

Chen Fei

The Day is Yet Long

Exhibition in Beijing: 12.3. – 30.4.2016

Opening: Saturday, March 12, 2016; 4 – 7 pm

Galerie Urs Meile Beijing is honoured to announce the opening of *The Day is Yet Long* from our up-and-coming artist Chen Fei (*1983 in Hongtong, Shanxi, China). This is his first solo exhibition since he began working with Galerie Urs Meile. The exhibition will feature a series of works that the artist has created over the past few years. Chen Fei's main creative media is painting, and he particularly loves a "super flat" creative technique that is straightforward and clean. Under bright and beautiful colours and clean, almost mechanical lines, a simple visual disguise is created. With consistently strong narrative characteristics, disturbing emotions leak out.

What Chen Fei's paintings are concerned with is certainly not any kind of grand theme. His expertise is the choreography of the scene. Those scenes of daily life could not be any more common but, because of tedious detail and character arrangement, often bring out a compact tension and an unexpected sense of drama. Chen Fei has an almost paranoid discipline towards detail: wallpapers covered with blossoming flowers, lush and expansive forests, thick, flowing hair... Chen Fei mechanically traces every line and every nuance without care for how much paint, effort, or time required. Because of this, he injects a strong sense of realism and the feeling of a film still into his work. Viewers standing in front of the canvas often back away out of discomfort. However, in spite of this, they are often still "kidnapped" into speculating on the canvas' psychological narrative and characters.

Chen Fei's works have been mostly autobiographical. Railing against politics while at the same time lampooning morality, Chen Fei also likes to mock himself. In the series of works of all the same size (180 × 240 cm) that we are exhibiting this time, he often imbeds himself in the paintings as characters: as a bare-chested shop owner leaning on the counter in a slightly offensive manner (*Hornet*, 2013), as a completely naked man covered in tattoos (*I am the Jungle*, 2015), surprisingly, as a worker displaying frustration at his just-completed sexual performance on the production line of a state of the art automated car plant (*Lychee*, 2015), or as 'police officer' standing intently along a lake with a leg up on the railing next to a scantily-clad female pan-handler (the last piece of this series, *The Day is Yet Long*, 2015)... Chen Fei mocks himself without mercy. A backdrop of obvious nudity and images of genitals signify lust, ugliness, etc. as a kind of abstract experience.

In the work *Non-cooperation* (2015), Chen Fei has avoided himself, instead using an elegant man wearing nice glasses. However, the scene has been arranged in an "atypical" karaoke club, where an ugly side of pork lies between the man and the woman procured for a short transaction. Chen Fei's works are filled with purpose and visual elements, often referred to as "bad taste", yet they affect the viewer's eye in a strange way.

His quirky imagination takes the plain and ordinary and adds attractive imagery and tension, and his paranoia towards detail and "accuracy" makes his scenes' arrangements surprising, yet highly believable. At the same time, he gives the viewer the excitement of breaking through an ugly, false mask. Chen Fei's fine painting method determines that his painting is a slow, almost boring, process. But in this kind of month and year-long exploration, he gives his own movie script the perfect subtext and gives the viewer a sensory experience of discomfort that does not fade.

A catalogue published by the gallery, with a text by Karen Smith (Art Critic, Curator, and Executive Director of the OCAT museum in Xi'an), will accompany the exhibition.

Chen Fei (*1983 in Hongtong, Shanxi, China) graduated from Beijing Film Academy Fine Art department in 2005 and currently lives and works in Beijing. The artist's recent exhibitions include the solo exhibition *Flesh and Me* (2014) at Galerie Perrotin's Hong Kong space. Group exhibitions include: *The Civil Power—Beijing Minsheng Modern Art Museum Opening Exhibition*, Beijing Minsheng Art Museum, Beijing, China (2015); *A New Dynasty—Created in China*, ARoS Aarhus Art Museum, Aarhus, Denmark (2015); *1199 People*, Long Museum, Shanghai, China (2014) as well as *1st CAFAM Future Exhibition*, China Central Academy of Fine Arts Museum (2012). In 2012, he received the Martell Art Fund's 'Focus on Talents Project' award.