

Qiu  
Shihua

Empty/ Not Empty  
28.3 - 31.5.2020



*Empty/ Not Empty*

Galerie Urs Meile is pleased to announce *Empty/ Not Empty*, Qiu Shihua's fourth appearance in our gallery's Beijing branch. The most comprehensive exhibition of his works in China to date displays oil on canvas as well as paper works spanning 25 years of his oeuvre with earlier pieces he painted in Beijing and Shenzhen until very recent ones he just finished in Sacramento.

In the 1980s Qiu Shihua visited France and studied the works of the Impressionists. Qiu underwent an incredible development in the course of the 1990s, moving from traditional landscape painting to find a very personal style. An un-trained eye might find in his work little more than an almost unmodulated white, but his minimalist style of painting has nothing in common with the forms of expression from Western art history. The paintings seem Impressionist, but the Impressionists' ideals - the view from out-side, the pure appearance of the outside world on the retina - are the opposite of Qiu's. Rather, he represents the landscape - or what is left of it - as an expression of the soul. Nor are his white paintings obligated to abstraction or monochromatism. Qiu certainly abstracts from reality, goes to the limits in reducing the recognizable world, but it is always there somewhere; all his picture remain figurative. They are radical within the category of landscape painting. They follow no systematic, conceptual search for the fundamentals of painting, of the kind Robert Rauschenberg pursues in his works, for example. Qiu Shihua's paintings originate in traditional Chinese landscape painting.

The painting seems to be behind a veil. The landscape reveals itself gradually to the concentrated and patient viewer. Like classical Chinese landscapes, Qiu Shihua's pictures are exempt from the laws of central perspective. There is no recognizable center, neither a horizontal nor a vertical axis, no left or right, perhaps not even an up and a down. In a few brief sentences the artist describes his "philosophy" - and in this case the term really is justified. "For me north, south, east, or west count for nothing, nor do red, yellow, or blue, and certainly not past, present, or future. With endless emptiness in the heart there is neither coming nor going; they are one and the same. So are my works too: simple and pale, calm and empty. All being and non-being is hidden in them, completely self-contained. In the zero condition the original countenance of the soul reveals itself." <sup>1</sup>

Like the old Chinese masters, Qiu paints an inner world. The atmospheric perspective invites the eyes to roam over emptiness; a roving that permits nothing more than a diaphanous, mystical presentiment of another world. "According to Qiu, his working process grounds on the premise of forgetting about such painterly matters as motive, technique, emotion, thus achieving pure sensuality in the void space from which the image must emerge rather than construct itself." <sup>2</sup> In their method, Qiu Shihua's white paintings follow a tradition that goes back more than a thousand years, but in their appearance they seem radically modern, even provocative. They are timeless, offer a wealth of perceptive possibilities, and can be regarded as one of the most interesting and certainly least expected contributions to painting in the past decades.

The gallery fully aligns with the current restrictions regarding COVID-19. The exhibition can therefore be visited by appointment only until further notice. For everyone who will not be able to see the show in Beijing, we take great pleasure to announce that it will travel to Switzerland and is planned to be on show from September through November.

Qiu Shihua was born in 1940 in Sichuan Province, but today divides his time between Beijing, Shenzhen and Sacramento. In 1999 Kunsthalle Basel arranged his first monographic exhibition outside China and since then his work has been included in numerous collective and solo exhibitions in worldwide such as The New York Kunsthalle, USA (2001), Kunstmuseum in Berne, Switzerland (2005), Berkley Art Museum, USA (2008) Hamburger Bahnhof, Germany (2012), Metropolitan Museum of Art, USA (2013), Vancouver Art Gallery, Canada (2014), De Warande, Belgium (2018).

His works have also been presented at the Sao Paulo Biennale in Brazil (1996), at the Venice Biennale (1999), and also at the Shanghai Biennale (2004).

