

GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE

QIU SHIHUA
Neiguan

07.09.2023 – 21.12.2023
Opening Thursday 7th September 2023 from 6pm to 8pm

Press kit

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Artist's quotes

“Forget everything. When there is nothing left, you can taste the pleasure of emptiness [...]. When everything outside disappears, there is an expansion inside: when form retreats, the spirit reveals itself.”

“My paintings are like a door, through which anyone can go through.”

“...depiction and landscape are a lot at the beginning (of the painting process) and at the end only a little. The depiction becomes gradually less, and more vague, or, to put it another way, whiter. Inwardly, intention, meaning, and spirit gradually become more peaceful, motionless, reserved, or flatter, blander, and lacking in any particularities. Outwardly, the inner vital spirit and a glow become more and more obvious. As if a sort of voice were there... ”

“It is like being in meditation, when the entire cosmos looks like a white mist. Here, time and space seem to be annihilated. Human passions do not matter.”

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Portrait de Qiu Shihua dans son studio à Beijing, 2016. Photo: HuaXia

Biography

Qiu Shihua was born in 1940 in Zizhong, in Sichuan province (China). He obtained a diploma from the Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts in 1962 with a focus on oil painting, in a China that was still closed to the Western world and its art. His first solo exhibitions took place in Chinese galleries in the early 1990s. Today, Qiu Shihua is an internationally renowned artist. In 2001, the New York Kunsthalle held his first monographic exhibition outside of China. Since then, his work has been honoured in numerous personal exhibitions, such as *White Field* at Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin in 2012. He also took part in prestigious collective shows, including *Ink Art: Past as Present in Contemporary China*, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 2013. His works were exhibited at the São Paulo Biennial in Brazil (1996), the Venice Biennial (1999) and the Shanghai Biennial (2004), and are part of major collections, including the Louis Vuitton Foundation (Paris), DKS Museum (Duisburg), the Metropolitan Museum of Arts (New York) and the LACMA (Los Angeles). Qiu Shihua lives and works between Beijing and Shenzhen (China). Galerie Karsten Greve has represented Qiu Shihua since 2015. A catalogue was published by the gallery to celebrate his work in 2018.

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QIU SHIHUA

Neiguan (inner vision)

September 7th to December 21st 2023

Opening September 7th from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Following the success of our precedent exhibitions devoted to the Chinese painter Qiu Shihua, Galerie Karsten Greve is delighted to present a new solo show featuring fifteen of the artist's canvases and works on paper from 1995 until today, on display for the first time in our Parisian gallery.

With this new presentation, Qiu Shihua continues his steadfast exploration of the landscape genre. Through a panorama of works, the artist engages the viewer in a sustained exercise in seeing. Defying immediate readability, Qiu Shihua's art reserves a plethora of visual surprises for the patient eye and requires the onlooker to adjust their gaze continuously, thus allowing the painting to emerge in time. While nature and landscapes are a constant in Qiu Shihua's work, his art starting from the 1980s is deeply influenced by Taoist philosophy. This presentation therefore invites the visitor to delve into the artist's unique pictorial world and above all, to experience first-hand its introspective nature that some have described as "soul landscapes."

Born in 1940 in Zizhong, in Sichuan province (China), Qiu Shihua began to paint, self-taught, from a very young age before studying at Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts. Despite his soviet-style education, the artist was familiar with the French and German schools of painting and practiced outdoor painting. By the time he began his studies, China's ancient artistic and literary culture was increasingly side-lined by the Communist politics of the day. Under Mao's leadership, traditional Chinese artists were under pressure to adapt their painting to Communist themes and styles, leaving little room for the intelligentsia to flourish. Illustrating posters for a living, Qiu Shihua was commissioned to create art in this vein too.

It wasn't until 1984 during a visit to Europe that Qiu Shihua really encountered the pioneers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century European art, beginning with the Impressionists. It was also during this time that the artist visited the Gobi Desert which marked a turning point in his life and his art. Evacuating the unnecessary and the abundance of information he had accumulated over the years, the artist's creative process would from hereon be aligned with his spiritual thinking. In his canvases, Qiu Shihua gives shape to the Taoist concept of "action through inaction" – letting results arise through their own paths – or rather, its opposite: non-action through action. In his words: *"I began to cultivate myself according to the principles of Taoism, which took a very long time. From that point on, my heart became calmer and I became more relaxed. Taoism unconsciously permeated my work (...). In the past I had always accumulated more and more information and felt that I was always looking outwards, but now I look inwards – it was a long road back."* In Taoist ideology, humans and nature are complementary. The quest for wisdom lies in harmony, which is found when the heart and spirit are aligned with the Tao, the Way of Nature.

