

Tang Yongxiang

MAGICIAN SPACE
魔金石空间

Tang Yongxiang: Shape

Date
2020.5.15 – 6.27

Opening
2020.5.15. 16:00 – 18:30

Curatorial Practitioner
Carlie Yixuan Chang & Jing Jin

Magician Space is pleased to announce our next exhibition Tang Yongxiang: Shape from May 15th to June 27th, 2020. Eleven new paintings by the artist will be presented in this exhibition with a unique display approach. Launching with the long-term artistic practice of Tang Yongxiang, this project aims at investigating painting as a type of media, and how the painting is transferred between its materiality and the depicted objects. Magician Space will be holding both 'reality' and 'virtual' platforms simultaneously during the exhibition for the first time, to develop intertextuality between the two types of contexts and connect the subjective and objective worlds in the eyes of the artist as well as audiences.

The exhibiting works reflect Tang Yongxiang's artistic practice since 2012. Using the photos that he takes randomly in daily life as the references, Tang depicts those images accordingly on canvas. And then, adding layers of paint and covering the previous that he painted constantly, in this process, Tang Yongxiang examines and refines the relationship of different objects. This gradual and literal action lasts till recognizable forms are abstracted and evolved to an ideal condition - as it visions in the consciousness of this artist - a subtle balance between shape and shape, shape and space. The painting thus becomes a feeler of the artist, assisting his enduring observation, digestion, and absorption of the objective world and factor it into his own use.

In the paintings that Tang Yongxiang creates, the truth of the objective world is hiding in the shell of the subjective world. The composition in appearance is quiet and neat, negative shapes and positive shapes are attracting yet still restricting one another. All the focuses and contrasts are erased meticulously by the artist, fulfilling his pieces an impression of elegance and cautious. However, the striking thickness of the paints implies tensions and indicates his tangle and struggle in the process of making these paintings. He uses rather unadorned brushstroke and states the process of internalizing frankly, yet at the same time, the traces of subjective expression are hidden meticulously. Tang Yongxiang says, *"a piece of art is like the scene of the incident, it has been cleaned when it finished. But if you check carefully, you would still see clues of what has happened."* Rich details grow in the layers and then vanish, but left traces in an unexpected area, which develops sober and obscure hints. This not only grants Tang Yongxiang's painting strong personality but also triggers the unlimited curiosity of audiences.

In order to achieve the best presenting the traits of Tang Yongxiang's paintings, for the first time Magician Space is combining both 'reality' and 'virtual' platforms. Both opposite and unified perspectives are woven in it, so to encourage the audience to experience the two approaches of looking 'gazing' and 'capturing'. Through the curating in 'reality' platform, the physical exhibition space, the observers will be able to track, detect, and cognizance the painting method of the artist according to their personal experience; through the website and social media of Magician Space, the 'virtual' platform is built up to reinforce detailed information of each piece from the perspective of the artist and reveal the hidden consciousness moments that on the back of images. Also, both platforms will capture the unique personality and habits of the artist through the interchangeable responding method.

This project is another stage exhibition since the last solo of Tang Yongxiang at Magician Space in 2017. In the past three years, Tang Yongxiang paints constantly, which granted him a more profound understanding of the technique and media. Except for the distinctive depiction of shapes which he has been practising, he is also experimenting with different size and colour range subtly. And he deems they are natural changes that generate from life experience and inner feeling. *"The painting of Tang Yongxiang is unique with lingering charm beyond time, each time of gazing you would discover a different relationship of forms and shapes, which triggers different senses and thoughts"* as Qu Kejie the founder of Magician Space says, *"Based on my knowledge, more and more audiences are expecting to see his further achievements, this motives us to present this project during the event Gallery Weekend Beijing 2020 that attracts large public attention."*

About the artist

Tang Yongxiang (b. 1977, Hubei Province) currently lives and works in Beijing.

