

Tang Contemporary Art Seoul

Xu Qu Solo Exhibition: The Central Axis

2023.7.22-8.26

Curator : Jeeun Hong

Tang Contemporary Art Seoul announced they will host Xu Qu solo exhibition at Seoul Gallery Space on July 23, 2023. This is Xu Qu's fifth solo exhibition in collaboration with Tang Contemporary Art following the exhibitions "Rejuvenation," "Straight Line," "A Hit," and "Mutable Forms and Immutability Consciousness." Xu Qu is expected to present a new work of his *Maze* series through this exhibition.

You can find meanings from Xu Qu's works within the maze of this work and the maze's extended outside. A 'maze' refers to a path that branches off in a dizzying array of directions, making it difficult to exit once entered. A maze is dissimilar to a labyrinth, with only one path, in that you can return to where you started and eventually choose the right path even if you make a wrong turn at any forked way. The journey of constant exploration of different directions and points of view to find the exit of a maze promotes understanding of the complex maze space. Through this journey of discovery, Xu Qu invites viewers to expand spatial and temporal experiences, transforming how they view artworks, and further proposes expanding how they view the world through artworks.

Xu Qu added one more feature, color, to his visual maze that elicits a unique visual, aesthetic experience. Intersecting colors create depth and perspective, forming a contrast against simplified lines and drawing the tension between reality and fantasy to maximize the artist's intention. By reorganizing conceptual and immaterial space and time, Xu Qu reconfigures the space of artistic production. He then invites the audience into a performative space, personally participating in expanding this artistic space in anticipation of discovering a new point of view. The artist reveals that his understanding of the painting medium is to find deeper spaces by immersing himself in the exploration and performance of flat surfaces. He further states that he considers the essence of painting to transform the way of viewing artworks.

When looking at Xu Qu's maze works, you can identify in some of his works one noticeable difference from traditional mazes: They have a 'central axis.' The central axis is a structure commonly found in Beijing. Old buildings in Beijing emphasize symmetry and balance, arranged around a central axis. Through this central axis structure, we can understand how the Chinese people think about politics and culture. The 'central center' carries a metaphor for coexisting phenomena in politics, culture, and society. Xu Qu structures a new image through his attempt to create a symmetrical representation by incorporating the central axis into a conventional complex form of a maze. In addition, he induces an experience where views and thoughts spread out from the central axis, a reference for ideas and cultures.

By presenting a new perspective rather than an outcome, Xu Qu's work questions the values and thoughts that will be brought to us in an era of conflicting aesthetic experiences and empathetic differences.

In this exhibition, you can also meet another series of works titled *Exercise* and *Feed the Eagle-Orange and Purple* by Xu Qu, who has contemplated the concepts of time and space through the representation of human figures in color gradients.

Xu Qu encourages viewers to come closer to his works in this exhibition and get immersed in the delicate texture of the materials and the flow of gaze guided by the artworks. He also asks viewers to step back from the works to feel the depth of space created by the changes in color and invite the works into their own space to experience expanding art through narrative thinking.