Deeply knowledgeable about Chinese and Western painting, the artist explores diverse techniques in a cross-fertilisation of both traditions in his paintings. Qiu Shihua's art offers visions of landscapes that oscillate between the Western idea of abstraction and reduction, on the one hand, and Taoist concepts of repetition and emptiness, on the other. Techniques established by artists such as Claude Monet and William Turner can be identified through the dissolution of the landscape into a painterly process and the treatment of subject matter through the study of light and atmosphere. In keeping with the Chinese tradition of *Shanshui* painting (*shan* - mountain and *shui* - water), he rhythms the surface of the canvas with an interplay of fullness and emptiness. The eye therefore travels over the entire canvas, never settling on one specific area for too long. Also reminiscent of traditional

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Chinese scroll paintings which afford an intimate and progressive viewing for the spectator, Qiu Shihua's work distances itself from one-point perspective, characteristic of Western art and appears to unravel itself in a temporal process. Furthermore, the merging of Eastern and Western traditions is exemplified through Qiu Shihua's choice of materials. Instead of the traditional ink on paper adopted by Chinese artists, he opts for oils on canvas. The result is unique – neither landscape nor total abstraction, a fusion of the ancestral and the contemporary, the Western and the Eastern.

When encountering the artist's work for the first time, one's immediate impression may be that of monochrome painting. White is dominant in Qiu Shihua's art. In Chinese, the word for 'white' and the word for 'empty' (respectively *Baise* and *Kongbai*) have the same root (-*bai*-). Untitled, his paintings do not allude to a specific or imaginary place and therefore do not guide the viewer towards an interpretation. Beginning his process with a landscape painting composed of primary colours (blue, red or yellow), Qiu Shihua proceeds with a careful and deliberate erasing *and* revealing of details, inlaying the motifs in thin veils or glazes of diluted pale paint. In his most challenging and captivating paintings, the image is concealed among the layers, leaving little trace of the genesis of creation. Pushing the image to the fringes of abstraction, the canvas appears almost untouched. The colour white therefore responds to a wish for emptiness, the essence of all things. However, in Qiu Shihua's art, it is not only the spatiality within the picture that we consider, but its relationship to real space.¹ Depending on the light and where one is standing, the faintest of figurative elements appear and disappear like apparitions. Some paintings give "respite" to the spectator's gaze by offering more visual "clues", but it is highly unlikely that spectators will see the same motifs at any given time. One could be witnessing a mass of clouds or treetops, an expanse of water or rolling hills. Within Qiu Shihua's art resides options and possibilities, but no fixed answers, just as the Tao or "the way" evades precise understanding. Furthermore, the figurative elements derive from the artist's inner vision which in turn has the subtle power to create a space for reflection and provoke the viewer into contemplation. The texture of the paint and the "raw" quality of the canvas also incite the viewer to look closer. Through the transparencies and nuances, subtle hues and inflections of colour (pink, green, blue, orange...) pierce the layers of paint and challenge once again the initial perception of a monochrome white painting.

In an attempt to "give expression to visions beyond the visible", Qiu Shihua offers a highly personal experience to each visitor that prioritises individual perception and consequently bestows greater critical powers on the viewer.² Qiu Shihua represents a generation of artists concerned with the modernisation of traditional Chinese art and the adaptation of the techniques of Western art, between landscape painting and abstraction. Similar to the demands imposed by installations or environments and owing to the fact that his art is so difficult to reproduce, his work requires that we be physically present in order to truly experience it.³ In Qiu Shihua's own words: "*When the beholder enters the (picture) space, he will feel how real they are, and he will notice how what he sees changes every now and then, sometimes growing larger, sometimes smaller, depending on his inner state.*"

¹ Silke Von Berswordt – Wallrabe, *Between presence and absence. Qiu Shihua's landscape painting*, published in *Qiu Shihua*, exh.cat. National-galerie Berlin, Museum Pfalzgalerie Kaiserslautern, Düsseldorf, 2012, ed. Richter & Fey, p.28

² Ibid., p.38.

³ Ibid., p.38.

