

Fang Xianchen: TARDIS

Curator: Fiona Lu

2024.6.15 – 7.30

Tang Contemporary Art, Beijing Headquarters Gallery Space

Tang Contemporary Art is honored to announce its exclusive representation of the post-90s Chinese artist Fang Xianchen across Asia. We are pleased to present his first solo exhibition in collaboration with Tang Contemporary Art, titled "TARDIS," which will open at our Beijing Headquarters Gallery Space on June 15, 2024, at 4 PM. Curated by Fiona Lu, the exhibition features Fang Xianchen's significant past works as well as over ten new paintings.

TARDIS, from the British sci-fi television series "Doctor Who", stands for Time And Relative Dimensions In Space. It is a time machine and spacecraft that possesses certain consciousness and life-like characteristics, capable of traveling to any time and place in the universe. Its interior space tends to be infinite, almost like another universe. Einstein's theory of relativity revealed the interrelation of time and space, indicating their existence relative to each observer. This means that changes in time and space depend on the observer's relative speed and position. As a painter, Fang Xianchen incorporates the concept of time and space into his creations, blending past and present, here and there, reality and fiction. Time and space become intrinsic forms of cognitive structure, a subjective way of perceiving the world rather than independent objective entities. Amid the prevalence of symbolic imagery today, Fang Xianchen's approach stands out with its calmness and restraint. Beneath his figurative, classical, mysterious, and poetic visual imagery lies a strong narrative and readability, attempting to detach the viewer from the entanglements of reality. The order and rhythm embedded in his colors and compositions are key to guiding all emotional variables.

The series of works in this exhibition are based on Fang Xianchen's reinterpretation and reconstruction of his surroundings. The magical realism and dreamlike scenes represent his ideal way of understanding and transforming reality. In these works, factual experiences are dislocated, opening cracks in the structure of time, where the magical and the mundane coexist harmoniously. The fluid experience merges the independent, enduring, and essential existence in reality with the transient, illusory, and partial existence. For instance, in the work "The Transient,"(2024) Fang juxtaposes the scene of a home lounge with the red bridge at the entrance of Yechun Teahouse in Yangzhou. The relaxed and carefree state of the figures in the room, depicted with the artist's delicate brushwork, exudes a romantic, intimate, and hazy atmosphere. The red bridge outside the window exists beyond the landscape, seemingly freezing time while infinitely extending it. Elements like a long-rotten baguette, a woman's reflection in a bathroom mirror, and a solitary house in a dreamscape make us aware that the flow of time is not a fixed constant.

Science fiction, dreams, poetry, madness, absurdity, and metaphor all weave through Fang Xianchen's surreal garden of painting. As André Breton described in "Soluble Fish," all my reveries are aflame in the chandelier of my head. Surrealism is the "invisible light," as if living elsewhere, turning countless absurdities into beauty, with fireworks blooming from the abyss. In "Serenity and Courage,"(2024) an elder with white hair gazes at city neon lights, alongside a stubborn lamb and blooming fireworks, encountering strong conflicts. In "Elephant Graveyard,"(2024) the elephants walking in the same direction, combined with the vaguely staff-like streetlights, stitch together their distinct stories. "Farewell to absurd choices, the dreams of dark abyss, rivalries, the prolonged patience, the flight of the seasons, the artificial order of ideas, the ramp of danger, time for everything!" Fang Xianchen's paintings are a place of imaginative experimentation and a sanctuary in reality.

About Artist

Fang Xianchen (b. Xinjiang, 1994) graduated from the Oil Painting Department of the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) in 2016 and obtained his postgraduate degree from the Oil Painting Department of CAFA in 2019. He now lives and works in Beijing.

Reticent yet suggestive, Fang Xianchen's works depict scenes that discuss about spatial structure, whereas the scenes are precisely from the artist's everyday life. The craftsman-esque ambition of detailing is thus not the focus of Fang. Rather, he endeavors to create a sense of tension and detachment from space, giving feelings of uneasiness, suspension, and dream-like instability through such a surrealist approach. This space contains no reality, for it is more occupied by the imagination and resonant gaze of time. In Fang Xianchen's works, it is not difficult to find subtle metaphors and straightforward language to be coexisting simultaneously, connoting the artist's self-reflection in the search of a new self, a new identity.

His solo exhibition includes: LAO YUE LIANG, SENSE GALLERY, Beijing (2023, solo); Bewitchment By Language, HuaiXuan, Beijing (2023, group); Dream Bird, Tang Contemporary Art, Hong Kong, Wong Chuk Hang Space (2023, group); Animal Farm, SENSE GALLERY, Beijing (2022, solo); A Gentle Conversation With Nothingness, Blanc Art Space, Beijing (2023, group); Pigeon Superstition, O2art Space, Beijing(2023, group); WILD BEAST, SENSE GALLERY, Beijing (2022, group); Into The Wilderness, O2art Space, Beijing(2023, group); NICHE, SENSE SPACE, Beijing (2021, solo); I Heard You Paint The House, SENSE SPACE x Building 23 artist Community, Beijing (2021, group); Exist、Time、Significance、Love, PARAGON BOOK GALLERY, Beijing (2019, solo project); EPARTY, 798 Art Center, Beijing (2019, group).

About Curator

Fiona Lu (b. 1992, Hubei, China), is the director of the exhibition department of Tang Contemporary Art. Her curating themes include intergenerational research of artists, gender research, fashion and virtual art, with special focus placed on the research of emerging art phenomena brought by young Chinese artists born in the 90s and 00s. Fiona is committed to bringing out the strength of younger generations of artists.

Past curating exhibitions include: "Jade Ching-Yuk Ng: Echo of Silhouettes"(2024), "Leng Guangmin: Shells garner Lingering Light"(2023), "The Body of Cybele : Liu Youran Solo Exhibition"(2023), "Group Show: Dream Bird"(2023), "Hou Jianan: Picnic"(2023), "Group Show: Mille Cortex"(2023), "Gao Hang: Digital Primitivism"(2023), "Jade Ching-Yuk Ng: GUSH"(2022), "A Room of One's Own"(2022), "Diary of Inner Inspiration: Wu Yi Solo Exhibition"(2022), "Zhu Jinshi Solo Exhibition: Accidental Aesthetics"(2022), "Yue Minjun: Smile at the Flower Sermon"(2022), "Indoor Weather" Caochangdi spring art show (2022), "Memory, Playfulness, and Stream of Consciousness"(2022), "Global Song"(2022), "Low Fever"(2021), "Li Erpeng: Control"(2021), "Guo Yuheng Solo Exhibition"(2020), etc. She was also selected to be part of the Emerging Curator Project of Shanghai Museum of Contemporary Art (2018).