

# Wang Xingwei

Exhibition in Zurich: June 9 – July 29, 2023

Opening: Friday, June 9, 11 am

Since its establishment in 1992, Galerie Urs Meile has contributed to the presentation and dissemination of contemporary art, from painting and sculpture to photography, installation and video.

In addition to their main galleries in Beijing (CN), Lucerne (CH) and the pop-up gallery in Ardez (CH), Galerie Urs Meile will open another branch in Zurich in June 2023. The positions shown here are intended to provide a concentrated insight into the gallery's program.

Galerie Urs Meile was one of the first international galleries to focus on the Chinese art scene and has been working on an international level with Chinese artists since 1995. The gallery represents established artists such as Wang Xingwei, Xie Nanxing, Qiu Shihua, Not Vital, as well as emerging artists such as Cao Yu, Hu Qingyan, Ju Ting, Chen Zuo, Miao Miao and Rebekka Steiger.

With the opening of this new space at Rämistrasse in Zurich in June 2023 Galerie Urs Meile is locating itself in the center of Zurich, between fellow art galleries and institutions. The inauguration show is dedicated to the Chinese painter Wang Xingwei, who continues to inspire and shape young generations today. In the three decades of his mature output, Wang Xingwei has created an artistic universe all his own, where references collide, characters recur, and styles proliferate, all articulated in a deliciously skillful range of styles. Regarded as one of China's most mature and wide-ranging contemporary painters, Wang Xingwei's irreverent appropriation of visual references from both Chinese and Western art history has been a topic in his work since the beginning of his career. Years of exploring and experimenting with these references allowed him to build up his very own visual vocabulary. Toying with disconnected elements, dismantling the acknowledged logic of thinking, and fabricating domestic incidents into his personal fantasies have always been winning strategies since the beginning of his artistic journey. With a focus to various forms of portraiture loaded with referential symbols and playful metaphors, his paintings feature a wide range of topics from everyday scenes to cultural history or contemporary political satire. Wang's unique approach to painting has earned him critical acclaim and a loyal following in the art world, both in China and internationally. Wang Xingwei, who was born 1969 in Shenyang, Liaoning Province, China, lives and works in Beijing China.

One of the works displayed in the upcoming exhibition is *Oedipus and the Sphinx (Proposal 1993)*, 2021 (Oil on canvas, 190.5 x 150 cm), which is based on the artist's personal proposal experience in the 1990's. At that time, China was in the initial stage of the development of modern urban civilization, and the study and imitation of Western civilization were rough and exaggerated. At the same time, the artist incorporated today's fashionable gesture of showing love. The picture draws on the exaggerated processing techniques of comics and renders with strong contrasting colors. The relationship between the characters in the picture is somewhat similar to the scene in Greek mythology where the Sphinx posed a riddle to Oedipus and the riddle was successfully solved. Here, the mystery of marriage is solved by the answer of "love". This is not only the artist's commemoration and review of his own precious moments, but also a clever fusion of two different eras in a playful way.

Equally colorful is the work *Evening Flight* (oil on canvas, 197 x 295 cm), being created in the year 2021 and depicting a dream most humans have at least once in their lifetime: Flying. But in this work, the subjects of flying are deliberately demonized characters, alluding to the ideological opposition that is prevalent in today's society. The work draws on the exaggerated treatment techniques of comics, including the expressions and movements of the characters. In the picture, the huge fat man is flying stably in the attitude of an arrogant bomber, while the thinner man is portrayed in a frightened staggering posture. The figures are respectively rendered with green and purple modern artificial light. The railway over the horizon is faintly visible, which is also the artist's memory of modern Chinese history to some extent. The artist

stages exaggerated character performances with his witty brushstrokes in a very personal and representative style. At the same time, he quietly transforms and integrates individuals and groups, the past and the present.

As always Wang's plots are often unexpected, far-fetched, and yet charmingly surreal. He has constructed an exquisitely unique and picturesque language of seemingly disconnected elements - conceptual entries from his own "visual dictionary". These elements are juxtaposed in order to purposely dismantle the acknowledged logic of thinking and create, by means of their disruptive power, new and unpredictable interpretative possibilities.

Groups of works by Wang Xingwei are represented in prominent collections in Europe, the USA, China and Hong Kong. Museum exhibitions have been shown in major institutions in China and Hong Kong, such as UCCA (Ullens Centre for Contemporary Art, Beijing; PSA (Power Station of Art), Shanghai; chi K11 Art Museum Shanghai; M+ Museum Hong Kong.

