

Press release

Exhibition title_ A Veil of Thoughts

Artists_ Laurens Legiers

Duration_ September 18–October 23, 2021

Opening_ Saturday, September 18, 6–8 PM

Venue_ Gallery Vacancy, Shanghai

Gallery Vacancy is pleased to present *A Veil of Thoughts*, Laurens Legiers's first solo exhibition in Shanghai, on view from September 18 to October 23, 2021. In this new body of work, *A Veil of Thoughts* extends on Legiers's assiduous maneuvering of form, color, and composition, which lends a unique lens to apprehend Belgian identity and its art history. His visual language assumes a readily comprehensible style, yet such legibility often shrouds the dynamic agenda of the works. While Legiers's practice demonstrates clarity and coherence, the exhibition simultaneously portrays rich ambivalence, tapping into a poetic tension.

The subject matter of Legiers's works comes apparent to grasp, which habitually situates viewers in the terrain of Belgian landscape and weather. Though employing a representational method through meticulously outlining shapes and contours, suggesting familiar objects such as leaves, lobsters, and pebbles, the artist nonetheless fiddles with semiotics and perception schema of human being's cognition. One inevitably detects the resemblance between *night ice glow* (2021) and *winter branches* (2021) through composition and content. The overhanging cone shape that dominates the paintings poses setbacks for identification, immediately commanding contemplation and debate over the two possible objects' connection. The representationality of Legiers's oeuvres seems to lack the pinpointing qualities of identification, which unexpectedly releases a set of interpretive availability amongst the viewers. Despite being laden with legible forms and objects, the works themselves are abstracted to allow room for interpretations, unearthing the delicate tension between representational and abstract masked by the jovial content.

The simplified, abstracted, and idealized formal treatment further compensates the artist's engagement with composition and color. As Legiers always regards painting as a process of formal study, he experiments with diverse ways of assembling different forms. Approaching composition as a controlled element, as shared between *resting mussels* (2021) and *awakening mussels* (2021), the paintings examine different backgrounds and cropping scales. Between the pair of *rising black lobster* (2021) and *cold river* (2021), the use of a subdued and unassuming color palette strikes an unexpected note: it softens the blow of a fantastical possibility, toning down the irrational and surreal to a more convincing and calming one, which evidently leads to the endurance of gaze. The interconnectivity gradually illuminates as viewers discern the creative jump from objects to objects: from crisscrossing leaves to twigs, from icicles to common tower shells, and from pebbles to mountains. Ultimately, the visual elements operate unanimously to evoke serenity, idyll, and a muted sense of humor, which are reminiscent of Belgian art.

A Veil of Thoughts provides a comprehensive glimpse into Legiers's practice, where interconnectivity is conceived even during the creating process inside the artist's studio by forming consistent dialogues among works in various stages of finish. Consequently, the paintings share congenial sensibilities which come together like a jigsaw puzzle: some fit together through motifs, others through composition. Notwithstanding the harmonious accessibility of Legiers's painting style augments the Romanticist and Surrealist quality in a way that requires a moment of reflection to lift up the veil, revealing the lurking undercurrents of tension.