Tang Yongxiang started capturing the daily life through the photos as creative materials and bases for the consequent paintings during his postgraduate study. Since 2007, his focus transferred from image itself to the process of absorbing. At this stage, he has formed his unique visual language through the method of repeating layering in painting, basing yet reconstructing the original images. He deems the painting is a process of experiencing. Hence, images, form and colours are applied to a specific field, accompanying with his instincts. This is precisely what Tang wants to provide to the audience.

Major solo exhibitions include: *Shape*, Magician Space, Beijing (2020); *Magician Space*, Beijing (2017); *Magician Space*, Beijing (2015); *West Bund Art & Design*, Shanghai (2015); *Magician Space*, Beijing (2014); *Hemuse Gallery*, Beijing (2012). Other selected group exhibitions include: *Boundless Realities, Multiple Nows – Contemporary Art from Hubei as a Sample*, Wanlin Art Museum, Wuhan (2017); *Post Wave: Temperament and Avant-garde*, The Barn Contemporary Art Space, Shenzhen (2017); *Ever Since*, Cheng Project, Beijing (2017); *Dissensus Agitation - The Painting to Language*, Today Art Museum, Beijing (2016); *Lehmann Maupin*, Hong Kong (2015); *Inside - Outside*, Klein Sun Gallery, New York (2014); *XXX - Next 10 Years of Contemporary Art*, Today Art Museum, Beijing (2011).