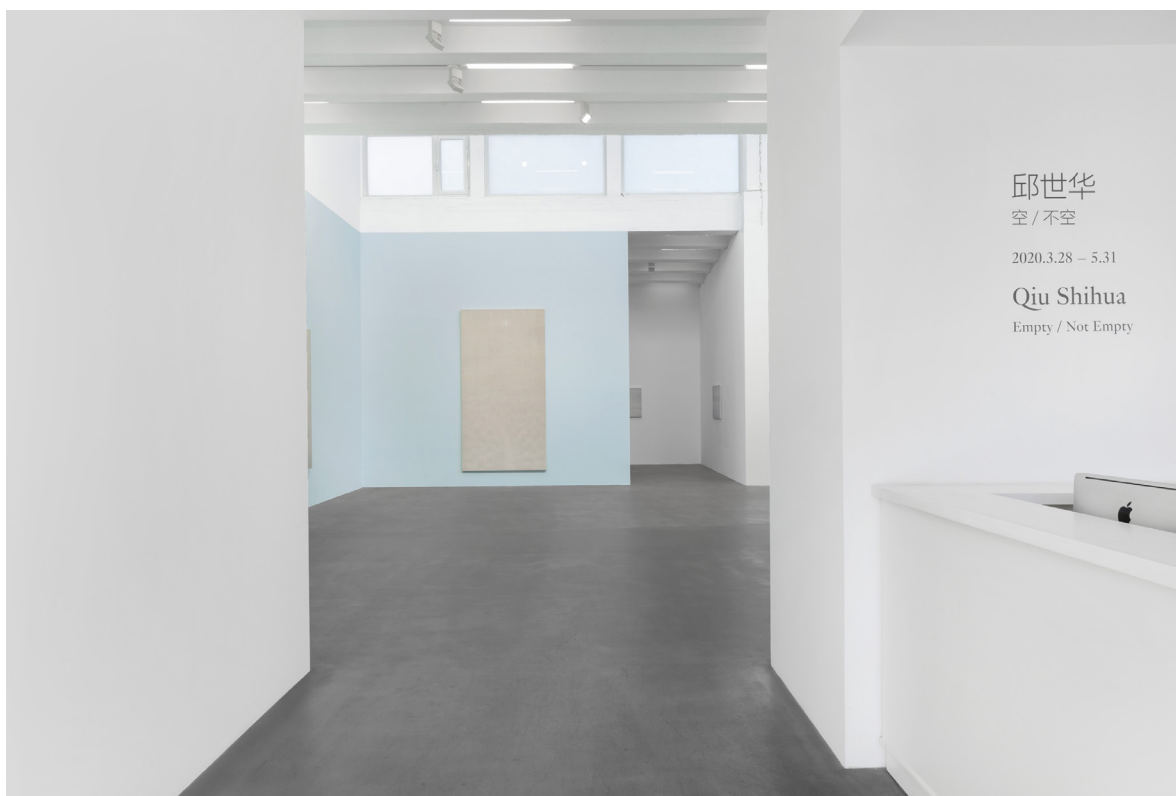
(The above text includes excerpts from Bernhard Fibichers text for the catalogue *Mahjong, Contemporary Chinese Art from the Sigg Collection*. Fibicher, B., Frehner, M. (Eds.) (2005). Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz. P. 240)

<sup>1</sup> Qiu Shihua, from a text supplied to the author in January 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Max Wechsler, "The Image as an Epiphany: On the Paintings of Qiu Shihua," on the website of Galerie Urs Meile, Lucerne, <http://galerie-meile.ch/QiuShiHua/QiuShiHua.htm> (accessed March 29, 2005).

# GALERIEURSMEILE 麦勒画廊

Exhibition views, *Empty / Not Empty*, Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing, China, 28.3 - 31.5.2020



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Qiu Shihua, *Untitled*, 2016 (Qiu Sh54688), oil on canvas, 128 x 234 cm



