

Tang Contemporary Art presents:

Diary of Inner Inspiration : Wu Yi Solo Exhibition

Artist: Wu Yi

Curator: Fiona Lu

Exhibition Dates: 7 May - 11 June 2022

Venue: Tang Contemporary Art Bangkok

Opening Reception: Saturday, 7 May at 4:00 PM

Tang Contemporary Art is proud to announce the opening of "Diary of Inner Inspiration" , the latest solo exhibition by Chinese artist Wu Yi, curated by Fiona Lu, at Tang Contemporary Art's Bangkok space. The exhibition, held from 7 May to 11 June 2022, will lead us on an intellectual journey of the artist which mixes between daily realities and artist inner inspiration.

Diary of Inner Inspiration: Wu Yi Solo Exhibition

Often called a "painter's painter," Wu Yi is one of the most artistically gifted Chinese contemporary artists. For half a century, he has been one of the few artists who has successfully adapted traditional Chinese art into something more contemporary. He has always retained his academic foundation, even as he has attempted to transcend that tradition. He has passed through the imitation stage to achieve perfection in mediums that span oil painting, Chinese ink painting, and literary writing.

This exhibition will showcase 21 recent works from Wu Yi's *Dunhuang* series, including oil paintings and watercolors depicting Dunhuang Cave 98 and stories of the Buddha's previous incarnations. The show will also present a dozen oil sketches made in Prague, Aschaffenburg, and Beijing. In these works, Wu depicts the parts that move him the most: street scenes in Beijing, people in Prague, urban architecture in Aschaffenburg, and religious images in Dunhuang. In "Diary of Inner Inspiration", Wu Yi brings us on an intellectual journey that intermingles lived realities (nature) and artistic talent (inner inspiration), engaged in a historical dialogue with the artist Zhang Zao from the Tang dynasty. Most of Wu's works are small in scale, so that they can be more easily carried as he travels. This interesting Chinese painter has woven travel into his life, feelings, and work, so he has experienced diverse cultural landscapes and local ways of life. He completely immerses himself in everyday life wherever he is. Clusters of small paintings offer diaristic glimpses of his nomadic spirit.

Born into a family of artists, Wu Yi naturally possesses an astounding talent for painting. Jing Hao wrote that an artist must observe the appearance of a thing to uncover the truth of it. The Eastern sensibility in Wu's oil paintings reflects his distinctive character, displaying depth in the lightness. Flat, bright, and innocent, these paintings appear to fly. Wu reduces the number of visual elements in his work, invoking the concept of the void from Chinese ink painting. With this technique, he can capture the amusing and refined aspects of Dunhuang paintings, as well as the beauty and sensuality of Czech women. He has cleared away the dust of old literati painting and distanced himself from a very traditional mode of calligraphy and ink painting, in order to push his work from mere taste to the realm of style. The atmosphere in his work is light yet intriguing and subtle without being ethereal. The paintings simply convey the beauty of the earth and the delights of human life.

The parallel threads of nature and sketching, religion and tradition, have always run through Wu Yi's oil paintings and they have been brought together in this exhibition. He has made sketches in cities around the world, repeatedly referencing traditional modeling techniques and the texture of Eastern splendor. Only someone who is very sensitive to life yet deeply fascinated by it could depict the everyday in such a bright and cheerful way. In the gaps between cultures, he shows the essence of everyday life. Wu Yi's connection to the present is manifested in his travels, memories, realizations, and paintings. The essence of Chinese culture has offered him the chance to wonder at nature and represent his true intentions. His city sketches, like an unfinished diary, are reflections of a fascinating process.

In his commentary on painting, Shi Tao stresses the need for spirit, fluidity, and immersion in an artist's brushwork. Wu Yi's *Dunhuang* series reinterprets cultural heritage from the Sui, Tang, and Five Dynasties periods by imitating the spirit of these works. These modern representations of ancient painting techniques are flawless yet spontaneous, reflecting larger interactions between the individual and Dunhuang. Wu noted that Dunhuang after a sandstorm had a sense of unreality, and to reflect this feeling, his depictions of Dunhuang have a rarefied air and lack the heaviness often present in religious paintings. With simplified compositions and restrained brushwork, his paintings have a timeless beauty. Wu Yi has learned from the ancients and from nature, which has helped him to find his inner inspiration and develop a distinctive contemporary painting style that does not simply follow the trends.

