

Hive - Becoming XXXVIII

Emptiness and Mirror

Press Release

Artist: Fang Yuan

Curator: Yang Jian

Opening: 2021.7.10 16:00

Exhibition Dates: 2021.7.10-2021.8.29

Venue: Hive Center for Contemporary Art

Address: E06, 798 Art District, Chaoyang District, Beijing, China

Hive Center for Contemporary Art is pleased to announce the debut solo exhibition of Fang Yuan (b.1996) in China, "Fang Yuan: Emptiness and Mirror," at galleries B and C. This show will focus on organizing and presenting the systematic practice of the artist's easel paintings. Fang Yuan graduated from the School of Visual Arts with a B.F.A. in Visual and Critical Studies in 2019 and has been pursuing her M.F.A in Fine Arts there since 2020. The artist was born in Shenzhen, China. She currently lives and works in New York City.

With her research-based experiences, Fang Yuan realized early on that in our established art historical narrative, there is often some opposition between the image and the form, while both of which contain and address visual elements. Fang, therefore, reserved from producing images in favor of more intuitive and perceptive abstract expressions, where the images often serve merely as an entry point to inspiration or are received by inspecting with a different method of comprehension after being painted. The reception is often reflected in the title of the work, which, like her paintings, is full of poetic sentiments of criticism.

Interdisciplinary cultural expositions and perceptions, like architecture and fashion, have always been crucial hidden forces and motivations for Fang Yuan's practice. Unlike figuration and narrative's introduction of various forms into paintings, Fang's works are to highlight and intervene the medium as an object, which is a method or approach for painting to resort to itself or its subjectification. In this transformation, diverse cultural references are flattened into the same dimension for parallel treatment. Instead of symbolism, these references come from numerous evident and ambiguous visual discourses and rhetorics and, in turn, reveal painting itself, forming captivating intertextual poetics. For the artist, such practice is not a technique, form, or straightforward imagery transformation but an operation that requires profound thinking and mobilization of intense sensibility, cognition, and rationality. This is the reason she had adopted formal media elements such as brushstrokes, paint, color, and traces while avoiding images.

Like storming down the streets of New York while glimpsing all sorts of cultural phenomena of confrontation, conflict, and ideology, there is a sense of urgency and destruction in Fang Yuan's work. She manages to manipulate this high frequency of momentum in a way that wavers what we are familiar with and certain classic forms with modernist characteristics. We are accustomed to exercising dominance over all sorts of things; we are habituated to retaining the order and structure of every surface and plane, while this sense of imbalance and intensity reminds us that we are facing a painting rather than an image. Subsequently, the thread of modern art history brimmed with classical significance connects the artist's perpetual self-reference, self-consciousness, and self-parody, drawing our sensations and thoughts to the most quintessential production system of contemporary painting. In other words, the artist has been deliberately delving for a way to present painting as a fact to our eyes with exquisiteness and individuality.