

The Fortuitous Encounter of a Sewing Machine and an Umbrella on a Dissecting Table

Exhibition Duration: September 3rd to October 29th 2017

Artist: Wang Haichuan

Venue: Art+ Shanghai Gallery

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Tuesday to Sunday, 10 AM - 7 PM (Closed Monday)

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About the Exhibition

For its September issues Art+ Shanghai Gallery prepared a solo show by a Chongqing-based artist Wang Haichuan ***“The Fortuitous Encounter of a Sewing Machine and an Umbrella on a Dissecting Table”***. Just as the exhibition title hints, Wang Haichuan boasts an accomplished oeuvre of engrossing and complex works in various media ranging from painting, installation, video, photography, and on-site artistic projects that are unified in their defiance of genre expectations, their eclectic imagery, and their examination of societal patterns and individual psyches.

Out of a wide range of Wang Haichuan’s works, ***“The Fortuitous Encounter of a Sewing Machine and an Umbrella on a Dissecting Table”*** mainly focuses on his paintings on various, sometimes least expected surfaces, beginning from commonplace canvas to rare Tibetan paper, wooden window frames and actual wood trunks.

The phrase: “as beautiful as the chance encounter of a sewing machine and an umbrella on an operating table” that André Breton discovered while reading “Les Chants de Maldoror” by a French 19th-century poet Comte de Lautréamont became an underlying principle of the surrealist movement. It commands a juxtaposition of two completely foreign realities that challenges an observer’s preconditioned perception of reality. This idea also defines the structure and aesthetics of Wang Haichuan’s paintings. Taken out of their common context, image-elements that appear on Wang Haichuan’s paintings are carefully selected to narrate the story that the artist intends to share with the viewer.

However, much of what is presented as purely impulsive or unconscious is actually strenuously revised and thought through.

The curator of the exhibition, Kang Xueru, also known as the editor-in-chief of a number of major art magazines, labelled Wang Haichuan's painting works as synthetic images comprised of miscellaneous imagery liberated of its original meaning, processed and reorganized by the artist into visual structures orders with new identities.

Wang Haichuan practices sourcing and collecting a wide range of imagery from high and low culture, figurative and abstract, portions of nature, colourful patterns, architectural sites and landscapes, portraying fragments of the most mundane as well as religious or even out-of-the-ordinary.

The artist begins from individual sensory experiences to record and expand on minute details, individual emotions, and memories of the everyday. He interweaves reality, dreams, and metaphors into discourse of his painting. However, the artist is not concerned with drowning himself into an excessive interpretation of each element he includes in the painting but instead he engages in creative practice of the story telling that continues to stay connected yet distant from the reality.

One may ask how to navigate through a vast collection of images so generously presented by the artist in this exhibition.

By trying hard to make sense of every single element we risk to get lost ourselves in the fragments and fail to see a bigger picture. Perhaps, sometimes it is meant to leave some things unencrypted, so that a new unique and unprecedented idea can arise for a story or even a novel.

About Wang Haichuan

Wang Haichuan (王海川) was born in 1968 in Jilin Province, China and currently lives and works between Beijing and Chongqing.

In 1997 he graduated from the Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, with a major in Visual arts. He used to work in the field of architecture and landscape for many years and became widely recognized as a visual artist. Wang Haichuan's works destroy the superficial characters of private lives and a harmonious society. He attempts to demolish the trace of reality and replace it with relics of time. His works were featured in solo-, as well as group-exhibitions and art fairs within China and abroad.

Wang Haichuan's installation *Seven Days* (2013) is exhibited at the 11th Shanghai Biennale "Why not Ask Again: Arguments, Counter-arguments, and Stories", which is curated by the Dheli-based artist and curatorial group Raqs Media Collective. This thematic exhibition explores the turbulences and transports of our time. His work features collected furniture that was discarded within seven days by former residents of copper manufactory workshops in Chongqing. It has its origins in Wang's Tongyuanju project, which was initially an art education plan to include the community into various art projects, that later turned into a series of works within this community in Chongqing, showing a typical example of China's urbanization process. Wang creates a sort of confession room — odd arrangements manifesting distances between life and power.

About curator Kang Xueru

Kang Xueru graduated from Sichuan Fine Arts Institute in 2008. Kang Xueru currently lives and works in Beijing. He was former editor-in-chief of *Art Time* (Nov. 2011-Apr. 2015), editor-in-chief of *Art Bank* (Jun. 2014-Apr, 2015), associate editor of *Art Time* (Nov. 2008-Apr. 2010), edit of *Art Map* (Aug. 2007-Apr. 2008). He founded an experimental space in Beijing in 2013: *We Wanted to Have a Space So There Will be a Space*. He curated group exhibitions including: *The Dilemmas of Painting* (Asia Art Center, Beijing, 2017), *The Cabinet of Wonder* (Hei Qiao Art District, Beijing, 2015).

About Art+ Shanghai Gallery

Founded in October 2007 and located along the Suzhou River within walking distance to Shanghai's famous Bund area, Art+ Shanghai Gallery is a dynamic art space dedicated to the exhibition, promotion, and development of Chinese contemporary art. Art+ Shanghai Gallery showcases a range of established and emerging contemporary artists from within China and abroad, stimulating and celebrating the diversity of the sprawling contemporary art scene. In addition to holding group and solo exhibitions, Art+ Shanghai Gallery offers art consultation services, hosts cultural events, and participates in international art fairs.