

# Shao Fan

## Recent Works

Exhibition Dates: 23.3. – 6.5.2018

Venue: Galerie Urs Meile Beijing

VIP Preview: March 23 (Friday), March 24 (Saturday),  
10:00 – 18:00 (In accordance with Gallery Weekend  
Beijing VIP Preview)

Galerie Urs Meile Beijing is honored to announce Shao Fan (Yu Han)'s exhibition *Recent Works*. After the artist's last solo show *Big Rabbit +* in 2016, the upcoming exhibition will extend the focus on new developments in his contemporary ink explorations.

Along with his diverse body of work—including painting, sculpture, landscape art and design—ink painting has always been an essential field of interest for Shao Fan and in the recent years resulted in a distinct body of work depicting predominantly portraits of animals. His works bespeak an almost obsessive fascination of Chinese traditional culture and its peculiar appreciation of Oldness<sup>1</sup>. At the same time, they even more embody concepts and leanings of contemporary art in an international context, something particularly noticeable in his large-scale portraiture of animals.

When working with recurrent themes of different animals such as rabbits or apes, Shao Fan tries not to look at the depicted animal from a human perspective, but from the animal itself. Bestowing the dignity of a human-sized portrait on an “irrelevant” animal, he aims to express his own Taoist mindset with a unique contemporary language. The virtually infinite accumulation of one single type of brush-stroke compiling an animal's coat, the unexpected focus on an animal's limbs or the unorthodox composition and perspective of the paintings are only a few hints to disclose the artist's endeavor to put traditional thoughts into a contemporary context.

In Shao Fan's works, artist and subject permeate each other producing new imagery challenging the audience's ordinary viewing experience. Through the large size and frontal perspective of the paintings, the viewer confronts the intimidating gaze of Shao Fan's animals on eye level—an awareness of the other arises, as does a new awareness of the self. The artist himself puts it: “Confrontation is an attitude, and while a frontal perspective could be understood as a limitation of an artist's painterly expression, I prefer to use this limitation to provide new possibilities.” Today, Shao Fan struggles less with *what* to express, but instead focuses his efforts on *how* to express, even when it comes to the same position. Explorations and breakthroughs in technique have brought him unwittingly into another creative state—one marked by more freedom and flavor that presents unexpected imagery scenes.

The works on display will travel to Germany after the show where the Ludwig Museum in Koblenz will host Shao Fan's first major solo appearance in a western art institution. The exhibition opening on 10 June, will showcase almost 30 years of the artist's creative work including over 30 artworks. The exhibition will then be continued at the Suzhou Museum in China in November 2018.

Shao Fan, Zi: Yu Han, was born in 1964 to a family of artists in Beijing, and has lived there ever since. He studied painting with his mother and father from a young age. He has held many solo exhibitions and has repeatedly participated in important group exhibitions. His recent exhibitions include: *Histoire naturelle*, Kunstmuseum Luzern, Lucerne, Switzerland (2018); *Big Rabbit +*, Galerie Urs Meile Beijing-Lucerne, Beijing, China (2016); *Chinese Whispers*, Kunstmuseum Bern and Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern, Switzerland (2016); *A New Dynasty—Created in China*, ARoS Aarhus Art Museum, Aarhus, Denmark (2015); “*Secret Signs*” *Chinese contemporary calligraphy exhibition*, Deichtorhallen, Hamburg, Germany (2014); *De la Chine aux arts Décoratifs*, Musée des Arts décoratifs, Paris, France (2014); *St. Moritz Art Masters*, St. Moritz, Switzerland (2013); *Ink Art: Past as Present in Contemporary China*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA (2013); *Go Figure! Contemporary Chinese Portraiture*, National Portrait Gallery, Canberra, Australia (2012); as well as the First Beijing International Design Triennial, National Museum of China, Beijing, China (2011). Numerous museums around the world, such as The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, the Peabody Museum of Salem in the United States, The National Art Museum of China, The Victoria and

Albert Museum in England, Hong Kong's M+ Museum, and The Fukuoka Art Museum in Japan, Royal Ontario Museum in Canada, Sigg Collection, Erlenmeyer Foundation in Switzerland, among others, have been collecting his works since 1988. In addition, a major retrospective exhibition will be held in June and November 2018, at the Ludwig Museum in Germany and the Suzhou Museum in China, respectively.

1. Shao Fan, *Appreciation of Oldness*, West Tiangezhuang Village, 2012.