

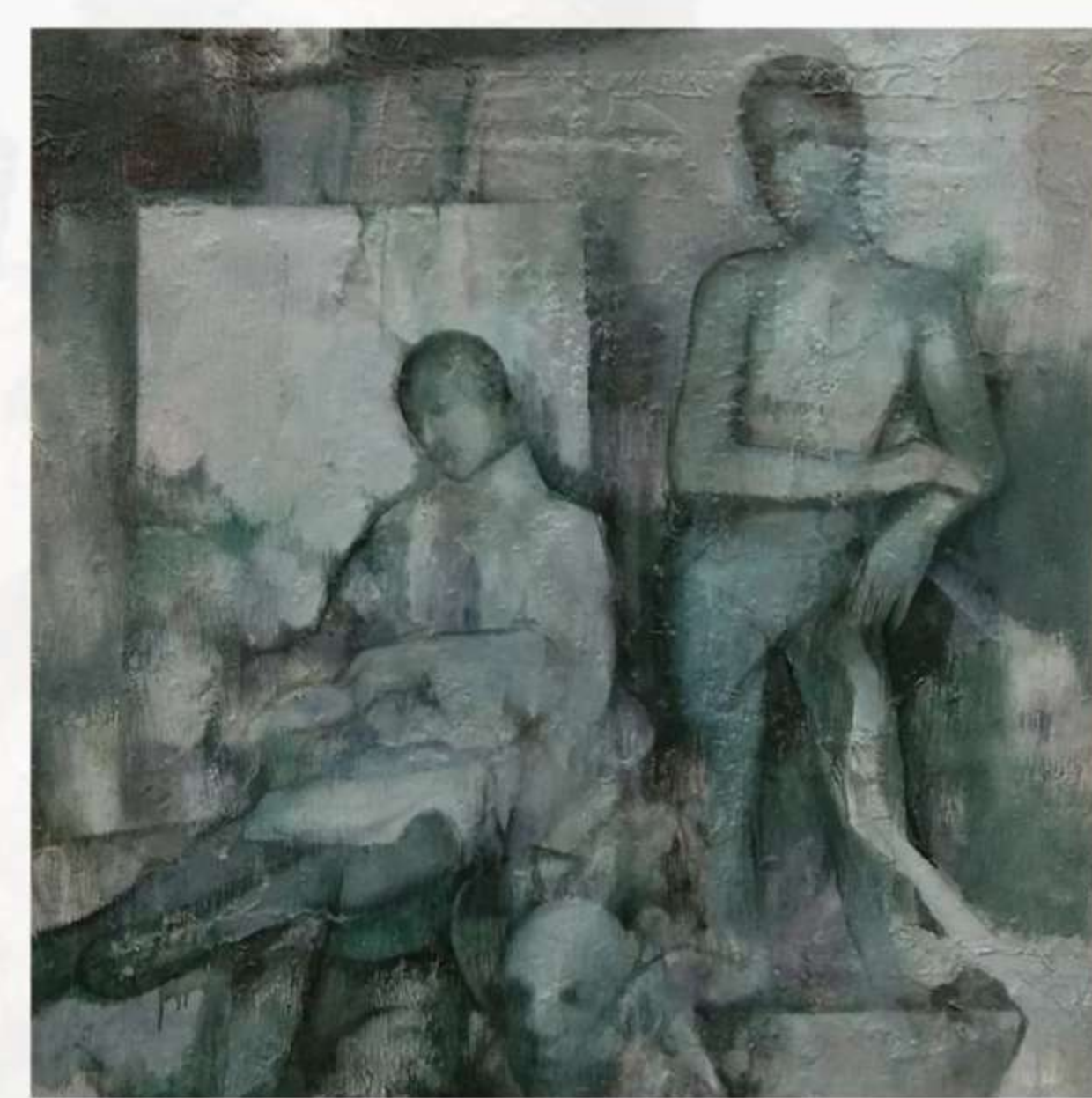
Chinese 1964

Liao Zhen Wu

Acrylic Oil Painters

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Education & Background | Exhibitions



Education & Background

Born in Sichuan Province, China

Studied in the Arts Department of Sichuan Education Institute and the Oil Painting Department of CAFA