Qiu Shihua, *Untitled*, 2006 (Qiu Sh54690), oil on canvas, 60 × 141 cm



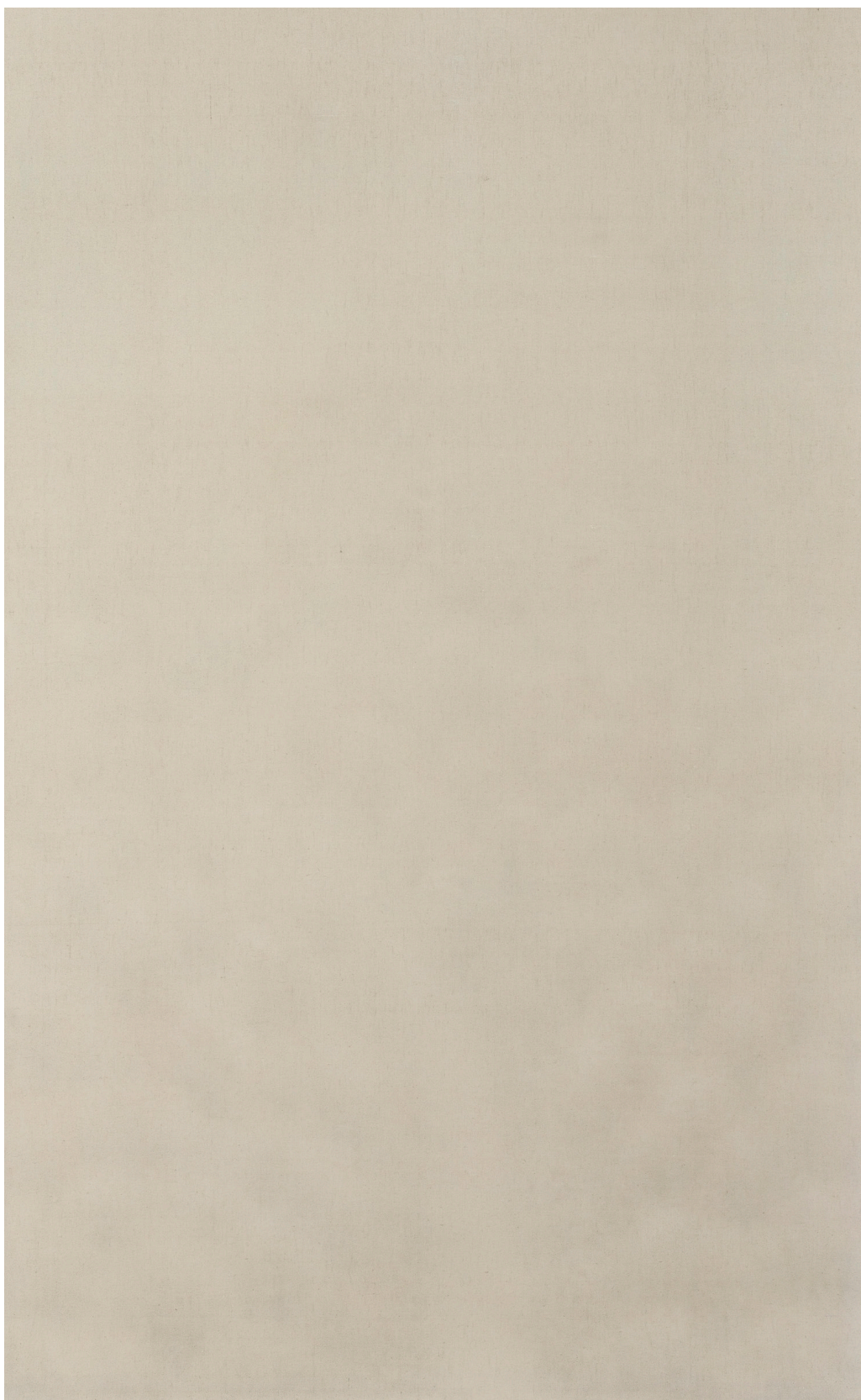
Qiu Shihua, *Untitled*, 2017 (Qiu Sh54699), oil on canvas, 123 × 233 cm



