
Nashunbatu: Stop Thinking, Start Breathing

22 Nov, 2014 - 5 Jan, 2015
Press Release

"My so-called "landscape paintings" are products of my imagination; the landscapes exist only in my mind. There is no message of certainty to convey. Instead, I prefer to invite viewers to interact with my work on their own terms, taking from the work what they will. I don't paint from real life. I don't follow the latest dogma in constructing what is essential to my paintings. Each of my paintings has its own soul, like a riddle without an answer."

- Nashunbatu Nov.2014

Pékin Fine Arts is pleased to present Nashunbatu's premiere Hong Kong solo exhibition. This is the 2nd solo exhibition for the artist with the gallery, following his exhibition at Pékin Fine Arts Beijing in 2012.

Born in Inner Mongolia in 1969, Nashunbatu graduated from university in Ordos, and earned graduate degrees in Germany. Today, he divides his time between his studios in Beijing and Frankfurt.

Nashunbatu is fluent in the Mongolian language, as well as Chinese, English and German, and is typical of the latest artists from Mainland China emerging on to the international stage: Polymaths, well studied and well travelled, and actively engaged with Western and Chinese, (and Mongolian), art history, literature and philosophical discussions.

As an "Overseas Returnee" (part-time in China and full-time in Germany), and like many of his generation, Nashunbatu can find himself in the awkward role of outsider, looking in at an unfamiliar Chinese art scene. Both ethnically and by virtue of his pursuits, he is more cosmopolitan and more prone to deviate from Chinese art world trends and discourse. As such, his successes and failures as an artist in China are particularly representative of the diversity and unpredictability that typifies the highly individualized avant-garde artists working in and around Beijing today. This lack of adherence to one dominant aesthetic or philosophical approach liberates his creative impulses and pursuits, while at the same time creating obstacles to easy understanding and categorization of his artistic practice.

His paintings, primarily horizontal/land-based imagery inspired by Mongolian landscapes, could be categorized as traditional art making or "classical avant-garde" of a realistic-representational mode. However, this would be an over-simplification. The formal language he adopts is as complex as the artist's experience; and, his rendering of the contemplative, passive and infinite characteristics of landscapes while evident, are only one facet of the artist's view of the world.

More precisely, he relies on classical land imagery and both ink and oil painting techniques, to 'disarm' viewers into a false sense of familiarity and neo-classical comfort. He uses a masterly array of painting styles, primarily dark palettes of thinly applied paint more typical of ink painting, to affect an ominous mood, alluding to danger and disaster, while tiny lone figures perform mysterious and random tasks. "Real life" is never the artist's subject domain, and his representational imagery is more surrealist than real.

In alluding to - without aiming to depict - reality, Nashunbatu's paintings invite the viewer to embark on a 'process of aesthetic experience', that transcends formal image production of figures, landscapes, and color wash on canvas. Instead, he opens image production to new possibilities that record the 'uneasy relation' between Western and Asian trends and visual art discourse. As German writer Felix Ruhofer explains, "[Nashunbatu] asserts the continued status of painting - and figuration - as critical elements of the theoretical discourse, deserving of continued critical analysis, as he reaches for answers beyond facile rejections of traditional image production."

The potential of painting is what we see in the latest works of Nashunbatu.