Many Circles, White Background, Some Blocks of Blue and Red Ochre

2020

Oil on canvas

50 x 60cm



A Tree, Some People, Grey Blocks at the Bottom

2020

Oil on canvas

200 x 150cm



A Female Figure at the Lower-right, Many Red Blocks at the Top

2020

Oil on canvas

150 x 130cm



Tang Yongxiang: Shape, 2020
Exhibition view



Tang Yongxiang: Shape, 2020
Exhibition view

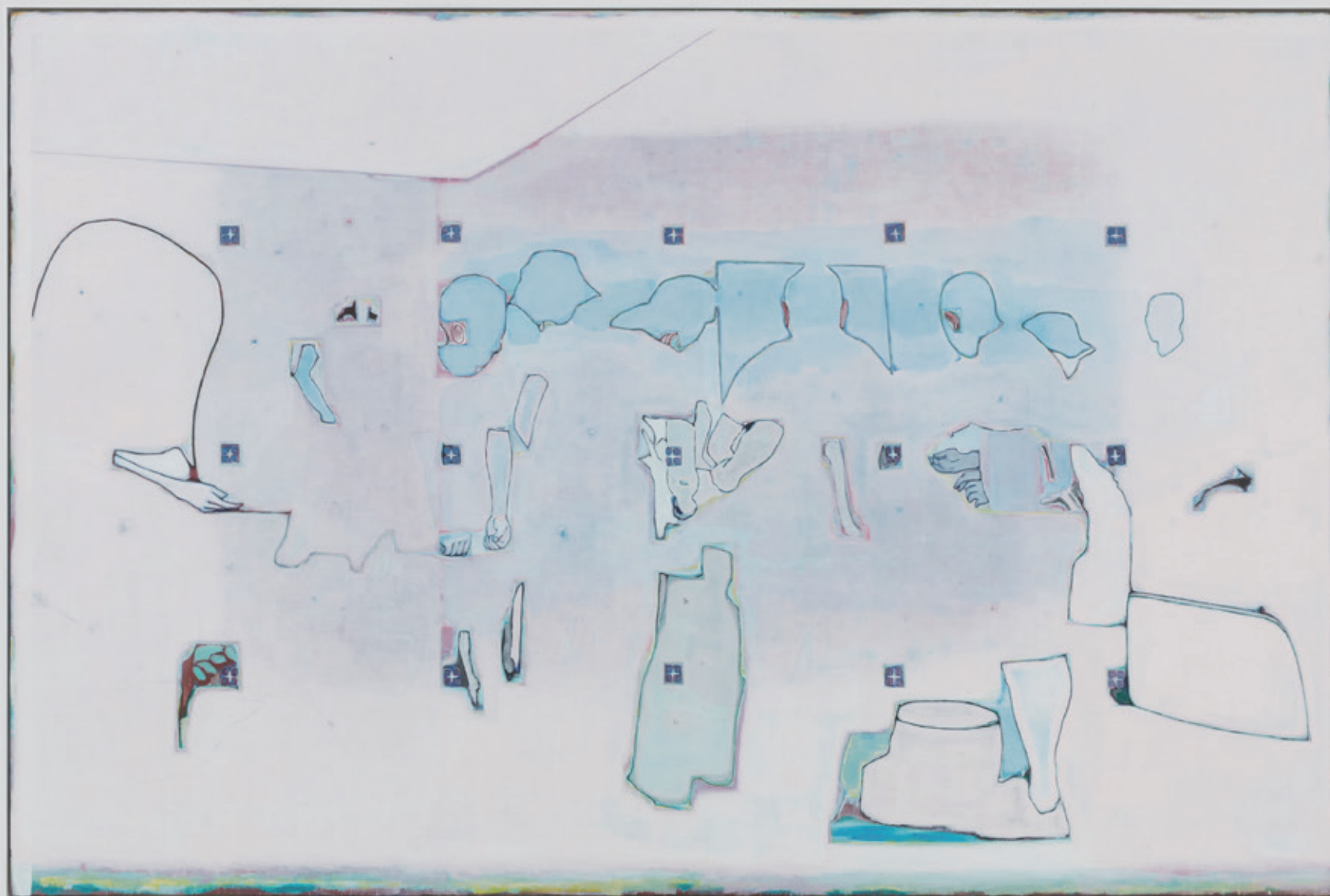


Two Potted Flowers on Yellow, Blue at the Top

2020

Oil on canvas

150 x 180cm



A Group of People with Heads in Blue

2020

Oil on canvas

200 x 300cm



Tang Yongxiang: Shape, 2020
Exhibition view



Tang Yongxiang: Shape, 2020
Exhibition view



Five People in A Blue Block

2020

Oil on canvas

150 x 200cm



Tang Yongxiang: Shape, 2020
Exhibition view



Four Plates and One Lizard

2020

Oil on canvas

130 x 150cm



Divided into Three Parts, Pink at the Top, Lines at the Bottom

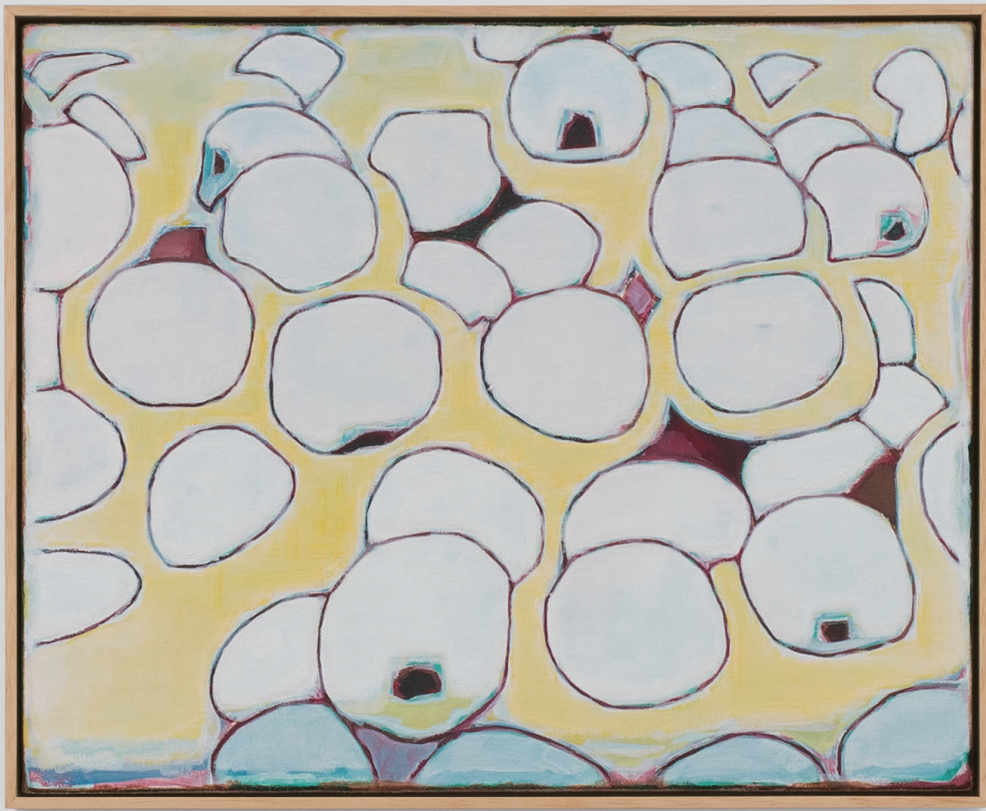
2020

oil on canvas

150 x 130cm



Tang Yongxiang: Shape, 2020
Exhibition view



Some White Circles, Yellow Background

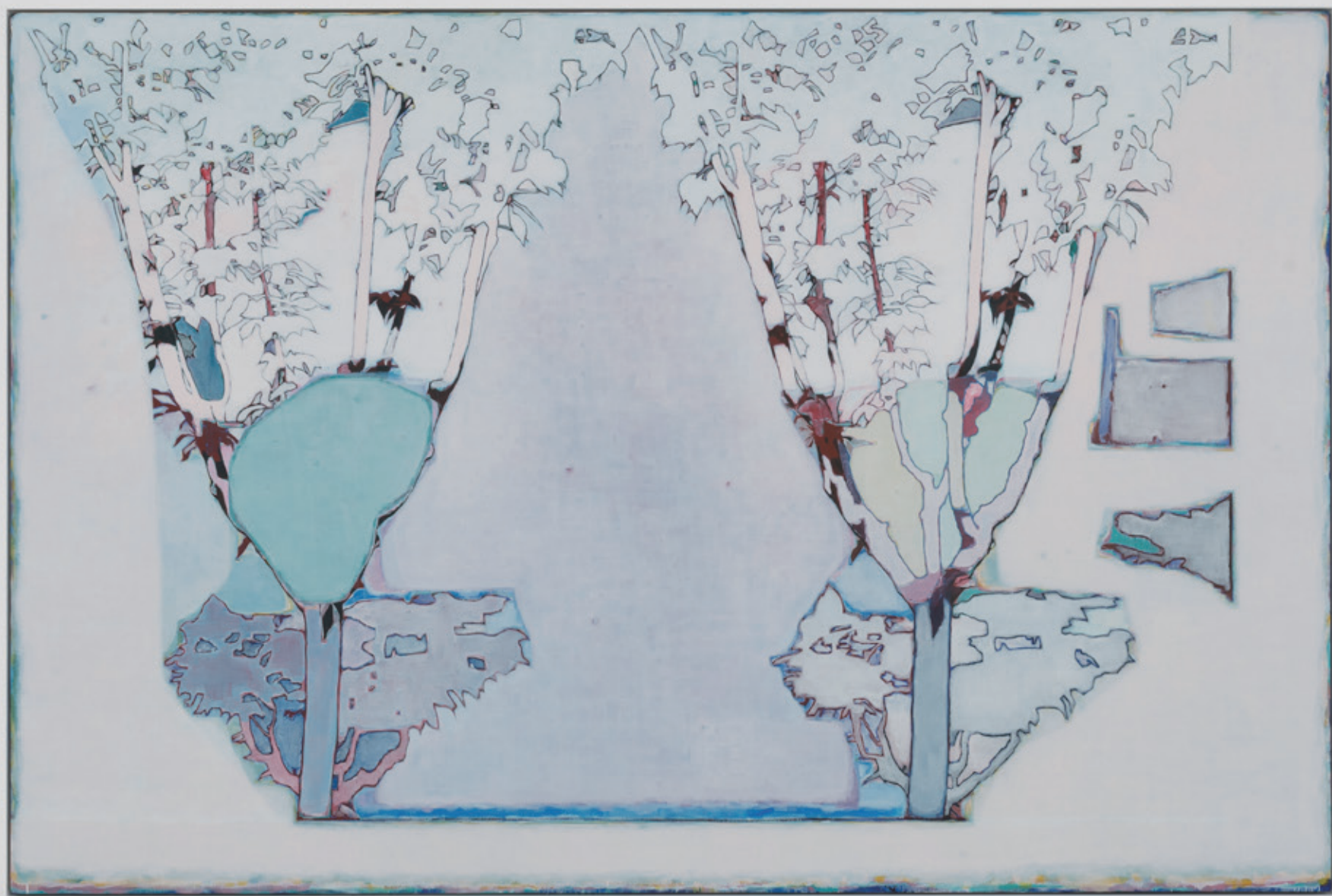
2020

Oil on canvas

40 x 50cm



Tang Yongxiang: Shape, 2020
Exhibition view



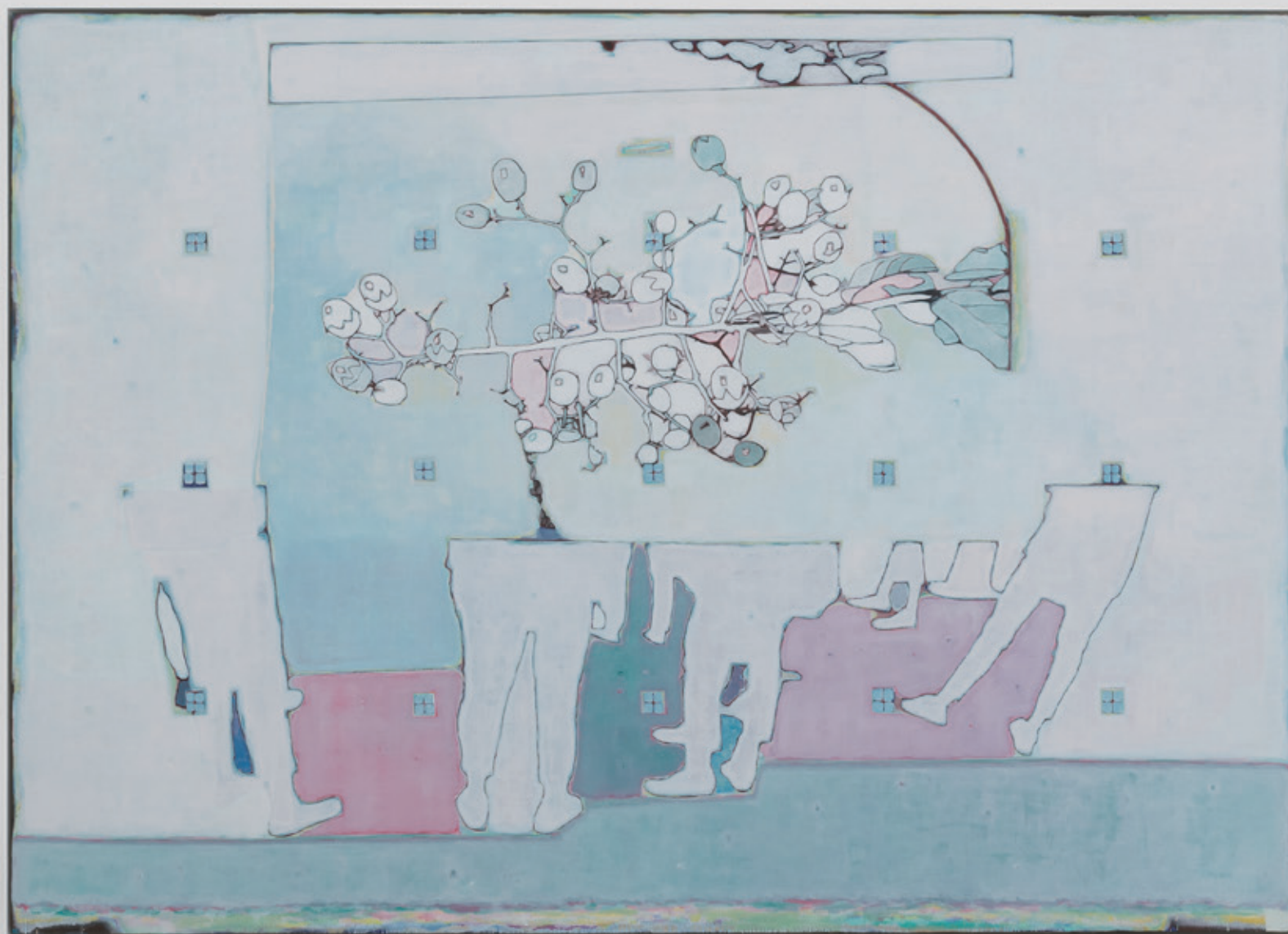
Two Trees, Some Green on the Left One

