

# Hu Qingyan

*Keep Silent*

Galerie Urs Meile Zurich

February 2 - March 29, 2024

Opening: Friday, February 2, 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Reception: Friday, February 2, 6 - 8 p.m., the artist will be present

Galerie Urs Meile is honored to announce the first solo exhibition of the Chinese artist Hu Qingyan (b. 1982, Shandong Province), titled *Keep Silent*, at our gallery space in Zurich. In this exhibition, Hu Qingyan has chosen marble, perceived commonly as cold, neutral and solemn, as the sole material for all of the artworks on display. Beyond their discussion of questions internal to sculpture, these creations lead us into multidimensional explorations of society, philosophy, and politics through which to ponder the complex substantive relationships between art, reality, and life.

The exhibition is a concentrated presentation of the artist's latest creations, showcasing the artist's sustained engagement in his increasingly in-depth explorations of form, medium, reproduction, and transformation. These works, sometime frank, sometime suggestive, embody the reality Hu perceives around him, while continuously exploring the themes of "emptiness".

Cardboard boxes carved from marble are laid on pallets, or tossed directly on the floor, creating an unsettling memorial of empty and superfluous consumerism. The work series *The World of Silence* imbues the neutral, cold material with tender, individual human sentiment, while condensing and transforming the artist's perceptions of the surrounding reality and society. During the pandemic, people's lives were once extremely dependent on couriers owe to China's zeroing policy. Life supplies were accomplished through deliveries that were uniformly managed by the community. The cardboard boxes used to deliver the necessities became a symbol that suggest the state of people's lives in extreme situations and were loaded with individual sentiments. *The World of Silence* is not only an observation and introspection of a public nature, but also a philosophical reflection carried out through the language of sculpture. The work group *Waste* is a marble representation of used and crushed delivery cartons. The trail of use appears to tell their fate as becoming waste. The content is emptied and only an empty shell remains, hanging on the wall and quietly watching the world. A major topic in Hu Qingyan's work is that of empty space, which is a recurring theme in his oeuvre.

In over a decade of artistic creations, Hu Qingyan has gradually shifted from a "semblance" drawn from life to a true "semblance"—this semblance being the internalization of the external appearance, the "semblance" within the mind of the creator, the truth of individualized cognition. Like a craftsman, the artist tirelessly imitates and effortlessly transforms the world, nimbly recreating ordinary things so that they may be examined and observed anew.

A large expanse of blue—*Blue on the ground*, 2022 (white marble, water paint, each piece 68 × 68 cm, installation size variable)—stretches across the ground in the exhibition space downstairs, leaving hardly space for a comfortable stroll around the subject, like a hard fishbone stuck in the throat that can neither be swallowed nor spit out. The colour of the barrier fencing has become such a common sight during the unique period in Chinese history. The artist has laid out this massive installation obstructing the path to form a visual and physical sense of blockage, the feeling of being forced down a set path.

As a conceptual sculptor, Hu Qingyan has chosen marble, a classic art historical material, for his interventions upon the reality. Behind this visual humour lurks a silent shout, a solemn, tranquil beckoning for us to engage in deep examination and expression of our unique era and the state of society around us.

Hu Qingyan was born in 1982 in Weifang, Shandong Province, China and studied sculpture at the Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts in Guangzhou and the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing. He lives and works in Beijing. His recent solo exhibitions include: *2023*, Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing, China (2022); *Necessary Redundancy: Hu Qingyan solo exhibition*, Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China (2020); *Absent & Superfluous*, Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing, China (2018); *Hollow Husk*, Galerie Urs Meile, Lucerne, Switzerland (2016); *Eternal Glory*, Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing, China (2015). A selection of his most recent group shows include: *THE EXHIBITION OF ANNUAL OF CONTEMPORARY ART OF CHINA SHANGHAI 2022*, Shanghai Doland Museum of Modern Art, Shanghai, China (2023); *SWIRL · The 8th stars plan young Artists Research Exhibition*, Wuhan Art Museum (Qintai), Wuhan, China (2023); *The 7th Guangzhou Triennial, Symphony of All the Changes*, Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts, Guangzhou, China (2022); *M+ Sigg Collection: From Revolution to Globalisation*, M+ Museum, Hong Kong, China (2021); *The Memory Palace*, OCT Art & Design Gallery, Shenzhen, China (2021); *Golden Flow*, Beijing Contemporary Art Expo 2020, CHAO Art Center, Beijing, China (2020); *Jing'an International Sculpture Project*, Jing'an sculpture Park, Shanghai, China (2020); *Roots of Clouds Adrift*, OCAT Nanjing Public Art Project 2019, OCAT Nanjing Qixia Exhibition Site, Nanjing, China (2019); *Progress Every Day*, Annual Nomination Exhibition 2019, ZhuZhong Art Museum, Beijing, China (2019); *Encounter Asia – Multi-vision of Youth*, Museum of Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, Tank Loft, Chongqing Contemporary Art Center, Chongqing, China (2018); *Forty Years of Sculpture · Part 1 (2008-2017)*, Museum of Contemporary Art & Planning Exhibition, Shenzhen, China (2017); *The 3rd Today's Documents – BRIC-à-brac: The Jumble of Growth*, Today Art Museum, Beijing, China (2016); *Shut up and paint*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia (2016); *The Exhibition of Annual of Contemporary Art of China*, Beijing Minsheng Art Museum, Beijing, China (2016); *M + Sigg Collection: Four Decades of Chinese Contemporary Art*, ArtisTree, Hong Kong, China (2016); *Familiar Otherness: Art Across Northeast Asia*, Hong Kong Arts Center, Hong Kong, China (2015); *28 Chinese*, Rubell Family Collection/ Contemporary Arts Foundation, Miami, USA (2013); *Building Bridges – Zeitgenössische Kunst aus China*, Wolfsberg, Ermatingen, Switzerland (2013).

His works can be found in the collection of many museums and institutions including National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne, M+ Sigg Collection, Guangdong Museum of Art, Rubell Family Collection, Today Art Museum, K11 Art Foundation, Song Art Museum and White Rabbit Gallery.