

# GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE

Photo: Serge Hasenböhler



*Untitled.*, 2016, oil on canvas, 153 x 294 x 3 cm

## QIU SHIHUA

January 30 – April 11, 2026

**Opening** on Friday, January 30, 2026, 6pm – 8pm

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Galerie Karsten Greve pays tribute to Qiu Shihua (1940–2025) and presents a curated selection of significant works on canvas and paper, many of which are being shown publicly for the first time. The works originate from a selection entrusted to the gallery by the artist late during his life. This fifth solo exhibition at the Cologne gallery honors an exceptional oeuvre in which, over several decades, Qiu Shihua developed a singular position between the millennia-old tradition of Chinese landscape painting and a radically reduced pictorial language. His works articulate an artistic stance in which perception, time, and philosophy are inextricably intertwined.

At first glance, Qiu Shihua's paintings appear almost empty: luminous, restrained pictorial fields in which color and form seem to dissolve. Yet through sustained, concentrated, indeed contemplative and meditative, viewing, they gradually begin to reveal themselves in subtle nuances. Mountains, forests, and lakes cautiously emerge from the finest layers of color, always fragile and fleeting, only to withdraw again in the next moment. Seeing becomes a time-bound process that resists acceleration, whose outcome remains inherently ephemeral. His painting does not unfold at a single glance, but rather as a gentle coming-into-being and fading-away, demanding attention and devotion.

The works elude immediate legibility and remain in a state of continuous transformation. This openness of perception, and the perpetual slipping away of the motif, lead into a condition that refuses fixation: one that lingers instead in suspension, poised between presence and absence.

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

QIU SHIHUA

In the radical reduction of his pictorial language, a meditative depth emerges that resonates with Taoist thought. In Taoism, to which Qiu Shihua aligned himself, life is understood as part of a natural, continuously transforming whole. At its center lies the Dao, an elusive principle from which all things arise and to which all things return. Apparent oppositions such as the visible and the invisible, emptiness and fullness, stillness and transformation are not conceived as contradictions, but as complementary forces within an ongoing process of change.

Rooted in the classical tradition of *shan shui* painting, Qiu Shihua translates its philosophical foundations into a radically reduced pictorial language. *Shan* (mountain) and *shui* (water) function less as concrete motifs than as a complementary unity of opposing forces. Within this tension between stillness and movement, density and emptiness, a form of painting unfolds that is not representation but experience. Qiu Shihua's images open a space for quiet contemplation, in which perception is revealed as an open, never-ending process, and the invisible plays a role as formative as the visible. He invites viewers to slow down their gaze and consciously engage

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with the fleeting nature of the moment. His painting demands this experience and thus stands in deliberate opposition to the visual overstimulation of the present: in the here and now of seeing lies the timeless relevance of his work.



Qiu Shihua in his studio, Beijing 2016. © HuaXia

**Qiu Shihua** was born in 1940 in Zizhong, in the Chinese province of Sichuan, and passed away in August 2025. Driven by curiosity, he taught himself painting by observing and depicting what he saw. He studied at the Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts in Shaanxi Province, where he graduated in 1962. His education was shaped by traditional Chinese painting as well as by Socialist Realism, in a China that was largely closed off from the Western world and its art. During the 1970s, amid the Cultural Revolution, Qiu Shihua worked as a poster painter in a cinema in the city of Tongchuan. In 1984, he returned to the Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts. Travels to Europe played a decisive role in the development of his painterly language. Around the same time, he journeyed into the Gobi Desert and began to engage deeply with Taoism, a philosophy to which he ultimately committed himself. This marked a profound shift in his artistic practice: he no longer painted outdoors, but instead devoted himself to landscape painting in the studio. His works increasingly became impressions of memory and natural atmospheres rather than representations of physical reality. Qiu Shihua adopted the Taoist concept of “acting through non-action,” in which things come into being by following their own course, or rather,

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conversely, a non-action that emerges through action. From this creative process arose a body of painting that, through its visible absence, poses questions and invites reflection.

