organic relationship in the hope that the created forms will be full of life as well as emit it.

In 2003 the transition from two- to three-dimensional painting took place due to his experience during an exhibition of his pencil drawings in the Today Art Museum. He realised that the works appeared far too small compared with the large space. In order to create a tangible relationship between space and image he broke a painting into five pieces. He cut out a figure and affixed it to one glass shard and clouds onto another. In this way, the picture expanded spatially. This was fundamentally the beginning of a painting form widened to the third dimension. Through the achievement of space and in light of the real volume of the human figures, the viewer gains the impression they are moving towards him. Here, the painter who has become a sculptor as it were, combining up to 17 glass shards into one picture, succeeds in simulating a reality which evokes immediacy unknown in painting.

In 2006 the Urs Meile Gallery presented the first solo exhibition with Xia Xiaowan's three-dimensional works. The current exhibition "Three Dimensional" in the gallery premises in Lucerne assembles three-dimensional works from the year 2009.

A publication is being released to accompany the exhibition.

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