

Swallow It! Summer x Bacchanal

Duration : 13 July 2019 – 31 August 2019

Address : Unit 302, 2879 Longteng Avenue, Shanghai

Opening : Saturday, 13 July 2019, 4 - 7 PM

Artist : LIU Ren, LU Song, QU Fengguo, Zhang Yunyao, ZHANG Ruyi, HU Zi, XU Jin

Shanghai, July 13—As temperatures rise, and another Shanghai summer swings into full swelter this July, Don Gallery is offering a long, thirst-slaking gulp of art, with a septet of artists in its latest group show— “Swallow It! Summer x Bacchanal.” QU Fengguo, LIU Ren, XU Jin, ZHANG Yunyao, ZHANG Ruyi, HU Zi and LU Song will each be bringing the fruits of this season’s labor, for a midsummer bacchanalia. Viewers are invited to feast on the progression and transformation of each artist’s conceptual excavation and evolution.

In progress since 2005, QU Fengguo’s “Four Seasons” is an important series of abstract paintings, in which each piece’s emotional basis is a subject-transcendent “material-sorrow.” From *Summer Commences*, *Four Seasons to End of Heat 2*, *Four Seasons*, and from blistering heat to the season’s lingering warmth, changes in hue betray QU’s sensitivity to nature’s ebb and flow, while the tense and electric lines in the work sing of the artist’s simpatico relationship with the seasons.

When seasonal sensitivity becomes hypersensitivity, the result might be ZHANG Ruyi’s *Misplacement*. Minute details in the pieces are deliberately offset to wreak havoc on the order of the composition, much like blemishes and rashes that tend to bloom across the skin, under summer’s sudoric attentions. Like QU’s pieces, ZHANG’s showings are also abstract, but they speak more so to a surfacing of buried discomfort and constraint.

Unlike the artists mentioned above, XU Jin and LU Song’s pieces skip past allusion and proceed to a direct address of reality. XU has drawn from his experiences overseas, building a barren landscape of absurdity from sinister dreamscapes and uncanny actuality. In contrast, LU’s pieces are more “contextual.” By associating the textual with the visual, the artist’s conceptualization creates a dissonant graphic/text dialectic. Text elaborates the image, while image deconstructs text.

Several artists in the exhibition continued the use of special mediums in their work. LIU Ren’s *Panta Rhei*, tears a sheet from Greek philosopher Heraclitus’ summary of the ever-changing nature of existence, where “one cannot step twice into the same stream.” Making a reprise as the carrier of LIU’s artistic concept, “recycled toilet paper” epitomizes that which has been physically reconstructed to present a new state of being. *Rhei* – flow, and the waves thereof, form a representation in triplicate on the continuum between absolute motion and relative stasis, where everything changes and nothing remains still.

ZHANG Yunyao has also continued to experiment with a familiar medium this summer – felt. In *Study in Two Figures*, the seemingly random absorption of color powder and graphite on felt constitutes a conceptual confrontation of the pretense of classical forms. ZHANG challenges the boundaries of the image one step further with new experimentation on textile lining. By rearranging and recombining motifs and media, the artist constantly pushes towards epiphany at the seam of self-aesthetics.

Another explorer at the frontiers of creative epiphany is HU Zi, who has recently returned from a long stint in Geneva. “Cumming” is a set of paintings which represent the city’s famous Jet d’Eau fountain. In HU’s narrative, a man is strolling along the banks of *Lac Léman* at the magic hour. He witnesses the fountain surging as a line of violet against the darkening cerulean night, and experiences a similar surge in his own corpus. Though she paints a portrait, HU does not embark from the oft-used perspective of an observer in the third person. Rather, she sets out from within the subject, seeking interoperable clues from within the environment.

If creation is a course of study, then “Swallow It! Summer x Bacchanal” is where each artist shall present their summer project. This July and August, step out of the West Bund’s incandescent sunlight and clamoring cicadas, and join us at Don Gallery to feast on a surfeit of artistic struggle and creation.