2020

Oil on canvas

200 x 300cm

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A Group of People under the Fruit Tree, with Many Small Windows
2020
Oil on canvas
200 x 280cm

A Group of People under the Fruit Tree, with Many Small

‘When picking up my daughter from school, I took some photos of the legs and feet of other parents. The shapes in this piece are derived from this original image. I thought about how to fill such a large picture when working on this piece, later, I added something from another photograph. The shape of the square was developed from the original image but I felt the bottom part was a bit scattered, so I added some green. I looked for this colour for a long time, until one night I woke up in the middle of a dream and it came to me. The colour, I thought then, was olive green, which is a little calmer than how it appears in the picture now. I suddenly sorted out the current effect two days before finishing the work: that I should raise the centre of focus a little and add some red. There should be a certain connection between colours and I had to be careful with it; otherwise, it would seem to be "floating". These little squares in the painting are actually part of the draft. The girl who works in the gallery said they were small windows, so they should be small windows.

Many Circles, White Background, Some Blocks of Blue and Red Ochre

‘I painted it in my small room at home during the epidemic. These circles are actually fruits, can't you tell? It's some fruit covered in a foam net; cut off, it's not as complete. When I was painting, I had no feeling at all and I almost gave up. All these hesitations left their mark on the painting, in pink and yellow. Finally, the gallery urged me for the work and I suddenly thought of what to do while I was on the road and exercising. There are three pieces in this series. If I were not in such a hurry I would have kept working on them, which probably would have led to a different result from the current one’.

Some White Circles, Yellow Background

‘These are fruits from the same stall, but from a different angle. I forget what's at the bottom, it may be an apple. Fruit is difficult to draw, it can easily end up looking like an art student's homework. The original idea was that the background and the fruit should stay the same colour, which did not work well. Halfway through, I found a way to sort it out together with the other one in this series. I emphasised a little bit of fruit on this one, and a little bit of background on that one, and that was it. These two now form a group. I haven't decided about the last one yet’.

Divided into Three Parts, Pink at the Top, Lines at the Bottom

‘This picture bothered me for a long time and I wanted to give it up several times. I could see it was cracking in the middle, but I slowly managed to finish it. The original image was of a couple I photographed in 798 Art District. I removed the strongest part of the image. Now there are some traces of human faces, like watermarks. These were left inadvertently and would be hard for me to replicate. The shape on the bottom right is the bag they're holding. These two people are in a vertical composition. In order to break the integrity of the composition, I added space and transformed the bottom part into a plain area. The final and inexplicable result is these three pieces; they feel quite stable. I think I started to work on this piece from the winter of 2018. It was a really boring time for me then, just going to work every day during regular hours. One day the cat went out for several days without returning and finally came back. A dog had bit her nearly to death, so I gave her some medicine and she was rescued. This seems to be the only thing worth mentioning from that period’.

