

PearlLam Galleries

Shanghai

Noises in Silence

ZHU XIAOHE solo exhibition

Exhibition Dates 11 January–7 March, 2020 Monday–Sunday, 10:30am–7pm

Venue Pearl Lam Galleries, 181 Middle Jiangxi Road, G/F, Shanghai, China 200002

Shanghai—Pearl Lam Galleries is pleased to present *Noises in Silence*, the first Shanghai solo exhibition of works by Chinese artist Zhu Xiaohe (b. 1956). The exhibition features 13 of the artist's abstract paintings created from 1999 to the present as well as two of his drawing series.

Zhu participated in the 1989 *China/Avant-Garde Exhibition* at the National Art Museum of China in Beijing. In the mid-1990s, he began to retreat from the mainstream and started to use short lines as the basic element in his works. Zhu's paintings are characterized by an endless and irregular repetition of lines as well as the accumulation of unidentifiable symbols built up through the deconstruction of daily imagery. The artist views his process-based painting practice as "complex and interpretive writing", while the art critic Gao Minglu classifies Zhu's work as Maximalist. Zhu Xiaohe approaches abstraction through a metaphysical approach.

The exhibition title *Noises in Silence* describes Zhu's obscure painting surface as a field of muted silence, a place where common sense and habitual consciousness have no place and conceptual generalization would be insufficient to define it. The title also refers to how Zhu's paintings resemble a construction site filled with nameless remnants produced through the disassembly of his visual resources, most of which the artist has intentionally limited to comic books. Zhu sees the process of setting up this image archive as one that involves interaction with the real world, a modified approach to pure abstraction, which in the end prompts a completely different way of seeing.

Zhu Xiaohe creates his paintings by tightly layering countless abstract lines and forms and concealing the boundaries between each layer. If one were to attempt to trace back to where the painting began, one may notice a mix of figures, objects, or scenarios with a silhouette effect. As mentioned by the artist, he "listens, absorbs, and picks out all kinds of traces from the picture archive, all kinds of triviality", including easily ignored pictorial components from the comic books he collects, real-world visuals, or fictional scenarios. He then strips them of their original context and meaning when he transfers them onto the canvas with colour and lines; his paintings are like boxes that collect these trivialities.

The exhibition space is arranged in accordance to different intensities of perception. The show provides clues as to how the artist interacts with the "traces" from his archive of pictures through drawings and several canvas works. In *Cavalry* (2009), bold black sketches of horse heads and soldier bodies seem to float on the top layer against oceanic red lines, serving as an invitation for viewers to dive into the more mystical and deeper layers. The constantly reproduced lines in *Portrait of Writer* (1999) were initially inspired by mechanical structure maps and constitute an estranged figure. *Ancient Comics* (2019) is a reworking of a previous painting created in 2007 titled *Receiving Guests*. The perceptual intensity of the more recent version has increased dramatically to erase traces of the older work on the canvas.

About the Artist

Zhu Xiaohe was born in Chongqing, China in 1956 and graduated from the Sichuan Fine Art Academy. Currently, he lives and works in Chongqing. Zhu began to pursue modernism in the mid-1980s. In 1989, he participated in the *China/Avant-Garde Exhibition*. Then, he started to explore methods of conducting philosophical discussions in his creation process. His methodology was categorized into “Maximalism” by art critic Gao Minglu. Zhu chose to use disconnected brushstrokes as basic artistic elements to delineate the paintings that audiences are familiar with, albeit unable to recognize at first glance, both in terms of form and appearance. Meanwhile, he wrote down notes to record his thought process. Hence, he regarded his paintings himself as “explanatory illustrations” or “metaphysical operations”, which allow these brushstrokes to speak by themselves. Zhu insisted on this particular painting style and kept a logical consistency in his creations. He has since become a non-aligned artist with independent and neutral thinking. He has become immersed in “academic painting” and lives by his own principles. Zhu Xiaohe has participated in many important exhibitions in China and abroad, including *Noises in Silence* (2020), Pearl Lam Galleries, Shanghai, China; *Univocality's Detail: Solo Exhibition of Zhu Xiaohe* (2016), ArtDepot, Beijing, China; *The Voice of the Unseen—Parallel Documentary Exhibition of the 55th Venice Biennale* (2013), Venice, Italy; *China Avant-Garde Art Exhibition* (1990), California Asia Pacific Museum, Pasadena, USA; and *China/Avant-Garde Exhibition* (1989), National Art Museum of China, Beijing, China. His works have been collected by notable public and private collections, including the USC Pacific Asia Museum and the Guangdong Art Museum.

About Pearl Lam Galleries

Pearl Lam Galleries is a driving force within Asia's contemporary art scene. Founded in 2005, the Galleries plays a vital role in stimulating international dialogue and cross-cultural exchange between the East and West.

Following a rigorous programme, Pearl Lam Galleries presents museum-quality exhibitions that re-evaluate and challenge perceptions of cultural practice in Asia. With a thoughtfully balanced roster of Chinese and international artists, the Galleries is strategic in its curation, positioning itself as an educator.

Pearl Lam Galleries maintains two spaces in Hong Kong: one in the historic Pedder Building and another in the more recently erected H Queen's. The Shanghai space is situated in the heart of the Bund district.

With a team of international staff, Pearl Lam Galleries' reach is global, having presentations at major international art fairs including The Armory Show, Art Cologne, Art Basel Hong Kong, Frieze Masters, and West Bund Art and Design.

About Pearl Lam

With over 20 years of experience in the industry, Pearl Lam is a leading authority on the Asian contemporary art market. She has been advising Chinese collectors on the intricacies of the international art market since 1993. Since then, her reach has expanded beyond Asia and now informs a far more global audience.

Press Enquiries

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