Qiu Shihua, *Untitled*, 2017 (Qiu Sh54687), oil on canvas, 150 x 295 cm



Qiu Shihua, *Untitled*, 2008 (Qiu Sh54692), oil on canvas, 292 x 150 cm



Qiu Shihua, *Untitled*, 2007 (Qiu Sh54693), oil on canvas, 288 × 150 cm



Qiu Shihua, *Untitled*, 2018 (Qiu Sh54708), oil on canvas, 70 x 110 cm



Qiu Shihua, *Untitled*, 2009 (Qiu Sh54710), oil on canvas, 70 x 110 cm



Qiu Shihua, *Untitled*, 1997 (Qiu Sh54713), oil on canvas, 70 x 90 cm



Qiu Shihua, *Untitled*, 2017 (Qiu Sh54707), oil on canvas, 70 x 110 cm



Qiu Shihua, *Untitled*, 2009 (Qiu Sh54710), oil on canvas, 70 x 110 cm



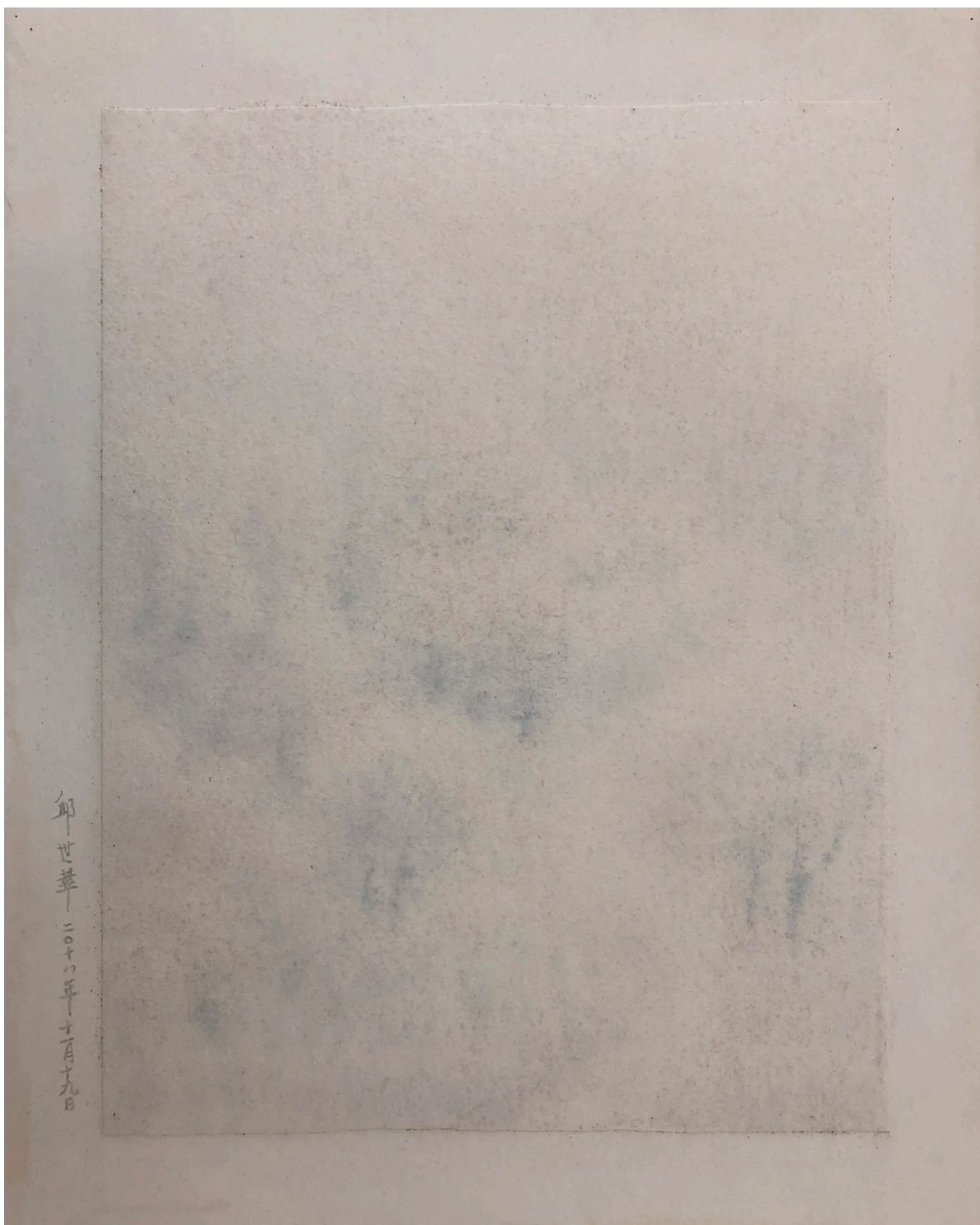
Qiu Shihua, *Untitled*, 2009 (Qiu Sh54710), oil on canvas, 70 x 110 cm



