

Chen Sixin

Four-footed Animals Are Great

Exhibition in Beijing: 2024.9.7 – 10.27

Opening: Saturday, September 7, 4pm

Galerie Urs Meile Beijing is pleased to announce the solo exhibition of emerging artist Chen Sixin (b.1995, Guangzhou), which marks his debut with Galerie Urs Meile. Titled “Four-footed Animals Are Great”, this exhibition showcases a selection of artworks created by Chen over the past two years, inviting the viewers into an imaginative area brimming with the artist’s distinctive style and personality: Utilizing colored pencils as his creative medium and alien animals as his muse, Chen breeds wonder between memory and fantasy. Despite of the medium’s delicate colors, the lush visual impact and intricate strokes betray the intense labor that lies beneath. These unconventional images seem to echo the subtle yearnings of the audiences for the extraordinary, the dangerous, and the exceptional in their everyday life.

Cow in *Tornado* (2024, colored pencil on paper, 176 × 150 cm), burning pedestrians in *Walking fire* (2024, colored pencil on paper, 129 × 186 cm), mountain slope in *Bird* (2023, colored pencil on paper, 46 × 61 cm), robots in *Gol ver.1* (2023, colored pencil on paper, 91.5 × 74 cm) and *Sil ver.1* (2023, colored pencil on paper, 91.5 × 73.5 cm), soldiers in *Battlefield* (2023, colored pencil on paper, 131 × 188 cm), ape in *White Terror* (2023, colored pencil on paper, 148 × 192 cm)... The artist adeptly merges these seemingly unrelated elements in one space: At first glance a jumble, yet each piece ultimately finds its purposes through the division of thematic areas, guiding the audience through an extraordinary encounter in a symphony of playfulness, moderation, and solemnity.

Stepping into the gallery, we seem to hear the declaration of the animals surrounding us: “Four-footed animals are great.” Chen Sixin, along with the tornado he has originated, sweeps across the viewers’ conventional thinking, using a playful preface to subtly conceal the human identity.

Species, form, survival scenario—all exist without constraint, engaging in a dialogue within the sphere of romantic surrealism. This is the inevitable scene of the post-civilization era as envisioned by the artist. The figure’s restlessness and tension are relieved by its consistent and orderly texture, achieving a delicate equilibrium amid a world of the absurd. The interweaving of the willfulness and the restraint within the artworks represents intimate fragments of the artist’s emotions after his profound contemplation.

As the concerns of the real world slowly seep into the sound of sirens, we are pushed into a realm where wars and disasters occur frequently. Within this space, the collective’s shared memories are stirred awake. Despite being deeply engaged in the community and part of the grand narrative, our individual experiences diverge. This allows the audience to experience the charm of what the artist calls “the dislocated imagination” —a mode of perception that is introspective and selective, imbued with a strong sense of subjectivity. When the visual journey concludes, we may be left with a new understanding of the value judgments that run through Chen Sixin’s work, while casting a warm glimpse at those great four-footed animals.

Artists like Norihiro Yagi with *Claymore*, Kentaro Miura with *Berserk*, and Araki Hirohiko with *JoJo’s Bizarre Adventure*—who spared no effort to build reality within the realm of fantasy—have shaped Chen’s artistic vision. At the same time, the dark, apocalyptic atmosphere of Japanese OVA from the 1980s and 1990s along with the serious exploration of posthumanism in both those animations and Western Cult Films, has broadened his perspective. Later, during his studies in Baltimore, the exposure to the Chicago Imagists, as well as independent comics by artists like Robert Crumb and Chris Ware, further enriched his visual language and modes of expression. Chen Sixin has woven all these diverse influences into his work, combining them with his keen perception to gradually develop his distinctive artistic style.

Chen Sixin (b.1995, Guangzhou) graduated from Guangdong University of Technology in 2017 and received his master’s degree from Maryland Institute College of Art in 2021. He currently lives and works in Chongqing, China.