Two Potted Flowers on Yellow, Blue at the Top

‘Every time I draw, there's always one picture that's the most natural and easy to complete. This is the easiest piece of the exhibited works this time. I hope that in every exhibition, there could be a work that functions like an air hole. Here it is. The original photo has a relatively balanced structure. In the painting, I changed the colour to lemon yellow, but it was too light. After some back and forth, I returned it to its original appearance. This process is actually evident in the picture. I basically left the blue part at the top as is, otherwise it would have felt too stuffy. Can you see what's in the middle of the two potted flowers? It's a plastic chair. The photo was taken while drinking tea in a friend's yard. That friend paints, too. I recommended him to paint it, but in the end it became part of my work’.

Four Plates and One Lizard

‘Mao Mao (my daughter) likes this painting the most, probably because of the lizard. The lizard is the "tea pet" of Lao Qu (founder of Magician Space). At that time, everyone was chatting, smoking and drinking and I was bored and snapped a photo. When painting, I was completely fooled by the lizard at first. It could easily become the focus of the picture and this needed to be avoided. The key is how it relates to the shape next to it. I worked the highlights on the lizard's body into the same shape as the handle on the teacup. A few archaic style armchairs were originally in the box at the top right corner, and I kept a few of their shapes in the final painting. I seldom think about the audience's feelings when drawing and only think about it when I am almost finished. So, the finishing part is the most important and painful part for me, and the middle of the working process is the easy part’.

Two Trees, Some Green on the Left One

I drew a lot of pictures of this size. Two meters is the perfect height for me when I stand on a bench, any higher would become difficult for me. In my last solo exhibition, I also drew trees, which were about 1.5 meters high. They were the same as each other but they were in two pieces, just like the paintings of the two pieces of fruit in this exhibition. Here, I first drew the tree on the left. I added less green to the tree on the right, which forms a new balance with this patch of colour on the left. Some of the shapes left in this picture remind me of the paintings I made in college, which were perhaps more deliberately practised in order to form the shapes. Now, such images left in my mind have unconsciously found their way into the work. This piece was the most physically demanding one among these exhibited works. The leaves were tough to draw; it took me two months to draw them one by one. But if I had to continue to work on this piece, I'd probably choose to cover them all’.

A Tree, Some People, Grey Blocks at the Bottom

‘This image is also segmented to break the vertical feel, reinforcing the positive and negative shapes between the legs. And then there are the grey blocks and some blue down here, which are drawn quite thinly with few layers. I wanted to make the top part of the picture a little richer, so I worked the bottom part more brusquely. This basically leads the viewer’s sight upwards. The most difficult part of creating this work is that the whole thing was painted in blue and green. Although a dividing line was added, I still couldn’t figure out a way to separate the top from the bottom. One day I decided to hang it at a distance. Upon entering the room, I turned my head and, in an instant, I thought maybe adding a bit of yellow could change things. This saved the painting so that it could be part of the exhibition’.

Five People in A Blue Block

‘This one is different from the others. The human face can easily become the centre of the picture, but my process of painting is to eliminate the focus, so I wanted to weaken the effect of the face. I was going to do a dark green one and it seemed to be the way to go. And then I didn't want to do that: I don't want something to go my way too much, or in the way everyone thinks it should go, whenever that happens I will usually stop for a minute. I chose to use only a single blue and purple, which brought a mild effect. I could make the painting pretty but the tepid effect is what I want in the end.’

A Group of People with Heads in Blue

‘When I was at Hei Qiao, people often had barbecues together. This painting actually comes from a photograph of several people roasting lamb. In the beginning, I wanted to do something different, so I made a draft using black, white and grey, just like a black and white photographic negative. This is an attempt I haven't made before. I hadn’t used black in my palette before: black was so powerful that I was afraid to use it. But after a while I gave in and went back to my usual colour range. I don't think people can see the black of the draft in the final picture. So, it's best to let yourself go when painting and not interfere with it too much. Sometimes being too deliberate is wrong’.