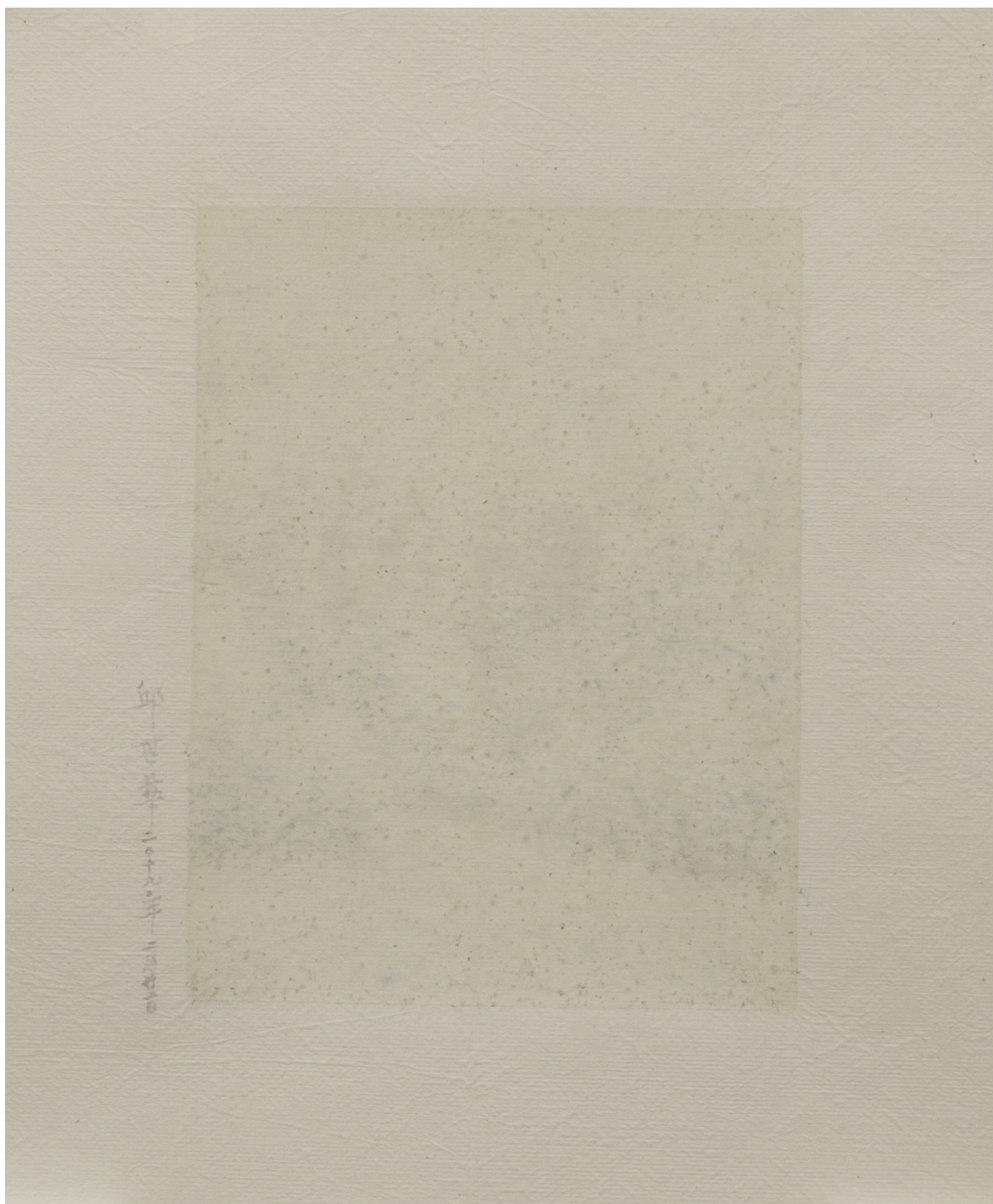
Qiu Shihua, *Untitled*, 1994 (Qiu Sh54719), oil on canvas, 50 × 40 cm