Fiona Lu
April 25, 2022

About the Artist

Born in 1966, Changchun City, China.

Wu Yi now serves as associate professor at the mural painting department under Central Academy of Fine Arts, Graduate student Supervisor, Chief of Studio.4 Deputy director. The artist graduated from the department of traditional Chinese painting under Central Academy of Fine Arts, with a bachelor's degree in 1989 and he graduated from the department of traditional Chinese painting under Central Academy of Fine Arts, with master's degree with professor Lu Chen as tutor.

His selected and recent solo exhibitions include: "Prague", Song Art Museum, Beijing, China and "Portrait of a Scene", Tang Contemporary Art, Hong Kong, China, 2021; "Wu Yi's solo exhibition – XIUZHEN TU", XUN WAY Art Space, Shanghai, China, 2019; "A Carefree Excursion: Wu Yi Solo Exhibition", Hive Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China, 2014; "The summer of Prague", Galerie Vaclava Spaly, Prague, Czech, 2013. Artist selected group exhibition include: "Re-Jiangnan | Homepage: The Golden Age Never Gone", The Museum of Nanjing University of the Art, Nanjing, China, 2022; "The Curtain Call of Theater and the Return of Medium", MOFEIM, Qingdao, China, "Diversified Expressions—Contemporary Chinese Ink Art", Daqian Gallery, Beijing, China and "Family", Tong Gallery + Projects, Beijing, China, 2021.

Invited by Xinhua News Agency, Wu Yi drew the paintings for the cover of Japanese monthly magazine *Shorinji Kempo* published by the Mainichi Shimbun in 1992. He was selected in the List of the Powerful Chinese Modern Artists by *L'official Art* (2009) and (2014). Wu Yi's collection published by The American art publisher *TIMEZONE8* was first launched at Frankfurt Book Fair. He is the first Asian artist drawing the illustrations (2 volumes) for Laozi - *Tao Te Ching* in Czech version which has been included into the National Library collection.

Tang Contemporary Art

Tang Contemporary Art was established in 1997 in Bangkok, later establishing galleries in Beijing and Hong Kong. Tang Contemporary Art is fully committed to producing critical projects and exhibitions to promote Contemporary Chinese art regionally and worldwide, and encourage a dynamic exchange between Chinese artists and those abroad. Acting as one of the most progressive and critically driven exhibition spaces in China, the gallery strives to initiate dialogue between artists, curators, collectors and institutions working both locally and internationally. A roster of groundbreaking exhibitions has earned Tang Contemporary Art internationally renowned recognition, establishing its status as a pioneer of the contemporary art scene in Asia.

Tang Contemporary Art represents leading figures in Chinese art including Ai Weiwei, Huang Yongping, Shen Yuan, Wang Du, Liu Xiaodong, Yang Jiechang, Xia Xiaowan, Sun Yuan & Peng Yu, Yan Lei, Wang Yin, Wang Yuping, Yangjiang Group, Guo Wei, Zheng Guogu, Lin Yilin, He An, Zhao Zhao, Wang Yuyang, Weng Fen, Yang Yong, Xu Qu, Xu Xiaoguo, Ji Zhou, Cai Lei, Ling Jian, Liu Yujia, Zhu Jinshi, Qin Qi, Chen Yujun, Chen Yufan and Chen Wenbo, additionally collaborating with international artists such as H.H.Lim, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Sakarin Krue-On, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Adel Abdessemed, Dinh Q.Le, Michael Zelehoski, Jennifer Wen Ma, Rodel Tapaya, Natee Utarit and Heri Dono.

Location: Room 201 - 206, River City Bangkok, 23 Soi Charoenkrung 24, Talad Noi, Sampantawong, Bangkok, 10100

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