During the 1990s, his first solo exhibitions were held in galleries in China and Taiwan. His works were also presented at major international exhibitions, including the São Paulo Biennial (1996), where he was a guest of honor; the 48th Venice Biennale (1999); the 2nd Berlin Biennale (2001); and the 5th Shanghai Biennale (2004). His work has since been shown in numerous international exhibitions, among them at the Zachęta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw (2003); a touring exhibition at the Kunstmuseum Bonn (2005), the Hamburger Kunsthalle (2006), and the Museum der Moderne Salzburg (2007); the Museum Franz Gertsch, Burgdorf (2006); the Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona (2008); the Kunstmuseum Luzern (2011); the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2013); the Vancouver Art Gallery (2014); Marta Herford (2015); the Noordbrabants Museum, 's-Hertogenbosch (2018); the Long Museum, Shanghai, and the Museum Rietberg, Zurich (2020); the Akademie der Künste, Berlin (2021); the Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne (2022–23); and the Kunsten Museum of Modern Art, Aalborg (2022).

Photo: Serge Hasenböhler

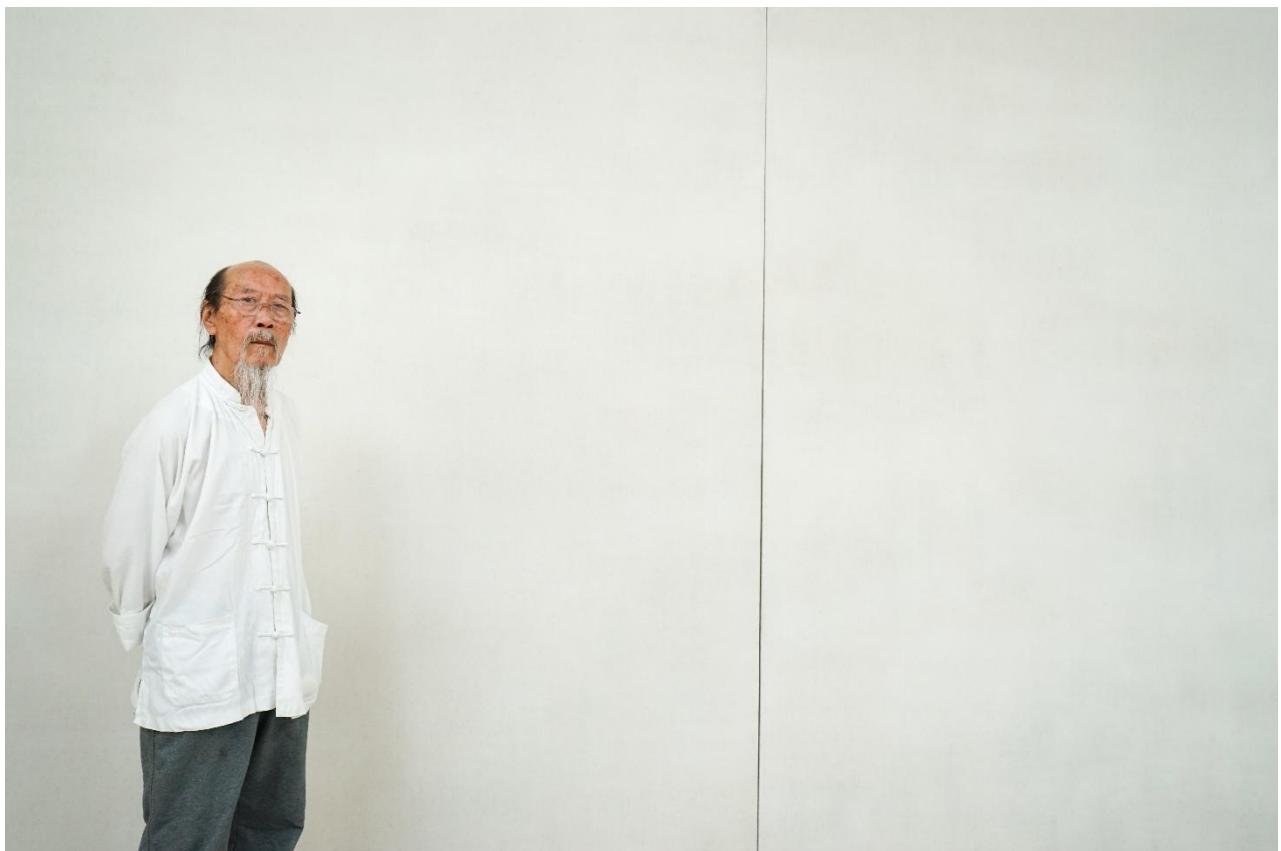


*Untitled*, 2016, oil on canvas, 153 x 293 x 3 cm | 60 1/4 x 115 1/3 x 1 1/4 in

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*„When I paint I do not think of structure or theme; what I seek is a certain “flavour” – a rhythm of spirit and energy, so that the soul drifts in the painting, like a shadow of the mind. Everything is flat and calm.“*