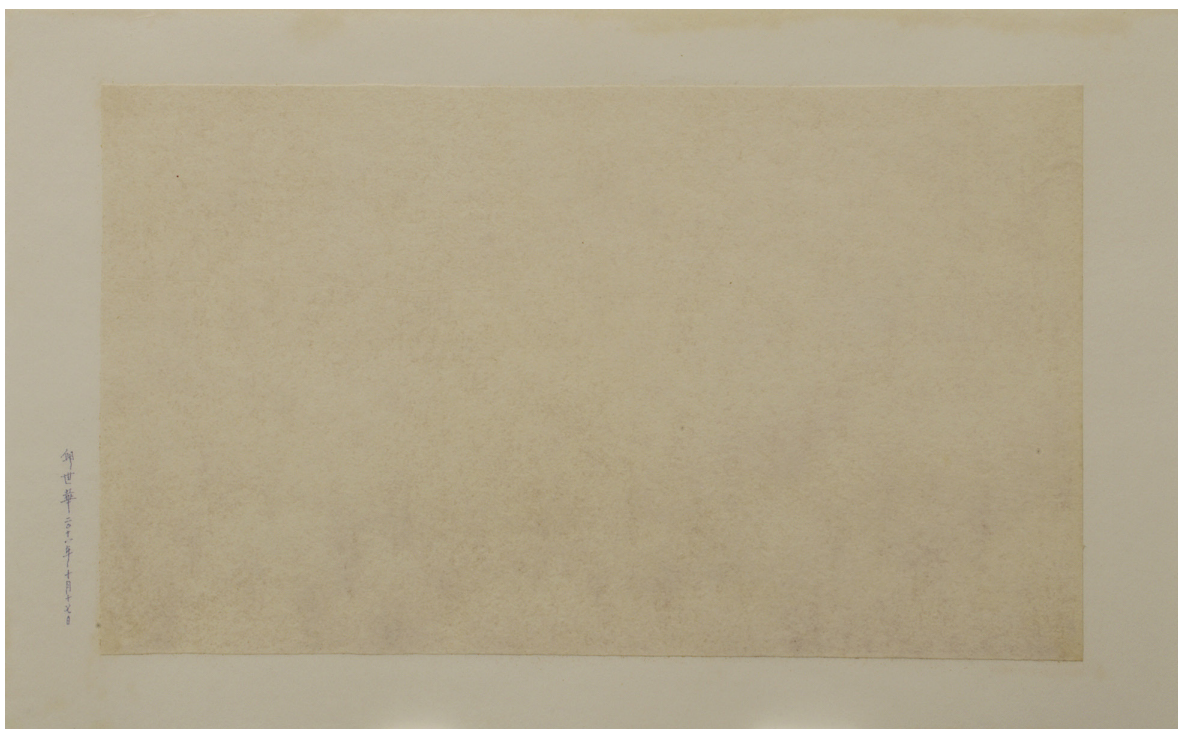
Qiu Shihua, *Untitled*, 2015 (Qiu Sh54720), oil on canvas, 50 × 40 cm



Qiu Shihua, *Untitled*, 2009 (Qiu Sh54710), watercolor and oil on paper, 70 x 110 cm



Qiu Shihua, *Untitled*, 2019 (Qiu Sh54773), watercolor and oil on paper, 30.5 × 23 cm



Qiu Shihua, *Untitled*, 2018 (Qiu Sh54780), watercolor and oil on paper, 51.4 × 87.6 cm

# Qiu Shihua

1940 born in Zizhong, Sichuan Province, China  
lives and works in Beijing and Shenzhen, China

