

Yan Jingzhou: All Around Buster Town

Curator: Sherry Wang

2024.1.5 – 2024.2.28

Tang Contemporary Art, Beijing Headquarters Gallery Space

Tang Contemporary Art is pleased to announce the presentation of Yan Jingzhou's latest solo exhibition, "All Around Buster Town", on 5 January 2024 at 4pm at its Beijing Headquarters Gallery Space. Curated by Sherry Wang, the exhibition will feature 15 new works by the artist to be completed in 2023.

The narrative in literature, as a distinctive discourse system, is based on real life. Through logical coherence, description, lyricism, and interpretation, it creates a distance between fiction and objective reality. The creative inspiration for this exhibition's works originates from Yan Jingzhou's journey to the UK. However, the imagery of British elements goes beyond regional characteristics. Much like accomplished science fiction writers and film directors, Yan Jingzhou, through the creation of an alternative world, brings to light historical or contemporary truths that often elude conventional narratives.

Yan Jingzhou's creations are consistently rich with imagination. His unique perspective, akin to a distorted mirror, reflects an apparently similar yet exaggerated infinite world within the confines of a finite frame. In the town of "Buster" in the fictional world constructed by Yan Jingzhou, most characters still possess the classic characteristics of the "Old Buster." The difference lies in Yan Jingzhou's artistic iteration, expanding from a focus on specific character images to a more extensive depiction of various domains through the technique of fictional narrative. One could say that Buster permeates every nook and cranny of the town. Essentially, Buster and the town can be situated in any corner of the world.

In the construction and portrayal of scenes, Yan Jingzhou exhibits a more precise and vivid mastery. He skillfully intertwines reality and imagination through metaphorical techniques, reflecting the authenticity of life and reconstructing a colorful world. In the town of Buster, seemingly ordinary scenes reflect the humorous aspects of everyday life. The simple tone both highlights the charm of the characters and contrasts with the bitterness of life. The narratives within the town can unfold in diverse directions, accommodating individuals of varying identities and colors. The plot may feature straightforward actions or embrace a diverse amalgamation of characters and settings, transitioning from a semi-realistic portrayal to a novel aesthetic creation and narrative expression.

In front of the green dessert shop in the West district, a police officer holding doughnuts in both hands unexpectedly locks eyes with a thief who, in disguise, is attempting to slip away. At a bar in the North district's nightlife scene, a bartender with a face covered in mayonnaise casts a sidelong glance at a drunken patron lying down. The youngster peddling chewing gum on the diagonal street in the West district during the day morphs into a playful ghost reveling in the East district at night. Around a long table, individuals of different skin tones, each with a distinct expression, gaze at the baked beans held by the first person. In a fast-food restaurant, two adults are distributing three kinds of condiments to seven children, and so forth. Countless stories are unfolding in the town—upper and lower districts, the sky, dinner parties, exams, streets, crows, friends, lovers, and mayonnaise. Although seemingly whimsical, these narratives transcend the peaks built from chance and individual facts, eloquently narrating the distances and linguistic nuances between different cultural entities.

Whether through literary discourse or artistic imagery, the portrayed world, although not a replica of reality, holds the potential to unveil the inherent meaning of societal realities on a more profound level. Yan Jingzhou intricately rearranges the dynamics between individuals and their environment, dismantling the barriers of diverse identities. He deliberately blurs conventional emotional experiences, breaking down barriers between different identities, and metaphorically expressing the complex regional relationships in the current real context. The vibrant colors and nuanced brushstrokes intricately enrich the dimensions of the artwork, mitigating the inherent tension between opposing elements. The ambiance crafted through the interplay of individualized characters and background details is both comical and delightful. This narrative tension, brimming with storytelling allure, dynamically captures the viewer's attention, urging them to scrutinize specific elements and ponder whether the characters and scenes convey a distinct sense of direction. The overall narrative transmutes weighty subjects into a relaxed, free-flowing form, while the freeze-framing of fortuitous moments amplifies the emotional intensity and vividness of the images. Here, the art of subtle narration supplants the tension of overt viewpoints, transforming into an exploration of beginnings and subsequent developments.

About Artist

Yan Jingzhou, born in 1995 in Handan, Hebei province, China. He now lives and works in Beijing. 2014–2018 Studied at Hebei Normal University majoring in Department of Oil Painting College of Art and Design. 2019–2022 Studied at the China Central Academy of Fine Arts majoring in The Department of Oil Painting. Yan Jingzhou's works are dedicated to the exploration of modernity from a personal perspective. The protagonists in the paintings are grotesque and distorted dolls. The absurd plays are full of interesting and slightly poignant stories. The plot is usually joyous and worldly, even a little boring and vulgar. Material inspiration usually comes from the relaxed and casual life of the public. When you savor it carefully, you can always detect a touch of absurd irony in dark humor. This arrangement of themes possesses unspeakable repressed desires and ignorant symbolism; there are also some light flashes — a Chinese way of thinking with generational influence from the 90s—creating a sense of boundary that is free from the real world. While maintaining a sense of alienation, Yan expresses the individual's doubts and introspection about real life through the momentary gaze of the absurd puppet.

About Curator

Sherry Wang, born in 1996 in Wuhan, Hubei province, China. Graduated from Hubei Academy of Fine Arts with a bachelor's degree in Art Management; graduated with a master's degree in Art Museum and Gallery Studies from the University of Leicester in the UK. Currently working in the Exhibition Department of Tang Contemporary Art in Beijing.

She has participated in, planned, and coordinated multiple large, medium, and small exhibition projects both domestic and abroad, including: The Artist is present: the 15 Years of AWARD OF ART CHINA, Luxury and Quaintness—Exhibition of Royal Vienna and Royal Vienna Style Porcelains, Painting: Feel the Pulse of the Time, Ancient Charm of the Wind—Exhibition of Artron on Refined Ancient Chinese Painting, "Jin Zhushan Plan" Exhibition, "Unchallenged" art exhibition, etc. Sherry Wang focuses on cutting-edge art styles with creative potential and expanding boundaries, committed to the research, curation, and practice of contemporary art ecology.