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Qiu Shihua

Untitled

2006

Oil on canvas

150 x 193 x 3 cm

© Qiu Shihua, Courtesy Galerie Karsten Greve Paris, Köln, St. Moritz

Photo: Serge Hasenböhler

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Qiu Shihua

Untitled

2019

Oil on canvas

110,2 x 70,2 x 5 cm

© Qiu Shihua, Courtesy Galerie Karsten Greve Paris, Köln, St. Moritz

Photo: Serge Hasenböhler

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Public collections (selection)

M+ Museum, Hong-Kong, CN
Zhuzhong Art Museum, Beijing, CN
The National Museum of China, Beijing, CN
Museum DKM, Duisburg, DE
Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris, FR
The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, IL
The Royal Academy of Art, London, UK
The Metropolitan Museum of Art (MET), New York, USA
Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Los Angeles, USA

Solo exhibitions (selection)

2023 *Qiu Shihua, Neiguan*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, FR
2022 *Qiu Shihua, Visible...Invisible*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, DE
2021 *Qiu Shihua, Visible...Invisible*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, FR
2020 *Qiu Shihua – Empty/Not empty*, Galerie Urs Meile, Lucerne, CH
Qiu Shihua – Empty/Not empty, Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing, CN
2019 *Qiu Shihua, Landscapes*, Galerie Karsten Greve, St-Moritz, CH
2018 *Scheinbar: nichts. Bildwelten von QIU SHIHUA im Dialog*, Museum unter age-Situation Kunst,
Bochum, DE
Qiu Shihua, Impressions, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, DE
Qiu Shihua, Impressions, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, FR
2017 *Qiu Shihua*, Galerie Urs Meile Beijing, CN
2015 *Qiu Shihua. Aura of Nature*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, DE
Qiu Shihua, Calme, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, FR
2013 *Qiu Shihua - New Works*, Galerie Urs Meile Lucerne, CH
St. Moritz Art Masters Winter Exhibition, reformierte Dorfkirche, St. Moritz, CH
2012 *Qiu Shihua. Landschaft, Licht und Stille*, Museum Pfalzgalerie Kaiserslautern,
Kaiserslautern, DE
Qiu Shihua, Gallery Luis Campaña, Berlin, DE
Qiu Shihua. White Field, Hamburger Bahnhof, Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin, DE
2010 *Qiu Shihua*, Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing, CN
2009 *Qiu Shihua - New Works*, Galerie Urs Meile, Lucerne, CH
2008 *Qiu Shihua*, Shanghai Gallery of Art, Shanghai, CN
2007 *Qiu Shi-Hua*, Luis Campana Gallery, Cologne, DE
2006 *Qiu Shihua*, Galerie 75 Faubourg, Paris, FR
2005 *Qiu Shihua*, Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing-Lucerne, Lucerne, CH
Insight: Paintings by Qiu Shihua, Chambers Fine Art, New York, USA
Visions of Fields by Qiu Shihua, Hanart TZ Gallery, Hong Kong, CN
2004 *Qiu Shihua*, Künstlerverein Malkasten, Düsseldorf, DE
2003 *Qiu Shihua*, Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing-Lucerne, Lucerne, CH
Qiu Shihua, Galerie Luis Campaña, Cologne, DE
2002 *White Landscape*, Pruss & Ochs Gallery, Berlin, DE

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- 2001 *Landscape - Painting on the Edge of Visibility*, Galleria OTSO, Espoo, FI
Qiu Shihua, The New York Kunsthalle, New York, USA
- 2000 *Qiu Shihua*, Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing-Lucerne, Lucerne, CH
Qiu Shihua, Landscape - Paintings on the Edge of Visibility, Galerie Rudolfinum, Prague, CZ
Galerie Sternberk, Sternberk, CZ
- 1999 *Qiu Shihua*, Kunsthalle Basel, Basel, CH
- 1997 *Qiu Shihua*, Hanart TZ Gallery, CN
Qiu Shihua, Hanart Gallery, Taipei, TW
- 1995 *Qiu Shihua*, Hanart TZ Gallery, HK
- 1991 *Qiu Shihua*, Hanart TZ Gallery, HK
Qiu Shihua, Hanart TZ Gallery, Taipei, TW



Exhibition views, Qiu Shihua, *Visible...Invisible*, 2021, Galerie Karsten Greve Cologne
Photo: Galerie Karsten Greve Köln, Paris, St. Moritz

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Group exhibitions (selection)