## Selected Solo Exhibitions

- 2020 Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing-Lucerne, Lucerne, Switzerland  
*Empty / Not Empty*, Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing-Lucerne, Beijing, China
- 2019 *Landscapes*, Galerie Karsten Greve, St. Moritz, Switzerland
- 2018 *scheinbar: nichts - Bildwelten von QIU SHIHUA im Dialog*, Situation Kunst (für Max Imdahl), Museum unter Tage, Bochum, Germany
- 2017 *Qiu Shihua*, Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing-Lucerne, Beijing, China
- 2015 *Aura of Nature*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, Germany
- 2013 *Qiu Shihua – New Works*, Galerie Urs Meile Lucerne, Lucerne, Switzerland  
St. Moritz Art Masters Winter Exhibition, Reformierte Dorfkirche, St. Moritz, Switzerland
- 2012 *Qiu Shihua. Landschaft, Licht und Stille*, Museum Pfalzgalerie Kaiserslautern, Kaiserslautern, Germany  
*Qiu Shihua*, Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing-Lucerne, Beijing, China  
*Qiu Shihua. White Field*, Hamburger Bahnhof, Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin, Germany
- 2010 *QIU SHIHUA*, Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing-Lucerne, Beijing, China
- 2009 *Qiu Shihua – New Works*, Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing-Lucerne, Lucerne, Switzerland
- 2008 *Qiu Shihua*, Shanghai Gallery of Art, Shanghai, China
- 2007 *Qiu Shi-Hua*, Galerie Luis Campaña, Cologne, Germany
- 2006 Galerie 75 Faubourg, Paris, France
- 2005 Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing-Lucerne, Lucerne, Switzerland  
*Qiu Shi-Hua*, Galerie Luis Campaña, Cologne, Germany  
*Insight: Paintings by Qiu Shihua*, Chambers Fine Art, New York, USA  
*Vision of Fields by Qiu Shihua*, Hanart TZ Gallery, Hong Kong, China
- 2004 *Qiu Shihua*, Künstlerverein Malkasten, Düsseldorf, Germany
- 2003 Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing-Lucerne, Lucerne, Switzerland  
Galerie Luis Campaña, Cologne, Germany
- 2002 *White Landscape*, Prüss & Ochs Gallery, Berlin, Germany
- 2001 *Landscape – Painting on the Edge of Visibility*, Galleria OTSO, Espoo, Finland  
The New York Kunsthalle, New York, USA
- 2000 Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing-Lucerne, Lucerne, Switzerland  
*Landscape – Painting on the Edge of Visibility*, Galerie Rudolfinum, Prague, Czech Republic;  
Galerie Sternberk, Sternberk, Czech Republic
- 1999 *Qiu Shi-hua*, Kunsthalle Basel, Basel, Switzerland

1997 Hanart TZ Gallery, Hong Kong, China  
Hanart (Taipei) Gallery, Taipei, Taiwan

1995 Hanart TZ Gallery, Hong Kong, China

1991 Hanart TZ Gallery, Hong Kong, China  
Hanart (Taipei) Gallery, Taipei, Taiwan

#### Selected Group Exhibitions

2018 *Lolo's Entanglements*, De Warande, Turnhout, Belgium

2016 *Ink and the Mind: Ink and Phenomenology. Exhibition No.2*, Ink Studio, Beijing, China  
*M+ Sigg Collection: Four Decades of Chinese Contemporary Art*, ArtisTree, Hong Kong, China

2014 *Unscrolled: Reframing Tradition in Chinese Contemporary Art*, Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, Canada  
*DIALOGUE5:5*, Kunstmuseum Bonn, Bonn, Germany

2013 *Building Bridges – Zeitgenössische Kunst aus China*, Wolfsberg, Ermatingen, Switzerland  
*Blank to Blank – Inframince Exhibition II* Soka Art Center, Beijing, China  
*Ink Art: Past as Present in Contemporary China*, The Metropolitan Museum Of Art, New York, USA

2012 *Duchamp' Inframince in Painting – First Zhuangzi International Conference Parallel Exhibition*, Yuan Art Museum, Beijing, China  
*Weltsichten. Landschaft in der Kunst vom 17. Jahrhundert bis zum 21. Jahrhundert*, Kunstmuseum Dieselkraftwerk Cottbus, Cottbus, Germany  
*Landschaft als Weltsicht*, Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz, Chemnitz, Germany  
*Self-essence Naturalism*, Today Art Museum, Beijing, China

2011 *Weltsichten. Landschaft in der Kunst seit dem 17. Jahrhundert*, Museum Wiesbaden, Wiesbaden, Germany  
*Weltsichten. Landschaft in der Kunst seit dem 17. Jahrhundert*, Kunsthalle zu Kiel, Kiel, Germany  
*Shanshui – Poetry Without Sound? Landscape in Chinese Contemporary Art*, Kunstmuseum Luzern, Luzern, Switzerland  
*Collectors' Stage: Asian Contemporary Art from Private Collections*, Singapore Art Museum (SAM), Singapore

2010 *Weltsichten. Landschaft in der Kunst seit dem 17. Jahrhundert*, Situation Kunst, Bochum, Germany

2009 *Linien stiller Schönheit*, DKM Museum, Duisburg, Germany  
*Yi Pai – Century Thinking*, Today Art Museum, Beijing, China  
*Black and White – Qiu Shibua and Yang Liming*, Found Museum, Beijing, China

2008 *Accumulation – The new Spirit of the East*, Asia Art Center, 798, Beijing, China  
*Mahjong: Contemporary Chinese Art from the Sigg Collection*, The University of California, Berkeley Art Museum, Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley, USA  
*RED Aside – Chinese Contemporary Art of the Sigg Collection*, Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, Spain  
*Yi School: Thirty Years of Chinese Abstract Art*, Palma, Barcelona and Madrid, Spain  
*Qi Yun – The International Travelling Exhibition of Chinese Abstract Art*, China Square Gallery, New York, USA