A Female Figure at the Lower-right, Many Red Blocks at the Top

‘Here, those red blocks on the top were the base colours for the underdrawing and they form the space between a lot of leaves; I did not change the blocks, and then, more and more, I didn't want to change them. But this is a particularly abrupt piece of colour, including the small triangle in the lower right corner, which was particularly difficult to deal with. How should it correspond to the red block above? This problem tormented me for a long time. An incident occurred during this time. A new occupant of the space above my studio got locked in the bathroom and became stuck trying to climb out through the window. I was painting when I vaguely heard someone shouting from the roof, so I went outside to look and climbed up to save him. It's kind of a weird thing. Back to this painting, I ended up changing all the colours on the side and, all of a sudden, the red just melted in and it was done’.

Tang Yongxiang

1977 Born in Hubei Province
Currently lives and works in Beijing

Solo Exhibitions

- 2020 *Shape*, Magician Space, Beijing, CN
- 2017 *Tang Yongxiang*, Magician Space, Beijing, CN
- 2015 *Tang Yongxiang*, Magician Space, Beijing, CN
West Bund Art & Design, Shanghai, CN
- 2014 *Tang Yongxiang*, Magician Space, Beijing, CN
- 2012 *HIDE - Tang Yongxiang Solo Show*, Hemuse Gallery, Beijing, CN

Group Exhibitions

- 2019 Art Basel Hong Kong, Hong Kong, CN
- 2018 FIAC, Paris, China
Beijing Contemporary, Beijing, China
Brushwork and True Feeling, Tang Contemporary Art, Bangkok, Thailand
Art Basel Hong Kong, Hong Kong, CN
Gathering of Masters. Lion Hill. The Summer Solstice Contemporary Chinese Art Exhibition, Huazhong Agricultural
Agricultural University, Wuhan, CN
- 2017 *Boundless Realities, Multiple Nows – Contemporary Art from Hubei as a Sample*,
Wanlin Art Museum, Wuhan, CN
Post Wave: Temperament and Avant-garde, The Barn Contemporary Art Space, Shenzhen,
CN
Ever Since, Cheng Project, Beijing, CN
Art Basel Hong Kong, Hong Kong, CN
- 2016 *Dissensus Agitation – The Painting to Language*, Today Art Museum, Beijing, CN
The First Dao Jiao New Art Festival, XI Contemporary Art Center, Guangdong, CN
Each to His Own Li Wendong\Wei Xingye Collection Exhibition, OCAT Xi'an, Xi'an, CN
Nian Shi Hui, Hubei Institute of Fine Arts Museum, Wuhan, CN
Hong Kong Art Basel, Hong Kong, CN
- 2015 *Nocturnal Friendship*, Lehmann Maupin, Hong Kong, CN
Hong Kong Art Basel, Hong Kong, CN
- 2014 *Inside - Outside*, Klein Sun Gallery, New York, US
Hong Kong Art Basel, Hong Kong, CN
West Bund Art & Design, Shanghai, CN
- 2011 *XXX – Next 10 Years of Contemporary Art*, Today Art Museum, Beijing, CN
- 2009 Songzhuang Art Festival, Songzhuang, Beijing, CN
- 2008 *Chinese Oil Paintings of Contemporary & Academic Seminar*, Ho-Am Gallery, Seoul, Korea
Body without Body, Space DA Gallery, Beijing, CN
- 2007 *Luo Zhongli Scholarship Exhibition*, Chongqing Art Museum, Chongqing/Peking University,
Beijing, CN
Uncollectivism – Wuhan Post 70's Contemporary Art, Soka Art Center, Beijing, CN
- 2006 *Happy New Year – Young Artists' Oil Paintings Exhibition*, Fine Art Literature, Wuhan, CN
Freedom – Contemporary Young Oil Painters' Exhibition, Oriental Yuan Xiang Gallery,
Beijing, CN
Young Artists' Oil Paintings Exhibition, Hanmo Gallery, Beijing, CN
Inside and Outside of the Image, Hubei Institute of Fine Arts Gallery, Wuhan, CN

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