- 2022 *Horizons, Qiu Shibua – Leiko Ikemura - Kimsooja – Evelyn Taocheng Wang – Yu Duan*,
Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst Köln, Cologne, DE
- 2021 *Nothingtoseeness – Void/White/Silence*, Akademie der Künste, Berlin, DE
SNAPSHOT, Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing, CN
Minestrone, Galerie Urs Meile, Ardez, CH
- 2020 *Chinese Colours: Eastward Turn To Absoluteness*, Long Museum, Shanghai, CN
China Longing for Nature - Reading Landscapes in Chinese Art, Museum Rietberg, Zurich, CH
THE WHITE Into THE BLANK, Whitebox Art Center, Beijing, CN
- 2018 *Lolo's Entanglements*, De Warande, Turnhout, BE
A Chinese Journey, The Sigg Collection, Noordbrabants museum, 's-Hertogenbosch, NL
- 2017 *Autumn Show*, Galerie Karsten Greve AG, St. Moritz, CH
- 2016 *Winter Accrochage*, Galerie Karsten Greve AG, St. Moritz, CH
Summer Show, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, DE
Ink and the Mind: Ink and Phenomenology. Exhibition No.2, Ink Studio, Beijing, CH
M+ Sigg Collection: Four Decades of Chinese Contemporary Art, ArtisTree, HK
- 2015 *Beyond Horizon. Reflexion on the horizontal line*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, FR
Harmonie und Umbruch. Spiegelungen chinesischer Landschaften, MARTa Herford, Herford, DR
Accrochage, Galerie Karsten Greve AG, St. Moritz, CH
- 2014 *Unscrolled: Reframing Tradition in Chinese Contemporary Art*, Vancouver Art Gallery,
Vancouver, CA
DIALOGUE5:5, Kunstmuseum Bonn, Bonn, DE
Right Is Wrong: Four Decades of Chinese Art from the M+ Sigg Collection, Bonnefontenmuseum,
Maastricht, NL
- 2013 *Building Bridges - Zeitgenössische Kunst aus China*, Wolfsberg, Ermatingen, CH
Blank to Blank - Inframince Exhibition II, Soka Art Centre, Beijing, CN
Ink Art: Past as Present in Contemporary China, The Metropolitan Museum of Art,
New York, USA
- 2012 *Duchamp' Inframince in Painting – First Zhuangzi International Conference Parallel Exhibition*, Yuan
Art Museum, Beijing, CN
Weltsichten. Landschaft in der Kunst vom 17. Jahrhundert bis zum 21. Jahrhundert, Kunstmuseum
Dieselkraftwerk Cottbus, DE
Landschaft als Weltsicht, Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz, Chemnitz, DE
Self-essence Naturalism, Today Art Museum, Beijing, CN
- 2011 *Weltsichten. Landschaft in der Kunst seit dem 17. Jahrhundert*, Museum Wiesbaden,
Wiesbaden, DE
Weltsichten. Landschaft in der Kunst seit dem 17. Jahrhundert, Kunsthalle zu Kiel, Kiel, DE
Shanshui - Poetry Without Sound? Landscape in Chinese Contemporary Art, Kunstmuseum Luzern,
Lucerne, CH
- 2010 *Weltsicht. Landschaft in der Kunst seit dem 17. Jahrhundert*, Situation Kunst, Bochum, DE
- 2009 *Linien stiller Schönheit*, DKM Museum, Duisburg, DE
Black and White - Qiu Shibua and Yang Liming, Found Museum, Beijing, CN

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- 2008 *RED Aside - Chinese Contemporary Art of the Sigg Collection*, Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelone, ES
Yi School: Thirty Years of Chinese Abstract Art, Palma, Barcelone et Madrid, ES
Qi Yun - The International Travelling Exhibition of Chinese Abstract Art, China Square Gallery, New York, USA
Mahjong: Contemporary Chinese Art from the Sigg Collection, The University of California, Berkeley Art Museum, Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley, USA
Nur der Schein trügt nicht, Situation Kunst, Kunstsammlungen der Ruhr-Universität Bochum, DE
- 2007 *Mahjong - Chinesische Gegenwartskunst aus der Sammlung Sigg*, Museum der Moderne, Salzburg, AT
Qi Yun - The International Travelling Exhibition of Chinese Abstract Art, OCT Contemporary Art Terminal of The Xiangnin Museum, Shenzhen; Art Now Gallery, Beijing; Hong Kong Artist Commune, HK
Art from China - Collection Uli Sigg, Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, Rio de Janeiro, BR
White Out, Künstlerhaus Palais Thurn und Taxis, Bregenz, Autriche; Stadtgalerie Saarbrücken, Saarbrücken, DE