- QIU SHIHUA



Qiu Shihua in his studio, Beijing 2016. © HuaXia

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## PRESS IMAGES



**QIU SHIHUA**

*Untitled*, 2017

Oil on canvas

180 x 355 x 4.5 cm |

70 3/4 x 139 3/4 x 1 3/4 in

Photo: Serge Hasenböhler, Basel



**QIU SHIHUA**

*Untitled*, 2016

Oil on canvas

153 x 293 x 3 cm |

60 1/4 x 115 1/3 x 1 1/4 in

Photo: Serge Hasenböhler, Basel



**QIU SHIHUA**

*Untitled*, 2024

Mixed media on paper

56 x 66 cm | 22 x 26 in

Photo: Serge Hasenböhler, Basel

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Qiu Shihua in his studio,  
Beijing 2016

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Qiu Shihua in his studio,  
Beijing 2016

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## SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2026	<i>QIU SHIHUA</i> , Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, Germany
2024	<i>Qiu Shihua. Neiguan</i> , Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, Germany
2021/22	<i>Qiu Shihua, Visible... Invisible</i> , Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, France; travelled to: Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, Germany
2020	<i>Qiu Shihua – Empty/Not empty</i> , Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing, China
2019	<i>Qiu Shihua. Landscapes</i> , Galerie Karsten Greve, St. Moritz, Switzerland

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2018/19      *Qiu Shihua. Impressions*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, France; travelled to: Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, Germany

2017      *Qiu Shihua*, Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing, China

2015      *Qiu Shihua. Aura of Nature*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, Germany  
*Qiu Shihua. Calme*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, France

2013      *Qiu Shihua – New Works*, Galerie Urs Meile, Lucerne, Switzerland

2012      *Qiu Shihua. Landschaft, Licht und Stille*, Museum Pfalzgalerie, Kaiserslautern, Germany  
*Qiu Shihua*, Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing, China  
*Qiu Shihua. White Field*, Hamburger Bahnhof, Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin, Germany

2010      *Qiu Shihua*, Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing, China

2009      *Qiu Shihua. New Works*, Galerie Urs Meile, Lucerne, Switzerland

2008      *Qiu Shihua*, Shanghai Gallery of Art, Shanghai, China

2007      *Qiu Shi-Hua*, Galerie Luis Campaña, Cologne, Germany

2006      Galerie 75 Faubourg, Paris, Franc

2005      Galerie Urs Meile, Lucerne, Switzerland  
*Qiu Shi-Hua*, Galerie Luis Campaña, Cologne, Germany  
*Insight: Paintings by Qiu Shihua*, Chambers Fine Art, New York, USA  
*Visions of Fields by Qiu Shihua*, Hanart TZ Gallery, Hong Kong, China

2004      *Qiu Shihua*, Künstlerverein Malkasten, Düsseldorf, Germany

2003      *Qiu Shihua*, Galerie Urs Meile, Lucerne, Switzerland

2002      *White Landscape*, Prüss & Ochs Gallery, Berlin, Germany

2001      *Qiu Shihua. Landscape – Painting on the Edge of Visibility*, Galleria OTSO, Espoo, Finland  
*Qiu Shihua*. The New York Kunsthalle, New York, USA

2000      *Qiu Shihua*, Galerie Urs Meile, Lucerne, Switzerland  
*Qiu Shihua. Landscape – Painting on the Edge of Visibility*, Galerie Rudolfinum, Prague; Galerie Sternberk, Sternberk, Czech Republic

1999      *Qiu Shihua*, Kunsthalle Basel, Basel, Switzerland

1997      *Qiu Shihua*, Hanart TZ Gallery, Hong Kong, China  
*Qiu Shihua*, Hanart (Taipei) Gallery, Taipei, Taiwan

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1995 *Qiu Shihua*, Hanart TZ Gallery, Hong Kong, China