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## Selected Solo Exhibitions

- 2023 *Wang Xingwei. Oriental Nobility*, Galerie Urs Meile, 789 space, Beijing, China
- 2023 *Wang Xingwei*, Galerie Urs Meile, Zurich, Switzerland
- 2022 *Wang Xingwei in Shanghai 2002 - 2008*, Power Station of Art, Shanghai, China
- 2019 *The Code of Physiognomy*, Galerie Urs Meile, 798 space, Beijing, China  
*Shenyang Night*, Galerie Urs Meile, Caochangdi space, Beijing, China
- 2016 *Honor and Disgrace*, Organised by Galerie Urs Meile, Supported by Platform China; Exhibition Venue: Platform China, Beijing, China
- 2013 *Wang Xingwei*, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), Beijing, China  
*Wang Xingwei (Sketches)*, 01100001, Beijing, China
- 2012 *Wang Xingwei*, Galerie Urs Meile, Lucerne, Switzerland
- 2011 *Wang Xingwei*, Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing, China
- 2008 *Wang Xingwei – one-man show*, Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing, China
- 2007 *Wang Xingwei – Large Rowboat*, Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing, China  
*Wang Xingwei – Large Rowboat*, Galerie Urs Meile, Lucerne, Switzerland
- 2004 *Interlinked Dreams*, Galerie Urs Meile, Lucerne, Switzerland
- 2003 *Fostered Art*, ShanghART Gallery, Shanghai, China
- 2001 *Still Paint – Wang Xingwei & Chen Danqing*, China Art Archives & Warehouse (CAAW), Beijing, China
- 1996 *The Dust of the Romantic History of Male Heroism*, China Central Academy of Fine Arts Gallery, Beijing, China

## Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2021 *SNAPSHOT*, Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing, China  
*Minestrone*, Galerie Urs Meile, Ardez, Switzerland
- 2020 *Forget the Horizon*, chi K11 art museum, Shanghai, China  
*Duration: Chinese Art in Transfer Motion*, Beijing Minsheng Art Museum, Beijing, China  
*Longing for Nature - Reading Landscapes in Chinese Art*, Museum Rietberg, Zurich, Switzerland  
*Shifting*, Pop-up Art Parcours, Galerie Urs Meile, Ardez, Switzerland  
*Being of Evils*, Hive Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China

- 2019 *Chinese Whispers 中国低语 - Recent Art from the Sigg Collection*, MAK Museum für Angewandte Kunst, Vienna, Austria
- 2018 *Force as Fulcrum - Selected works from the collection of Wang Bing & Xue Bing*, New Century Art Foundation, Beijing, China  
*The Orientation and Taste of New Painting*, B131, Zhi Art Space, Huxi Commune, Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, Chongqing, China  
*Art and China after 1989: Theater of the World*, Museum Guggenheim, Bilbao
- 2016 *New Capital: Huang Yu Collection Exhibition (2007–2016)*, Museum of Contemporary Art Chengdu, Chengdu, China  
*M+ Sigg Collection: Four Decades of Chinese Contemporary Art*, ArtisTree, Hong Kong, China  
*Chinese Whispers*, Kunstmuseum Bern and Zentrum Paul Klee, Berne, Switzerland
- 2015 *Now Then – China’s Avant-Garde twenty years later*, Nieuw Dakota, Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
*Media – Dali: Major Exhibition of Surrealism Art*, chi K11 art museum, Shanghai, China  
*NOTES ON PAINTINGS*, Blue Roof Museum of Chengdu, Chengdu, China  
*The Garden of Forking Paths – Tracks and Intersections of 15 Artists*, Shanghai Gallery of Art, Shanghai, China  
*Absolute Collection Guideline*, Sifang Art Museum, Nanjing, China  
*28 Chinese*, Rubell Family Collection, Asian Art Museum, San Francisco; San Antonio Museum of Art, San Antonio, USA
- 2014 *Dai Hanzhi: 5000 Artists*, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), Beijing, China; Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam, The Netherlands  
*Right is Wrong, Four Decades of Chinese Art from the M+ Sigg Collection*, Bildmuseet, Umeå, Sweden  
*1960*, Springs Center of Art, Beijing, China  
*Early*, Platform China, Beijing, China
- 2013 *28 Chinese*, Rubell Family Collection, Miami, USA  
*One Step Forward, Two Steps Back – Us and Institution, Us as Institution*, Times Museum, Guangzhou, China  
*DUCHAMP and/or/in CHINA*, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), Beijing, China  
*Portrait of the Times – 30 Years of Contemporary Art*, Power Station of Art, Shanghai, China
- 2012 *Go Figure! Contemporary Chinese Portraiture*, National Portrait Gallery, Canberra; Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation, Sydney, Australia  
*CAPITAL – Merchants in Venice and Amsterdam*, Swiss National Museum, Zurich, Switzerland  
*The 7th Shenzhen Sculpture Biennale – Accidental Message: Art Is Not a System, Not a World*, OCT Contemporary Art Terminal (OCAT), Shenzhen, China  
*Face*, Minsheng Art Museum, Shanghai, China
- 2011 *Picture-History-Existence – Taikang Life Art Collection 15th Anniversary Exhibition*, National Art Museum of China (NAMOC), Beijing, China  
*5x5 Castelló2011 – Premi Internacional d’Art Contemporani Diputació de Castelló*, Espai d’Art Contemporani de Castelló (EACC), Castelló, Spain  
*Youth – On Wu Tao (1969–2001)*, 01100001, Beijing, China
- 2010 *The Official Opening of Minsheng Art Museum – Thirty Years of Chinese Contemporary Art 1979–2009*, Minsheng Art Museum, Shanghai, China  
*The State of Things – Contemporary Art from China and Belgium*, National Art Museum of China (NAMOC), Beijing, China  
*Reshaping History – Chinart from 2000 to 2009*, China National Convention Center, Beijing, China