Qiu Shihua

Untitled

2019

Oil on canvas

43,7 x 70 x 3,8 cm

© Qiu Shihua, Courtesy Galerie Karsten Greve Paris, Köln, St. Moritz

Photo: Serge Hasenböhler

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- 2006 *The Sublime is Now*, Museum Franz Gertsch, Burgdorf, CH
Mahjong - Chinesische Gegenwartskunst aus der Sammlung Sigg, Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, DE
- 2005 *Pictorial DANN made in China*, Galerie Urs meile, Beijing-Lucerne, Lucerne, CH
Mahjong - Chinesische Gegenwartskunst aus der Sammlung Sigg, Kunstmuseum Bern, Bern, CH
China. Prospettive d'Arte Contemporanea / China: As Seen by Contemporary Chinese Artists, Provincia di Milano, Spazio Oberdan, Milan, IT
- 2004 5th Shanghai Biennale, Shanghai, CN
Shanghai Biennale, Shanghai, CN
Le Printemps de Chine, CRAC Alsace, FR
- 2003 *Einbildung - Das Wahrnehmen in der Kunst*, Kunsthau Graz, AT
New Zone - Chinese Art, Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, PL
- 2002 *China - Tradition und Moderne*, Museum Ludwig Galerie Schloss Oberhausen, DE
- 2001 *Take Part II*, Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing-Lucerne, Lucerne, CH
The Inward Eye: Transcendence in Contemporary Art, Contemporary Art Museum, Houston, USA
2nd Berlin Biennale, Berlin, DE
Take Part I, Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing-Lucerne, Lucerne, CH
- 2000 *Landscape - Painting on the Edge of Visibility*, Galerie Rudolfinum, Prague, CZ
Our Chinese Friends, ACC Galerie et Galerie der Bauhaus-Universität (en collaboration avec Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing-Lucerne), Weimar, DE
- 1999 *d'APERTutto*, La Biennale di Venezia, 48. Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte, Venise, IT
- 1998 *Eight Chinese Artists*, Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing-Lucerne, Lucerne, CH
- 1996 *China*, Kunst Museum Bonn, Bonn, Allemagne; Künstler Wien, Vienne, AT
Art Museum Singapore, Singapore; Zacheta national Gallery of Art, Warsaw, Pologne;
Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, DE
Qiu Shihua, The 23rd São Paulo Art Biennial (invité d'honneur), São Paulo, BR
- 1995 *China's New Art Post - 1989*, University of Oregon Museum of Art, Portland, USA
- 1992 *The First Annual Exhibition of Chinese Oil Painting*, HK
- 1986 *Chinese Art Festival*, La Défense, Paris, FR

Monographies et catalogues d'expositions personnelles (sélection)

- 2018 Galerie Karsten Greve (Ed.) cat., *Qiu Shihua*, Paris.
- 2012 Buhlmann, B. E. & Kittelmann, U., (Ed.), *Qiu Shihua*, Museum Pfalzgalerie, Kaiserlautern, Richter & Fey Verlag.
- 2010 Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing-Lucerne, *Qiu Shihua, New Works*, Beijing.
- 2005 Mao, C. W., (Ed.), *Insight, Paintings by Qiu Shihua*, Chambers Fine Art, New York.
- 2000 Galerie Rudolfinum (Ed.) cat., *Qiu Shi-hua, Landscape Painting*, Prague.
- 1999 Kunsthalle Basel (Ed.) cat., *Qiu Shihua*, Schwabe & Co, AG Verlag Basel.
- 1996 Chiu, C., Mazella di Bosco J. B., *Qiu ShihuaI*, Biennial of São Paulo, Fundação Biennial de São Paulo.