2007 *Mahjong – Chinesische Gegenwartskunst aus der Sammlung Sigg*, Museum der Moderne, Salzburg, Austria  
*Reboot – The Third Chengdu Biennial*, Chengdu Contemporary Art Museum, Chengdu, China  
*Qi Yun – The International Travelling Exhibition of Chinese Abstract Art*, OCT Contemporary Art Terminal of He Xiangnin Museum, Shenzhen, China; Art Now Gallery, Beijing, China; Hong Kong Artist Commune, Hong Kong, China  
*Landscape & Memory II*, Haines Gallery, San Francisco, USA  
*Art from China – Collection Uli Sigg*, Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil  
*The Year of the Golden Pig – Contemporary Chinese Art from the Sigg Collection*, Lewis Glucksman

## GALERIE URS MEILE 麦勒画廊

- Gallery, Cork University College, Cork, Ireland  
*Inferno in Paradise – 10 Years Alexander Ochs Galleries Berlin / Beijing*, Alexander Ochs Galleries  
Berlin | Beijing, Berlin, Germany  
*Idilio I*, DA2 – Domus Artium 2002, Salamanca, Spain  
*White Out*, Künstlerhaus Palais Thurn und Taxis, Bregenz, Austria; Stadtgalerie Saarbrücken,  
Saarbrücken, Germany
- 2006 *The Sublime is Now*, Museum Franz Gertsch, Burgdorf, Switzerland  
*Mahjong – Chinesische Gegenwartskunst aus der Sammlung Sigg*, Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg,  
Germany
- 2005 *Pictorial DNA Made in China*, Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing-Lucerne, Lucerne, Switzerland  
*Mahjong – Chinesische Gegenwartskunst aus der Sammlung Sigg*, Kunstmuseum Bern, Berne, Switzerland  
*Cina. Prospettive d'Arte Contemporanea / China: As Seen by Contemporary Chinese Artists*, Provincia di  
Milano, Spazio Oberdan, Milan, Italy  
*What is Realism*, Albermarie Gallery, London, UK
- 2004 5th Shanghai Biennale, Shanghai, China  
Shanghai Biennale, Shanghai, China  
*Le Printemps de Chine*, CRAC Alsace, Altkirch, France
- 2003 *Einbildung – Das Wahrnehmen in der Kunst*, Kunsthhaus Graz, Graz, Austria  
*New Zone – Chinese Art*, Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, Poland
- 2002 *China – Tradition und Moderne*, Museum Ludwig Galerie Oberhausen, Oberhausen, Germany  
*Welcome China!*, Gallery Soardi, Nice, France
- 2001 *Take Part II*, Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing-Lucerne, Lucerne, Switzerland  
*The Inward Eye: Transcendence in Contemporary Art*, Contemporary Art Museum, Houston, USA  
2nd Berlin Biennale, Berlin, Germany  
*Take Part I*, Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing-Lucerne, Lucerne, Switzerland
- 2000 *Our Chinese Friends*, ACC Galerie and Galerie der Bauhaus-Universität (in collaboration with  
Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing-Lucerne), Weimar, Germany
- 1999 *d'APERTutto*, La Biennale di Venezia, 48. Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte, Venice, Italy  
*Natural Reality*, Ludwig Forum, Aachen, Germany
- 1998 *Eight Chinese Artists*, Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing-Lucerne, Lucerne, Switzerland  
Asian Fine Art Gallery, Berlin, Germany
- 1996 *China*, Kunst Museum Bonn, Bonn, Germany; Künstlerhaus Wien, Vienna, Austria; Art Museum  
Singapore, Singapore; Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, Poland; Haus der Kulturen der  
Welt, Berlin, Germany  
*Qiu Shihua*, The 23rd São Paulo Art Biennial (special guest), São Paulo, Brazil
- 1995 *China's New Art Post – 1989*, University of Oregon Museum of Art, Portland, USA
- 1992 The First Annual Exhibition of Chinese Oil Painting, Hong Kong, China
- 1986 *Chinese Art Festival*, La Defense, Paris, France  
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