- Jungle – A Close-Up Focus on Chinese Contemporary Art Trends*, Platform China, Beijing, China  
*Marcel Duchamp and the Forestay Waterfall*, Kunsthalle Marcel Duchamp, Cully, Switzerland
- 2009 *The State of Things – Contemporary Art from China and Belgium*, BOZAR, Brussels, Belgium  
*The Home Court – An Exhibition of Contemporary Art*, Whitebox Art Center, Beijing, China  
*Bourgeoisified Proletariat, Contemporary Art Exhibition in Songjiang*, Shanghai Songjiang Creative Studio, Shanghai, China  
*Textbook: An Exhibition of Lively Chinese Paintings*, Li-Space, Beijing, China
- 2008 *Opening Exhibition*, Nam June Paik Art Center, Suwon-Seoul, South Korea  
*Mahjong: Contemporary Chinese Art from the Sigg Collection*, The University of California, Berkeley Art Museum, Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley, USA  
*Our Future: The Guy & Myriam Ullens Foundation Collection*, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), Beijing, China  
*Sky*, Red Space, Beijing, China  
*Community of Tastes: The Inaugural Exhibition of Iberia Center for Contemporary Art*, Iberia Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China  
*RED Aside – Chinese Contemporary Art of the Sigg Collection*, Fundacio Joan Miro, Barcelona, Spain
- 2007 *1997–2007. Awakening From a Ten-Year Long Sleep*, Hejingyuan Contemporary Art Center, Beijing, China  
*Energies – Synergy*, Foundation DE 11 LIJNEN, Oudenburg, Belgium  
*Mahjong – Chinesische Gegenwartskunst aus der Sammlung Sigg*, Museum der Moderne, Salzburg, Austria  
*The Year of the Golden Pig – Contemporary Chinese Art from the Sigg Collection*, Lewis Glucksman Gallery, Cork University College, Cork, Ireland  
*STRATEGY ON PAPER – Works on Paper Invitational*, Square Gallery of Contemporary Art, Nanjing, China
- 2006 *Double Sound Cracker*, Tang Contemporary Art, Beijing, China  
*FROM ‘POLAR REGION’ TO ‘TIE XI QU’ – Contemporary Art in Northeastern China 1985–2006*, Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China  
*Instants. 1st Exhibition of Left Right Art Zone*, Left Right Art Zone, Beijing, China  
*Mahjong – Chinesische Gegenwartskunst aus der Sammlung Sigg*, Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Germany  
*Alllooksame? / Tuttuguale? Art from China, Japan and Korea*, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, Italy  
*6th Shanghai Biennale*, Shanghai Art Museum, Shanghai, China
- 2005 *Show Me... Catch Me... Sight Unseen – Xie Nanxing and Wang Xingwei*, China Art Archives & Warehouse (CAAW), Beijing, China  
*The Wall – Reshaping Contemporary Chinese Art*, Millenium Art Museum, Beijing, China; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, New York, USA; University at Buffalo, Anderson Gallery and Center for the Arts, New York, USA  
*Cina. Prospettive d’Arte Contemporanea / China: As Seen by Contemporary Chinese Artists*, Provincia di Milano, Spazio Oberdan, Milan, Italy  
*PICTORIAL DNA Made in China*, Galerie Urs Meile, Lucerne, Switzerland  
*Mahjong – Chinesische Gegenwartskunst aus der Sammlung Sigg*, Kunstmuseum Bern, Berne, Switzerland  
*China – Contemporary Painting*, Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio, Palazzo Saraceni, Bologna, Italy
- 2004 *Persona3*, China Art Archives & Warehouse (CAAW), Beijing, China  
*Degenerated*, Modern Chinese Art Foundation (MCAF), Gent, Belgium  
*The Monk and the Demon – Contemporary Chinese Art*, Musée d’ Art Contemporain, Lyon, France