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Qiu Shihua

Untitled

2019

Oil on canvas

44 x 69,7 x 2,4 cm

© Qiu Shihua, Courtesy Galerie Karsten Greve Paris, Köln, St. Moritz

Photo: Serge Hasenböhler

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Qiu Shihua

Untitled

2004

Oil on canvas

152 x 188 x 3 cm

© Qiu Shihua, Courtesy Galerie Karsten Greve Paris, Köln, St. Moritz
Photo: Serge Hasenböhler



ARTPIL



Qiu Shihua

Qiu Shihua / Visible... Invisible

FEB 12 – MAY 16, 2022

GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE
COLOGNE, GERMANY

Galerie Karsten Greve is delighted to present *Qiu Shihua Visible... Invisible* at the beginning of the new year, making it the third solo exhibition shown in Karsten Greve's Cologne gallery space featuring works by Chinese contemporary artist Qiu Shihua. This is Qiu Shihua's seventh one-man show with Galerie Karsten Greve, which has represented and presented the artist since 2015. Eleven oil paintings created between 2006 and 2019 will be on display, as will twelve works on paper dating from 2018 and 2019 to be premiered here.

At first glance, the works by Chinese artist Qiu Shihua seem to be monochrome paintings. However, out of nowhere, from the all-encompassing white-on-white that covers the natural hue of the raw canvas like a transparent, white veil, weak contrasts and vague contours emerge. In transparent glazes, Qiu Shihua makes landscape motifs appear and disappear. Shades condense into hills and valleys, groups of trees and forest silhouettes, mountain ridges and rocky precipices. The sun flickers as a luminous spot and a guide in impenetrable banks of fog. Slight color modulations on a whitish underlying tone break through the monochrome and, upon closer inspection, reveal themselves to be a superimposition of delicately colored layers of pale gray, blue, pink, and yellow. "In my pictures I try to give expression to visions beyond the visible. But I also try to depict things completely and at the same time vividly. When the beholder enters the (picture) space, he will feel how real they are, and he will notice how what he sees changes every now and then, sometimes growing larger, sometimes smaller, depending on his inner state," says Qiu Shihua about his paintings.



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LUXUO

STYLE CULTURE MOTORING PROPERTIES LIFESTYLE THE LUX LIST

Karsten Greve Presents Qiu Shihua, A Study in White

This year marks his second exhibition with the gallery, which will run from 1 September to 6 October at their Paris space.

Sep 11, 2018 | By Art Republik

Qiu Shihua



Conjuring up paintings that converge at the fringes of visibility and invisibility, Qiu Shihua emerges as one of the more prolific Chinese landscape painters of his time, first debuting in the European art scene in 1999 with Kunsthalle Basel in Switzerland. Since then, Qiu has gone on to display his works in several prominent galleries and museums in the Western art world, including a solo show entitled 'Calme' with Galerie Karsten Greve in 2015. This year marks his second exhibition with

the gallery, which will run from 1 September to 6 October at their Paris space.

A Study in White



Born in 1940 in Zizhong, China, Qiu's education in the sixties at the Xi'an Art Academy was marked by both China's isolation from the West, and a Socialist Realism derived directly from both Soviet and traditional Chinese artistic influences. Upon graduation, his career coincided with the Chinese Cultural Revolution, which was met by a nascent growth in Cynical Realism, an artistic movement propagated by figures such as Liu Wei and Fang Lijun. Unlike the

other contemporary Chinese artists of his time, however, Qiu steered away from his immediate social milieu, positioning himself instead as a figurative painter.

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Taking influence from his encounters with French Impressionism, alongside his traditional Chinese training, his works evoke atmospheric and veiled tones while elucidating the introspective nature of landscape painting. In particular, the latter is couched in his practice of Taoism, otherwise known as the teaching of Tao, or “the Way”. Each landscape is thus a mere motif or iteration but not an ends to itself. The signal at a deeper underlying force that guides Qiu’s process: just as how the Way eludes

precise articulation and understanding, the subjects that surface in Qiu’s paintings escape direct confrontation, existing merely as possibilities.

In any gallery setup, Qiu’s canvases of white paint, idiosyncratic of his oeuvre beginning from the early eighties, are easy for the untrained eye to dismiss as prima facie empty figurations adorning equally blank walls. Initially foreboding, each painting seems to present a monolithic void that gazes stoically back at the viewer. Yet, the apparent simplicity of the paintings conceals a depth of layers, formed by precise and sensitive gestures that cloak the works with an interplay of light and shadows. In fact, there is nothing easy or apparent about Qiu’s works. By presenting audiences with a disorienting nothingness, the works demand concentration and patient meditation. It is only then that the shadowy landscapes encompassing trees or seascapes, illuminated by vestibules of light, are revealed calmly to perception, fading away from view as quickly as they emerge.

