

Zhao Zhao

Curator: Cui Cancan

2021.3.20 – 5.5

Tang Contemporary Art Beijing 1st Space

Tang Contemporary Art is proud to announce the opening of Zhao Zhao's solo exhibition "Zhao Zhao" on Mar 20, 2021, in the first space of Beijing. This exhibition is curated by Cui Cancan.

Preface

Cui Cancan

If we can still consider "the present" a complete world, then its spirit is certainly fractured and ambiguous. Different systems, multiple standards, and disparate values have greatly shaken familiar traditions and arts.

As a key figure in the new generation of artists, Zhao Zhao has pioneered a new way of working. His artistic vision is extremely broad, with his work and life spanning many different disciplines. From founding a fashion label, designing for other brands, operating a space, and editing books to collecting ancient artifacts and engaging in an exacting study of lifestyles, Zhao Zhao breaks the boundaries between conceptual artist, fashion designer, and celebrity and smooths over the cracks between art and life.

Bizarre yet concrete work can overshadow the uniqueness of art, but new work also redefines art and makes it incredible. Zhao Zhao engages with a wide range of art, including two-thousand-year-old Han figurines, limited-edition sneakers, a lost Tocharian language, white cotton, marble bamboo ladders, convenient instant noodles, shattered glass, a Louis Vuitton bag, and Buddhist charms. These works of art are wide-ranging and miscellaneous, involving the typical trends and scenes of our era. Zhao Zhao applies and expands the possibilities of multiple mediums without reservations, engaging with many different areas—artifacts, books, art, design, texts, pictures, products, and advertisements—that provide a window into our complex world.

Zhao Zhao has created art that belongs to this era but could also resist it. His work is traditional yet contemporary, common yet literary, scholarly yet commercial, consumable yet eternal, regional yet global. It is sometimes extremely precise and there is only a "yes" or "no," but it is also sometimes vague, something boring and unrelated.

In this exhibition, Zhao Zhao combats chaos with chaos and represents complexity with complexity. He does not offer a single viewpoint or cross-section, and he certainly does not present that heavy critique of reality that he has in past exhibitions, a seemingly real conceptual thread. Zhao Zhao presents this era, which cannot be described, its multiple layered realities, and its endless spread. Specious conclusions make the world complicated and confusing. They are nearer to the truth than refinement and summarization, such that, behind these works of art, we find it difficult to clearly articulate the lack of substance under a hard surface or, in contrast, to see the profound vision behind the softness.

This is an art world that feels unfamiliar; here, art seems ambiguous, empty, and dull, but it makes a show of seriousness. However, how can art that has lost its ambiguity, emptiness, and dullness become devoid of meaning? Andy Warhol once said that department stores were kind of like museums, and today, if you look closely, the entire world is a museum.

About Artist

Zhao Zhao was born in 1982 in Xinjiang, China, and he currently lives and works in Beijing and Los Angeles. In his art, he engages with real subjects in multiple mediums and plays with art forms, emphasizing an exploration of the relationship between the individual and the rest of society. His work is developed around the subtle emotional changes that take place as we are confronted with diverse cultural influences. He brings together the expressive methods of contemporary art and traditional culture to create metaphors for people's living circumstances and modern society's real conditions in a globalized world. His work also reflects his attitudes toward the coexistence of collective and individual ideals.

In recent years, Zhao Zhao's bold, radical artistic practice has attracted international attention. He has presented solo exhibitions and personal projects at the Alexander Ochs Gallery (Berlin), Carl Kostyál (Stockholm), Roberts & Tilton (Los Angeles), Chambers Gallery (New York), Mizuma and One Gallery (Beijing), Lin & Lin Gallery (Taipei), Tang Contemporary Art (Hong Kong), Tang Contemporary Art (Beijing), China Art Archives and Warehouse (Beijing), Song Art Museum (Beijing), and Fusion Art Center (Beijing). His work has been shown in group exhibitions and collected by many institutions, including MoMA PS1 (New York), the Tampa Museum of Art (Tampa), Pinchuk Art Center (Kiev), Groninger Museum (Groningen), the Museum of Asian Art (Berlin), Hamburger Bahnhof Museum for Contemporary Art (Berlin), Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea (Milan), MAXXI National Museum of 21st Century Art (Rome), the DSL Collection (Paris), Castellón Contemporary Art Space (Castellón), the White Rabbit Gallery (Sydney), M+ (Hong Kong), the Minsheng Art Museum (Beijing), the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (Beijing), the New Century Art Foundation (Beijing), Taikang Space (Beijing), Luxelakes · A4 Art Museum (Chengdu), Minsheng Art Museum (Shanghai), the Museum of Contemporary Art (Shanghai), Start Museum (Shanghai), Ming Contemporary Art Museum (Shanghai), Tianjin Art Museum (Tianjin), the Hubei Museum of Art (Wuhan), the He Xiangning Art Museum (Shenzhen), Wanlin Art Museum at Wuhan University (Wuhan), the Wuzhen Contemporary Art Exhibition 2019 (Wuzhen), and the Yokohama Triennale (Yokohama).

He has developed artistic collaborations with Louis Vuitton, Land Rover, Nike, Vans, Vervennet, and other brands.

In 2019, Zhao Zhao won the Artist of the Year Award at the Thirteenth Award of Art China (AAC). In 2017, his piece Project Taklamakan was selected as the poster and catalog cover image for the Yokohama Triennale. That same year, Zhao Zhao was named one of China's top 10 artists by CoBo and he won the Young Artist of the Year Nomination Award at the Eleventh Award of Art China (AAC). In 2014, Modern Painters named Zhao Zhao one of the world's top 25 artists to watch.

About Curator

Cui Cancan is an active Chinese independent curator and critic.

He has won CCAA (Chinese Contemporary Art Award) Art Review Award for Youth, Critics' Award in Chinese contemporary art by YISHU, Annual Exhibition Award by Art Power 100, Nominee for Lincoln Curator Prize by TANC Asia Prize, The Best Artist Solo Exhibition of the Year Award by Chinese Contemporary Art News, Best Exhibition Award by Gallery Week Beijing, Annual Curator Award by Art Bank, et cetera.

Since 2012, he has curated almost 100 major exhibitions, including group exhibitions like Hei Qiao Night Way (2013), Rural Wash, Cut and Blow-dry(2013), FUCKOFF II (2013), Unlived by What is Seen (2014), Between the 5th and 6th Ring Road in Beijing (2015), The Decameron (2016), Rip it Up (2017), Spring Festival Projects (2018), The Curation Workshop (2019) and Nine-Tiered(2020). He has curated artists' solo exhibitions such as Ai Weiwei, Bao Xiaowei, Chen Danqing, Chen Yufan, Chen Yujun, Feng Lin, Han Dong, He Yunchang, Huang Yishan, Jiang Bo, Li Binyuan, Liu Gangshun, Liu Jianhua, Li Qing, Li Zhanyang, Ding Muer, Ma Ke, Mao Yan, Qin Qi, Sui Jianguo, Shijiezi Art Museum, Shi Jinsong, Shen Shaomin, Tan Ping, Wang Qingsong, Xie Nanxing, Xia Xiaowan, Xia Xing, Xiao Yu, Xu Zhongmin, Xu Xiaoguo, Zong Ning, Polit-Sheer-Form, Zhang Yue and Zhao Zhao et cetera.