Currently lives and works in Beijing, China

Located in the hinterland of China, Sichuan Province boasts a vast expanse of Chengdu Plain, which abounds with numerous lakes and fertile land, and is thus known as the "land of plenty". Although the economy there seems to be backward and time seems to go slowly compared with the high technology, modernization and quick tempo of life and work in the open coastal cities, people feel relaxed in psychology and time and they can sense and taste the minute changes in the whole process of economic development. Without needing to face the clash between modernisation and commercialisation directly, they are not as disconcerted and politically and socially conscious as people of other places. As a result, we find many local artists are limited in their views as they only focus on the representation and description of the scenes of local life.

The works of Liao Zhen Wu are also characterised by distinct local features. His early works could be divided into two types: one was to represent the teahouses and things happening there in the small town of Sichuan and the other was to describe the motorcycles running here, there and everywhere. Teahouse culture is distinct in Sichuan from that of other places such as Suzhou of Jiangsu Province and Hangzhou of Zhejiang Province, which is characterized by tranquillity, elegance and relaxation. In Sichuan, teahouses are full of hubbubs and vivacity, where people play board and card games, make fun of each other or even gamble by playing a kind of poker game named "Landlord". Those who lose the games, whether rich or poor, old or young, may be pasted with slips of paper on their faces or go down under the tables. Teahouses in other places are known for high prices, while in Chengdu teahouses rank by popularity rather than prices. Therefore, teahouses here cater largely to common and average people, where people of all social sectors with the same interest and tastes gather together to kill time. Therefore teahouses are the best place to observe the life and activities of people at various social levels in Sichuan. Compared with the large coastal cities, which have entered the time of automobiles, in the inland provinces of China, mopeds and motorcycles carrying both people and goods and always overloaded, which is against the traffic rules, features largely in urban and rural traffic. Their existence not only represents the economic recovery and take-off of the local economies but also shows people's consciousness of the market economy and low-priced labour force in small and medium-sized cities. As for a province such as Sichuan, which abounds with mountains, motorcycles take the place of bicycles to become the most important means of transport for people due to their low cost and high efficiency.

As the old Chinese saying goes, the falling of one leaf heralds the coming of autumn. Liao Zhen Wu uses the two leaves of the teahouse and motorcycles to describe the life of common people and the customs of the land of Shu (Sichuan Province) vividly. His works include photos and oil paintings. As for his photos, he is inclined to take horizontal panoramas to represent the overall situation of the town, which reminds people of the famous scroll of a painting entitled The Festival of Pure Brightness on the River drawn by Zhang Zeduan of the Song Dynasty. In terms of his oil paintings, he prefers to include a pair of characters in his works. His early works showed his inclination to tell stories and construct plots, but his recent works show his exploration of formal languages in patterns and his style also changes from the previous impressive and vivid representation to less intensive description which serves as the basis for the format of lump structure.

His latest works of the Windows series have transformed his artistic views as his life and work are now based in such a large metropolis as Beijing. He becomes interested in the window models which can be seen everywhere along the streets of large cities. Walter Benjamin's description of the streets and shop windows of western cities as well as the loafers or vagrants wandering around the cities at night is, to a great extent, applicable to today's urban scenes in China. The models in the shop windows symbolize the commercial society and also represent the indifference of the consumption society. People are attached to the idolised symbolic landscapes and even abandon themselves to such attachment, which is, in nature, not real at all. Artists are quite sensitive to such a phenomenon. Quite a few artists presented works with similar subjects. However, Liao's new paintings are free from unified idolised stiff faces and expressions. Instead, he attaches importance to the representation of the interactive relations among a group of models. Moreover, his way of representation is not influenced by the plane treatment method prevalent in the current art field. As a result, we can see the characters in his works are all like sculptures, with no efforts made to represent the expressions. Sometimes the heads of the characters are even enveloped by clothes-what the artist wants to show us the materialized world where people's real natures compromise to the materialized desires. For this purpose, the artist weakens the models' bodies, which seem to be hard as rocks, with his loose representation of lump structures. In this way, his artistic way of representing the urban consumption atmosphere emerged. On one hand, he grasps the indifferent and dying pulse of the consumption society; on the other hand, he tries to change such a pulse with drawing skills. The contradictory representation of the characters in the paintings explains why the new works of Liao Zhen Wu are critical of the cultures and customs of the consumption society.