As such, Qiu’s pieces resist copy in a Benjamin age of mechanical reproduction. Rather, it is almost necessary to view his pieces with the naked eye, since photographic or illustrated mediums tend to dilute his works into a miry whiteness, making it impossible to discern otherwise. Yet, landscapes are not the only thing that each painting holds, and whiteness is not the only hue that materialises on the canvas. Lighting shone onto each piece can sometimes divulge subtle inflections of varying colours that the whiteness itself comprises: tones of pale greys, blues, pinks and yellows punctuate what was once invisible to the eye.



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BLOUINARTINFO

Qiu Shihua's "Impressions" at Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris

Par BLOUIN ARTINFO, en ligne le 11/09/2018

Galerie Karsten Greve in Paris is featuring new works of Chinese painter Qiu Shihua.

On view through October 6, this is the second solo show of the artists in France, following the great success of his last exhibition, held in 2015 in the gallery space and it consist about 20 paintings completed between 2001 and 2012.

"Nature has always been the source of Qiu Shihua's art. The artist often refers to his journey across the Gobi desert — its immensity and its dryness — as being a founding experience for his artistic process. While he did indeed begin his career painting outdoors, he would soon discover a preference for working in his studio where he would translate the feelings that nature inspires into paintings. His works are therefore 'Natural atmospheres' more so than representations of a physical reality," the gallery says.

"In his landscapes, white is the highlight. Qiu Shihua twins white with light itself, and conceives of the pictorial creation as a transition from the realm of shadows into the clear perception of the pattern or image: as would an Impressionist who makes light the focal point of the piece," the gallery adds.

Qiu Shihua was born in 1940 in Zizhong (Sichuan, China). He studied painting at the Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts, training first and foremost in traditional Chinese painting techniques. After a solo exhibition held in 2001 at the New York Kunsthalle, and group shows such as Mahjong at the Kunstmuseum Bern, Switzerland (2005); and subsequently those held in Hamburg, Germany, and Salzburg, Austria (2006); "The Sublime is Now" at the Franz Gertsch Museum (2006) and "Shanshui" at the Kunstmuseum Luzern, Switzerland (2011); Qiu Shihua has earned international renown.

His work was featured at the Venice Biennale in 1999; the Shanghai Biennale in 2004 and at the Sao Paulo Biennale in 1996. In 2012, two important retrospectives of his work were presented at the Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin and at the Pfalzalerie a Kaiserslautern in Germany.

"Impressions" is on view through October 6, 2018 at Galerie Karsten Greve, 5, rue Debelleye, 75003-Paris, France.

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Art in America

Qiu Shihua

Par Travis Jeppersen dans Art in America, en ligne le 17/11/2015

From a distance, they look like white monochromes—if anything at all. Quite often, they suggest raw canvas, without even a layer of gesso. When you get a bit closer, however, and allow your eyes to rest upon them for half a minute, a full minute, longer, suddenly entire landscapes appear before you—worlds half-known and half-dreamed, much as in classical Chinese landscape paintings.

How does he do it? This is the inherent mystery of Qiu Shihua's paintings. Even on close inspection the shapes of trees, forests and suns on the canvases seem to have been rendered almost accidentally, resembling light coatings of amassed dust. What's more, the difficulty of discussing Qiu's paintings in a critical context (namely, the fact that they are almost impossible to reproduce) is exacerbated by his choice not to title them, which is perhaps partly why so few people have written about his work.

Qiu's recent exhibition at Luis Campaña consisted of six paintings of varying sizes, and was thus fairly compact—fittingly so, considering the amount of concentration each canvas requires. One of the smallest works in the show, dated 2014 and measuring around 16 by 20 inches, is centered with a full moon—or could it be an overripe sun? It shines above a round hollow, which we take to be a lake or a pond, surrounded by land. In the foreground, a tree stands proud, naked with its barren autumn branches outstretched like monster claws in an expressionist film.

A larger canvas, about 45 by 94 inches, dated 2006, utilizes the barest discernible inferences of green to infer the movements of the sea—or is that a bed of clouds? Looked at from another angle, it could also be a conference of mountains or rolling hills, seen from above.

We often don't know, and sometimes two viewers might disagree on just what it is they are seeing. That is the mystery, the value of Qiu's painting. Images are hidden in snow or smog, or, to use an analogy to the mind's processes, it is as though they are shrouded in the mists of memory: you have to go somewhere in order to locate them. Such probing always leads back to the self: what am I doing here and why? A horizon conceals as much as it shows; there is always a certain amount of deception in such instances of blatant nakedness.