1991 *Qiu Shihua*, Hanart TZ Gallery, Hong Kong, China  
*Qiu Shihua*, Hanart (Taipei) Gallery, Taipei, Taiwan

## SPECIAL SHOWS

2004 5<sup>th</sup> Shanghai Biennial, Shanghai, China

2001 2<sup>nd</sup> Berlin Biennial, Berlin, Germany

1999 48<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennial, Venice, Italy

1996 23<sup>rd</sup> São Paulo Art Biennial (special guest), São Paulo, Brazil

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2023/24 Meisterwerke Masterpieces Chefs-d'oeuvre Capolavori, Galerie Karsten Greve AG, St. Moritz, Switzerland

2022/23 *Horizonte*, Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne, Germany

2022 *Sky to the East, Sky to the West*, Kunsten Museum of Modern Art, Aalborg, Denmark

2021 *NOTHINGTOSEENESS –Void/White/Silence*, Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Germany

2020 *Chinese Colours: Eastward Turn To Absoluteness*, Long Museum, Shanghai, China  
*China Longing for Nature - Reading Landscapes in Chinese Art*, Museum Rietberg, Zurich, Switzerland  
*THE WHITE Into THE BLANK*, Whitebox Art Center, Beijing, China

2018/19 *Scheinbar: nichts. Bildwelten von Qiu Shihua im Dialog / Apparently Nothing. Qiu Shihua's Pictorial Worlds in Dialogue*, Museum unter Tage, Situation Kunst (für Max Imdahl), Kunstsammlungen der Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Germany

2018 *Lolo's Entaglements*, De Warande, Turnhout, Belgium  
*A Chinese Journey, The Sigg Collection*, Het Noordbrabants Museum, 's-Hertogenbosch, The Netherlands

2017 *Autumn Show*, Galerie Karsten Greve AG, St. Moritz, Switzerland

2016 *Summer Show*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, Germany

2015 *Beyond Horizon*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, France  
*Harmonie und Umbruch. Spiegelungen chinesischer Landschaften*, MARTa Herford, Herford, Germany  
*Accrochage*, Galerie Karsten Greve AG, St. Moritz, Switzerland

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2013	<i>Building Bridges – Zeitgenössische Kunst aus China</i> , Wolfsberg, Ermatingen, Germany <i>Blank to Blank – Inframince Exhibition II</i> , Soka Art Center, Beijing, China <i>Ink Art: Past as Present in Contemporary China</i> , The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA
2012	<i>Duchamp's Inframince in Painting – First Zhuangzi International Conference Parallel Exhibition</i> , Yuan Art Museum, Beijing, China <i>Weltsichten. Landschaft in der Kunst vom 17. Jahrhundert bis zum 21. Jahrhundert</i> , Kunstmuseum Dieselkraftwerk Cottbus, Cottbus, Germany <i>Self-essence Naturalism</i> , Today Art Museum, Beijing, China
2010/11	<i>Weltsichten. Landschaft in der Kunst seit dem 17. Jahrhundert</i> , Situation Kunst, Bochum, Germany; Kunsthalle zu Kiel, Kiel, Germany; Museum Wiesbaden, Wiesbaden; Germany; Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz, Chemnitz, Germany; Bonnefantenmuseum Maastricht, The Netherlands <i>Shanshui – Poetry Without Sound? Landscape in Chinese Contemporary Art</i> , Kunstmuseum Luzern, Lucerne, Switzerland <i>Collectors' Stage: Asian Contemporary Art from Private Collections</i> , Singapore Art Museum (SAM), Singapore, Republic of Singapore
2009	<i>Linien stiller Schönheit</i> , DKM Museum, Duisburg, Germany <i>Yi Pai – Century Thinking</i> , Today Art Museum, Beijing, China <i>Black and White – Qiu Shihua and Yang Liming</i> , Found Museum, Beijing, China
2008	<i>Accumulation – The new Spirit of the East</i> , Asia Art Center, 798, Beijing, China <i>Mahjong: Contemporary Chinese Art from the Sigg Collection</i> , The University of California, Berkeley Art Museum, Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley, USA <i>RED Aside – Chinese Contemporary Art of the Sigg Collection</i> , Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, Spain
2007	<i>Reboot – The Third Chengdu Biennial</i> , Chengdu Contemporary Art Museum, Chengdu, China <i>Qi Yun – The International Travelling Exhibition of Chinese Abstract Art</i> , OCT Contemporary Art Terminal of He Xiangnin Museum, Shenzhen, China; Art Now Gallery, Beijing; Hong Kong Artist Commune, Hong Kong, China <i>Landscape &amp; Memory II</i> , Haines Gallery, San Francisco, USA <i>Art from China – Collection Uli Sigg</i> , Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil <i>The Year of the Golden Pig – Contemporary Chinese Art from the Sigg Collection</i> , Lewis Glucksman Gallery, Cork University College, Cork, Ireland <i>Inferno in Paradise – 10 Years Alexander Ochs Galleries Berlin / Beijing</i> , Alexander Ochs Galleries Berlin   Beijing, Berlin, Germany <i>Idilio I</i> , DA2 – Domus Artium 2002, Salamanca, Spain <i>White Out</i> , Künstlerhaus Palais Thurn und Taxis, Bregenz, Austria; Stadtgalerie Saarbrücken, Saarbrücken, Germany
2005–07	<i>Mahjong – Chinesische Gegenwartskunst aus der Sammlung Sigg</i> , Kunstmuseum Bern, Berne, Switzerland; travelled to: Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Germany; Museum der Moderne, Salzburg, Austria
2006	<i>The Sublime is Now</i> , Museum Franz Gertsch, Burgdorf, Switzerland