Liao Zhen Wu choose cool colours of black, white and grey for this series of works instead of reproducing the world with various colours, which, to some extent, shows that the artist tries to convey his ideas about the intrinsic characteristics of the world. That is to say, under the surface of leisure or hubbubs, the world seems to be a place of apathy and changes, which people cannot know or control. For most Chinese people, control of their fate is a topic that seems too unrealistic for them to ponder in the current economic and educational reality. They have no way but to choose such a kind of life.

In his way of artistic creation based on the living environments he is familiar with, Liao first told us stories about the town he lived in and then describes the shop windows of the metropolis. Thus he provides us with various versions of the times tags vividly and endows his works with authenticity and human-oriented feature. Refusing to follow the current artistic trend or fashionable styles, he will undoubtedly blaze a new trail in artistic creation. For artists, the most important thing is to strive to create an original form of visual language. Good luck to Liao and may he accomplish more in his way of artistic creation!

Solo Exhibitions

2011
Big Lake, Liao Zhen Wu Solo Exhibition, Dahu Villa, Beijing, China

2010
Liao Zhen Wu: MONUMENT, Today Art Museum, Beijing. Also Travelled to Sichuan University Museum, Chengdu; Shanghai Duolin Museum of Modern Art, Shanghai; Hua Museum of Art, Shenzhen, China
Making of a MONUMENT, Museum of China Cultural Arts, Beijing, China

2007
Times Tag – Liao Zhen Wu Works Exhibition, Gefeng Art Organisation, Shenzhen, China
Times Tag – Liao Zhenwu Works Exhibition, Visual Arts Center, Beijing, China
Water Affection – Liao Zhenwu Works Exhibition, Beijing, China

2002
Years Trace – Liao Zhenwu Works Exhibition, Sichuan, China 1992
Liao Zhen Wu Watercolor Exhibition, Sichuan, China

Group Exhibitions

2009
Contemporary Art Union Academic Invitation Exhibition, Leshan Art Museum, China Evolution of Art History: New Cultural Art, Qianwei Cultural Centre, Sichuan, China In Order to Forget the Memory – The Power of Sichuan, Museum of Central Academy of Fine Art, Beijing, China

2008
Under The Radar, ArtSpace/Virginia Miller Gallery, Miami, FL, USA
Southwest Power Contemporary Art Exhibition, Yuangong Art Museum, Shanghai; travelled to Sichuan Art Museum, Chengdu, China
The Woods of Lust, Gefeng Contemporary Art Gallery, Shenzhen, China
The Third Asian International Art Exhibition, AsiaWorld-Expo, Hong Kong, China
China Contemporary Art Exhibition, Gefeng Contemporary Art Gallery, Shenzhen, China
Power/mould, Bridge Art Center, Beijing, China

2007
Sino-Japan Modern Art Exhibition, Japan
The 2nd National Landscape Oil Painting Exhibition, Shanghai, China Reopen Suojiajun – International Art Camp Exhibition, Beijing, China Opening Exhibition of Jiuchang Art Camp, Beijing, China

2006
The 19th National New Works Exhibition, Lanzhou, Beijing

2005
The 7th National Watercolor and Gouache Exhibition, Zhengzhou, China Sichuan Watercolor and Gouache Exhibition, Chengdu, China
Sichuan Seven Artists Watercolor Academic Exhibition, Chengdu, China

2004
The 10th National Fine Arts Exhibition, Guangdong, China
The 2nd Nanjing Watercolor Biennial Exhibition, Nanjing, China
Sichuan Fine Arts Exhibition, Chengdu, China

2003
The 1st National Small-size Watercolor Exhibition, Fuzhou, China Sichuan Watercolor Invention Exhibition, Chengdu, China

2002
60th Anniversary National Fine Arts Exhibition in Memory of Mao's Talks at the Yan'an Forum, Chengdu, China

2000
Sichuan Watercolor Exhibition, Chengdu, China

1999
50th Anniversary of Establishing PRC – Sichuan Fine Arts Exhibition, Chengdu, China

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