

Hive-Becoming XXVII  
Guan Yu: To be Hungry for Wind

Artist: Guan Yu

Curator: Yang Jian

Opening: 2017.7.15 16: 00

Exhibition Dates: 2017.7.15 – 8.20

Venue: Hive Center for Contemporary Art (Beijing)

Add. E06, 798 Art District, Chaoyang District, Beijing, China

Hive Beijing will present the young artist Guan Yu for the new exhibition of the “Hive-Becoming” Program. Curated by Yang Jian, the exhibition will be on show from 15th Jul. to 20th Aug. 2017. Born in 1989 in Qingdao, Guan Yu was graduated in Experimental Art from China Academy of Art, in 2013, she was graduated with an MFA from Slade School of Fine Art, University College London, currently she works both in Beijing and London. Chinese is Guan Yu’s mother tongue, while painting is her mother tongue in art. The artist’s repeated positioning of these two within has shaped her artistic creation into what it appears like now.

The title of this exhibition “房间里的大象” (which means “Elephant in the Room” in English), is free translated into “To be Hungry for Wind” in English. With the wind coming, the elephant appears. The wind is invisible, while the elephant is not to be seen. The honest wind, never avoiding the obstacles voluntarily and disappearing after intimate touch against them, features embodiment that is not to be seen visually.

As the returnees with experience of living abroad have more specific aspirations and requirements for the lives back in their motherlands, she has to utilize another language except her mother tongue to enrich the expression of multiple meanings, filling in the seam of expression torn by herself. English appearing somewhere in her paintings will definitely cause doubts since she mainly grew up in China. In fact, its appearance is precisely due to the artist’s respect for and understanding of Chinese characters. Though English is written in the painting eventually, the artist’s thinking logic in Chinese is inevitably mixed in it. These words seem to have been resulted from the positioning and conflict between the subjective thinking of the two languages. The translation made when the audience viewing them gives them easier access to spaces of multiple meanings brings in personal engagement.

Guan Yu’s painting reveals an atmosphere of fables and fairy tales with exuberant emotions condensed in the concrete objects. Guan Yu boldly adds a large area of blocks with light brushwork and bright colors to the composition, improving the “purity” of the painting and easing the canvas’s burden of carrying pictorial information. Also, the painting-scale has been enlarged and emotions rendered, visually the painting appears lighter and avoids the possibility of falling into simple stereotyped-thinking and shallow experience-sharing. The artist hopes to place her painting expression in the irreversible and inevitable process of art creation and history, rather than in the time when her accidental experience and private past have been reviewed. All this seems to unfold from fables but with the tinge of fairy tales, and ultimately the essence of poetry prevails.

Guan Yu’s works, with a neutral way of expression, are expected to be as light and swift as the wind and to be a soft hook that hungers for prey. She knows very well the multiple meanings of painting as language and masters this expression of multiple meanings through controlling the issues inside and outside painting.