- Beyond Boundaries*, Shanghai Gallery of Art, Shanghai, China  
*Silknet – Emerging Chinese Artists*, Galerie Urs Meile, Lucerne, Switzerland  
*All under Heaven*, Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp (MuHKA), Antwerp, Belgium
- 2003 *Junction – Chinese Contemporary Architecture of Art*, Shanghai Lianyang Architecture Museum, Shanghai, China  
 Prague Biennale, Prague, Czech Republic  
*Open Sky – Contemporary Art Exhibition*, Shanghai Duolun Museum of Modern Art, Shanghai, China  
*Second Hand Reality – Post-Reality*, Today Art Museum, Beijing, China
- 2002 The 1st Guangzhou Triennial, Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China  
*Mirage*, Suzhou Art Museum, Suzhou, China
- 2001 *Between Earth and Heaven – New Classical Movements in the Art of Today*, P.M.M.K Museum voor Moderne Kunst, Oostende, Belgium  
 The First Chengdu Biennale, Chengdu Modern Art Museum, Chengdu, China
- 2000 *Fuck Off*, Eastlink Gallery, Shanghai, China  
*Unusual & Usual*, Yuangong Art Museum, Shanghai, China  
*Portraits, Figures, Couples and Groups*, BizArt, Shanghai, China  
*Future - Chinese Contemporary Art*, Contemporary Art Centre (CACOM), Macau, China
- 1999 *d'APERTutto*, La Biennale di Venezia, 48. Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte, Venice, Italy  
*Zeitwenden – Rueckblick und Ausblick*, Kunstmuseum Bonn, Bonn, Germany; Künstlerhaus & 20er Haus, Vienna, Austria  
*Concepts, Colors and Passions*, China Art Archives & Warehouse (CAAW), Beijing, China  
*Modern China Art Foundation Collection*, Caermersklooster - Provinciaal Centrum voor Kunst en Cultuur, Gent, Belgium  
*Innovations Part I*, China Art Archives & Warehouse (CAAW), Beijing, China  
*Changing Views*, Kunsthal Hof 88, Almelo, The Netherlands  
*China's High Potentials Canvases*, Canvas International Art, Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
*Hsin: a Visible Spirit – Contemporary Photography from the People's Republic of China*, Cypress College Photography Galleries, Cypress, USA; BC Space Gallery, Laguna Beach, USA
- 1998 *It's Me!*, Main Ritual Hall of the former Imperial Ancestral Temple (Workers' Cultural Palace, Forbidden City), Beijing, China  
*China: 5000 Years*, Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, Spain  
*CORRUPTIONISTS*, North Third Ring No. 10, Basement, Beijing, China
- 1997 4th Biennale d'Art Contemporain de Lyon, Lyon, France
- 1996 *China Now*, Littmann Kultur Projekte, Basel, Switzerland; Parco Square and Kirin Art, Tokyo, Japan  
*China – Aktuelles aus 15 Ateliers*, Artcircolo Kunstprojekt GmbH, Munich, Germany  
*Reckoning with the Past – Contemporary Chinese Painting*, Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh, UK
- 1994 *Put to Trial*, China Central Academy of Fine Arts Gallery, Beijing, China