Qiu's project remains steadfast and unrelenting as the years go by and the canvases pile up. Nature is our friend; it is also, inevitably, our end. Qiu is painting the void we are all well aware of, and that some of us may even wish to enter permanently.

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Los Angeles Times

'Ink Art' at Metropolitan Museum of Art plays with Chinese tradition

'Ink Art: Past as Present in Contemporary China' at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York features artists including Ai Weiwei drawing on tradition in unexpected ways.

Par Scarlet Cheng dans Los Angeles Times, en ligne le 11/01/2014

NEW YORK — It's hard to break from the past. Even under the Chinese Cultural Revolution, which sought to smash the "Four Olds" of customs, culture, habits and ideas, the tradition of calligraphy was held in reverence, as it had been for centuries. Chairman Mao's own calligraphy served as nameplate for the powerful newspaper the People's Daily.

"Ink Art: Past as Present in Contemporary China," at the Metropolitan Museum of Art through April 6, ambitiously seeks to tie past with present through the work of 35 artists. It's the first contemporary Chinese art show at the museum, and curator Maxwell Hearn, head of the Asian art department, has carefully and sometimes wittily interwoven the work into the Chinese galleries, which usually display Imperial porcelain, scholar scrolls and the Ming garden. The juxtaposition highlights how the Chinese avant-garde, which rose in the 1980s, has been able to deploy traditional themes and media for its own purposes. While ink on paper works were obvious choices, Hearn cast his net wider by including works such as the white-on-white oil paintings by Qiu Shihua and an art film by Yang Fudong — they reminded him of Southern Sung paintings "obscured by mist," he says during a walkthrough of the exhibition. "I feel some of these artists are reaching back to draw on their traditions in ways that are surprising and unexpected."

In the 1980s Chinese artists began experimenting with "ink flow" and abstract imagery. In a 1985 group show, Gu Wenda presented large-scale paintings in which he combined genres and reconfigured the very components of Chinese writing. "Ink Art" includes three panels from his landmark series "Mythos of Lost Dynasty--Tranquility Comes from Meditation." "I tried to combine the two highest forms of Chinese art, calligraphy and landscape," says Gu. They depict a mysterious landscape, with a hybrid word looming in the central panel. It is made up of three parts, with the combination of the left two meaning "spirit," and the right two meaning "smooth" or "unobstructed." Hearn translates it as "to liberate the spirit" — in short, a manifesto for new Chinese art.

Gu, and later Xu Bing, became famous for "pseudo-characters," which questioned the very nature of words and what they convey; Chinese characters that are missing or have additional strokes are unreadable. The exhibition presents Xu Bing's "Book From the Sky" in its own gallery — an installation made up of open books on a raised platform with scrolls hanging over them. They seem grand and intimidating, yet they are covered with thousands of "pseudo-characters" Xu concocted.

The exhibition features several works by Ai Weiwei, probably the best-known Chinese artist today. "Map of China" is a wooden map of China pieced together from remnants of Qing temples. Says Hearn, "I see the symbolism here of China as a jigsaw, a fusion of many different regions and ethnicities." Elsewhere, in a room of Ming furnishings, are two examples of his

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reconfigured furniture — one is two stools fused together, the other is a table bent in the middle, with two legs placed on the wall.

A younger generation using new media is emerging. In her "Scroll" series, Xing Danwen combined multiple shots on one roll of film (in those pre-digital days), creating a horizontal scroll of overlapping pictures. One shows ordinary citizens seated along a walkway, another architectural details in the Forbidden City. Duan Jianyu refers to landscape in her own way, painting scenic highlights such as the Great Wall or Guilin mountains with ink on cardboard — corrugated cardboard, with some of the top layer torn away to reveal the rippled paper beneath.

One rising art star, video artist Sun Xun, has an unusual short in "Ink Art." He usually employs hand drawing or painting, but "Some Actions Which Haven't Been Defined Yet in the Revolution" features something even more labor-intensive, woodblock carvings — a medium popular during the Maoist era. The 12-minute video traces the strange Kafka-esque day in the life of a Chinese worker.

"I think ink is not a dead culture in China," he says via email, "and tradition becomes a part of life." And while he understands traditional Chinese art practices — he was trained at the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou — he's veered from them, and thinks of them as a tool, not a calling. "I just use relevant materials to extend the tradition. What I paint is not 'ink.' it's me!"

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