

Ju Ting

Deep in the Mountains

Galerie Urs Meile Luzern

May 2 - July 26, 2024

Opening: Thursday, May 2, 2024; 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Galerie Urs Meile is pleased to announce the third exhibition of new works by Chinese artist Ju Ting (*1983 in Shandong, China, lives and works in Beijing, China) at its Lucerne gallery. Following the highly acclaimed solo exhibition in 2021, the artist is increasingly focusing on conceptual approaches in her oeuvre, which alternates between the use of painting and sculptural techniques.

Within Ju Ting's artistic work, the two series on display, *Amber* and *Deep Waters Run Quiet*, stand as testimonies to methodical experiments in a technique that the artist has constantly explored and perfected over the years. During her meticulous working process, Ju Ting uses simple wooden boards as canvases on which she orchestrates a conceptual arrangement and accumulation of acrylic colour tones. Layer by layer, she builds up an opulent mass of colour, with each new layer carefully covering the previous one. This repetitive and time-consuming work process demands the artist's complete concentration and endurance, which often leads to a meditative state during production. Moreover, the act of overlaying is simultaneously an act of temporary disappearance and oblivion, which lends her work a paradoxical beauty. Ju Ting's artistic approach, however, is not just the mere application of colour; it is ultimately the transformative act of unveiling that characterizes the aesthetic expression of her work. Equipped with a carving knife, the artist carefully cuts through the countless layers of acrylic paint to reveal the colour spectrum that has disappeared underneath. In doing so, the knife surpasses its conventional utility function and becomes a direct tool of artistic expression. The brute intervention creates three-dimensional brushstrokes that meander with a 'lyrical cadence' over the ups and downs of the surface, giving the work an additional dimension of depth and movement. The fascination of Ju Ting's series of works lies not only in their tactile appeal, but also in the ethereal interplay of light and colour that makes each new composition vibrate. As viewers traverse the exhibition space, a kaleidoscope of hues emerges, a symphony of changing colours that ebbs and flows with every glance. This synthesis of colour and light becomes clear in Ju Ting's *Amber* series, in which the artist reveals a conceptual refinement of her technique. By introducing geometric patterns, she creates optical illusions that are reminiscent of the refraction of light in gemstones when viewed from a distance. On closer inspection, the meticulously calibrated, vertically merging lines unfold, creating a fascinating visual effect between sharpness and blurriness. Ju Ting skillfully moves between the boundaries of the perceived and the hidden, whereby her large-format compositions achieve a suggestive effect and manifest themselves as poetic works between painting and sculpture.

The latest series, *Deep Waters Run Quiet*, is a significant further development of her previous wall works. The application of paint has become noticeably pastier and has been given a tactile dimension, so that vein-like structures and protrusions run across the surface and lend each composition a palpable sense of vibrancy. The hand-cut furrows also evoke depths that have not yet appeared so pronounced in her previous work and which may well be reminiscent of a swell on the open sea. As the title of the series - a variation on the proverb 'still waters run deep' - suggests, the calm and inconspicuous exterior conceals a passionate and subtle interior. By means of the symbolic inversion, Ju Ting refers to a certain ambiguity and unpredictability of the interior by bringing out the colours. Through this titling and the haptic perception of the picture surface, Ju Ting lures the viewer into a field of ambiguity and conjecture, where the interplay of colour and form invites open interpretation. In the quiet depths of her paintings, she exposes the complexity of human (and her own) experience and invites us to reflect on the dichotomy between superficial serenity and inner turmoil.

Text by Michael Sutter

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Ju Ting (b. 1983, Shandong, China; lives and works in Beijing, China) is one of China's foremost young female contemporary artists with a work characterized by coalescing two conventional art media: painting and sculpture, and obscuring the boundary between the two. Ju Ting graduated from the Printmaking Department of the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, China with a BA in 2007, and with a master in 2013. Her works have been exhibited at Museum and institutions including Unlimited, Art Basel, OCT Contemporary Art Terminal, Xi'an, China; Stable Gallery of Lal Lal Estate, Melbourne, Australia; Shijiazhuang Art Museum, Shijiazhuang, China; Xinjiang Art Museum, Xinjiang, China, Taikang Space, Beijing, China; Today Art Museum, Beijing, China; Hi Art Center, Beijing, China. Her works are also in the collections of museum and institutions including National Art Museum of China, Beijing, China; Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, China and White Rabbit Gallery, Sydney, Australia, etc.