

# Xie Nanxing

untitled : 3 ×

Exhibition in Beijing: 7.11.2015 – 6.2.2016

Opening: Saturday, November 7, 2015, 4–7 pm

Galerie Urs Meile is pleased to announce the opening of *untitled: 3 ×*, the eighth solo exhibition by Xie Nanxing at one of our galleries. Xie Nanxing is a revolutionary and experimental painter, who always challenges tradition and the seemingly established rules of art education. He is interested in psychology and also approaches his practice with a psychologist's line of questioning, inquiring into what is behind the surface.

For example, he reconsidered the traditional portrait genre, depicting people not as it is usually done, by painting their appearance, but by illustrating their personality through a story, the composition, or through color. Xie Nanxing portrayed his girlfriend (*Portrait No. 1*, 2012, oil on canvas, 120 × 160 cm) by painting her style of driving. We see a shabby car scaring a dog off the road, and in the light cones emanating from its headlights one can read: "One-eyed person bravely dashing into Heiqiao" (an art district in Beijing). Xie Nanxing's approach differs for every portrait, depending on and reflecting upon the person who is to be portrayed. His portrait of a friend (*Someone's Portrait*, 2014, oil on canvas, 100 × 80 cm) is based on the friend's ongoing art project. Xie Nanxing was extremely fascinated with the friend's narratives of the project's details as well as his expectation of it, which in turn inspired Xie Nanxing to do some portraits for his friend.

Xie Nanxing's recent series, *Untitled* (2014-2015) consists of six paintings that radiate a strange, dark, uncanny beauty. The subjects are hard to recognize, and what we see seems to come out of our unconscious. The viewer can't trust his own ability to focus, as everything seems blurred. In this series, Xie Nanxing was looking into the question of what happens to an image when it is processed through a variety of different media. Xie Nanxing created these paintings by using photographs of flowers and plants taken by his mother, and transforming them with the help of light, painting, and other photographic media. Xie Nanxing has always been exploring the relationship between the image and the painting. He successfully changes the form, composition, and color of the original image drastically with the help of different media and the change of light, as well as the reversal method. The final image was transformed into a map of light and Xie Nanxing felt that this metamorphosis was almost magical. On *untitled no. 1* (2014, oil on canvas, 220 × 320 cm) you can even see the artist's reflection on the TV screen when he was taking the image.

*Triangle Relations Gradually Changing* (2013) is a group of works that combines Xie Nanxing's formal and psychological approach. The series was inspired by Lucian Freud's *The Artist Surprised by a Naked Admirer*. In Freud's painting you can see the painter standing in his studio, a naked woman sitting at his feet, embracing his legs, and to their left a canvas is set up on an easel, depicting the very same scene. While the model seems to care only about the painter, he is turning away from her toward the canvas. Inspired by this scene, Xie Nanxing wanted to explore the relationship among painter, object, and depiction. At first he thought that the model holds the painter's attention because she wants him to observe her physical existence instead of his version of her in his painting. In *Triangle Relations Gradually Changing No. 1* (2013, oil on canvas, 221 × 152 cm), *Triangle Relations Gradually Changing No. 2* (2013, oil on canvas, 220 × 220 cm), *Triangle Relations Gradually Changing No. 3* (2013, oil on canvas, 190 × 190 cm), and *Triangle Relations Gradually Changing No. 4* (2013, oil on canvas, 220 × 220 cm), Xie Nanxing examined this triangular relationship by assigning different roles to each party. By the time he finished *Triangle Relations Gradually Changing No. 5* (2013, oil on canvas, 190 × 190 cm) he realized that he had misunderstood Freud and dedicated the last painting to Freud's intention to comment on a painter's adoration of the opposite sex. Xie Nanxing used a technique in this series he has worked with before. He primed one canvas—white or in a variety of colors—and put another one on top of it, upon which he painted a figurative painting. But the finished work is the canvas beneath, which only shows the traces of paint that penetrated through onto the base coat. These are the kinds of marks that can often be seen on the back of a painting, and Xie Nanxing also understands leftovers from themes or concepts as traces similar to those in the painting process. Together they form the unconscious of painting, which Xie Nanxing once more brings to mind.

On the occasion of the exhibition the gallery will publish a catalog with texts by Carol Yinghua Lu (curator and critic, Beijing) and Ruth Noack (curator and critic, Berlin).

Xie Nanxing was born in 1970 in Chongqing, Sichuan Province; today, he lives and works in Beijing and Chengdu, China. The artist's exhibitions include: *New Works #1*, OCT Contemporary Art Terminal (OCAT), Shenzhen, China, 2014; Documenta XII, Kassel, Germany, 2007; *Xie Nanxing Paintings*, Kunstverein Hamburger Bahnhof, Hamburg, Germany, 2005; *Xie Nanxing Paintings 1999-2002*, Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester, UK, 2003; Shanghai Biennial, Shanghai Art Museum, Shanghai, China, 2000; *d'APER Tutto*, Venice Biennial, 48th International Art Exhibition of the City of Venice, Italy, 1999.