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2005	<i>Pictorial DNA Made in China</i> , Galerie Urs Meile, Lucerne, Switzerland <i>Cina. Prospettive d'Arte Contemporanea / China: As Seen by Contemporary Chinese Artists</i> , Provincia di Milano, Spazio Oberdan, Milan, Italy <i>What is Realism</i> , Albermarie Gallery, London
2004	<i>Le Printemps de Chine</i> , CRAC Alsace, Altkirch, France
2003	<i>Einbildung – Das Wahrnehmen in der Kunst</i> , Kunsthaus Graz, Graz, Austria <i>New Zone – Chinese Art</i> , Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, Poland
2002	<i>China – Tradition und Moderne</i> , Museum Ludwig Galerie, Oberhausen, Germany <i>Welcome China!</i> , Gallery Soardi, Nice, France
2001	<i>Take Part II</i> , Galerie Urs Meile, Lucerne, Switzerland <i>The Inward Eye: Transcendence in Contemporary Art</i> , Contemporary Art Museum, Houston, USA <i>Take Part I</i> , Galerie Urs Meile, Lucerne, Switzerland
2000	<i>Our Chinese Friends</i> , ACC Galerie and Galerie der Bauhaus-Universität, Weimar, Germany
1999	<i>Natural Reality</i> , Ludwig Forum, Aachen, Germany
1998	<i>Eight Chinese Artists</i> , Galerie Urs Meile, Lucerne, Switzerland Asian Fine Art Gallery, Berlin, Germany
1996	<i>China</i> , Kunst Museum Bonn, Bonn, Germany; Künstlerhaus Vienna, Austria; Art Museum Singapore, Singapore; Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, Poland; Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, Germany
1995	<i>China's New Art Post – 1989</i> , University of Oregon Museum of Art, Portland, USA
1992	<i>The First Annual Exhibition of Chinese Oil Painting</i> , Hong Kong, China
1986	<i>Chinese Art Festival</i> , La Defense, Paris, France

## SELECTED PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

Kunsthalle Basel, Basel  
The National Art Museum of China, Beijing, China  
Zhuzhong Art Museum, Beijing, China  
Museum DKM, Duisburg, Germany  
M+ Museum, Sigg Collection, WestKowloon Cultural District, Hong Kong, China  
The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Israel  
The Royal Academy of Art, London, UK  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Los Angeles, USA  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art (MET), New York, USA  
Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris, France

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2013 Gygax, R.: “Qiu Shihua”, in: *Frieze*, Berlin, pp. 129f.

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2012 Kejun, Xia: “The Painting of Qiu Shihua – The Infra-Mince of Infra-White”, in: *Infra-Mince Duchamp and Chuang Tzu*, Nanjing, pp. 118–133.

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## Press inquiries:

**Alessia Dorner**

[a.dorner@galerie-karsten-greve.de](mailto:a.dorner@galerie-karsten-greve.de)