

Ce JIAN | Paradise
5.15-7.3, 2021

WHITE SPACE BEIJING is pleased to announce Ce Jian's sixth solo exhibition, *Paradise*, at the gallery, opening on May 15 through July 7, 2021, presenting a series of new works Ce Jian completed from 2020 to 2021.

This exhibition is about a promise. A promise of excitement, enjoyment, and beauty, of pleasure and status. This promise was invented almost 170 years ago, when the first monumental department store Le Bon Marché made Paris with its 'Parisienne' (the Paris lady) an emblem of cosmopolitan lifestyle in the 19th century, laying the foundation of modern commerce. Its role in cultural history and its complex symbolic dimension were explored by Walter Benjamin in his *Arcades Project*. With the invention of the department store began a tradition that has had a lasting impact on all our lives to this day.

It grew to be a world of its own, a canvas for projected desires, a phantom temple of endless wish-fulfillment. Émile Zola created a striking contemporary portrait in his 1883 novel *Au Bonheur des Dames* (The Ladies' Paradise), in which he captured the overwhelming power of the store and the havoc it wreaked among traditional merchants as well as luxury-addicted customers. Far from being a simple criticism of consumerism, he gives an excellent assessment of innovative mercantile strategies, the most remarkable of which – besides advertising, free delivery, and returns – are the aesthetics of exhibiting goods. Presenting itself as a place of visual splendor and comfort, filled with a dazzling assortment of products, the store offers people an elevation from everyday life – a task that has been classically assigned to art or religion.

The artist departs from here. In her series *Icon* and *Diorama*, she shows compositions that are modeled on the visual logic of shop windows: A stimulating presentation of frontal views, where a desirable object is imbedded in a fictional, extravagant setting, like a main character in a stage play. In a series of illuminated, eye-catching spatial images that stand out strikingly from the surrounding architecture, the displays form a paraphrase of the window concept applied to traditional painting. Adding to the theatrical spectacle is the fact that luxury stores repeatedly resort to artistic quotes for their advertising, be it Mondrian or Cubism, Pop Art or collaborations with contemporary artists. By transforming their 'artful' imagery back into painting, Ce Jian analyzes their rhetoric of sensuality, while creating surreal scenes featuring the famous Kelly bag by Hermès, a Guerlain lipstick or Tiffany bracelets. At the same time, she alludes to art historical elements such as Vanitas symbols, draperies or Gothic windows.

As a source for her works, she used the website of the Berlin KaDeWe (Department Store of the West), which was founded in 1907 and until today remains the most famous high-end department store in Germany. The lavish shop windows are a public attraction in every season, its richly ornamented wrought-iron front gate, which unlike other parts of the building survived WW2, stands as an entrance to another sphere. Integrated into the exhibition as a wallpaper, this motif assumes the role of a heavenly gate as well as the enclosure of a paradisiacal garden.

The space is alternately immersed in black and white light, causing an alienating change within the exhibition. As under an X-Ray, the shortwave light reveals a different face of the paintings, where invisible textures suddenly stand out in neon colors. Our quotidian perception is disrupted by an alluring metamorphosis: While the physical form of the canvas recedes into darkness, its pictorial illusion gains a virtual power – the exhibition becomes a holistic, absorbing experience, echoing the store's overwhelming strategy and the mirage of its window displays.

The pandemic has considerably accelerated the decline of department stores, a process that came with the rise of online shopping. The future of retail and consumer culture lies in tracking cookies and personalized adverts. Yet the psychology and aesthetics of merchandising still hold true, as can be heard in the audio piece *Mirage*, where passages from Zola's novel are interwoven with advice from contemporary marketing guides, framed by Benjamin's text.

When Benjamin wrote about the Paris arcades, he uncovered the living culture that expressed itself in the details, the ornaments and materials. With sharp-sighted curiosity, he analyzed the phenomenon of fashion and things that are "about to die out". The places of commerce and beauty already seemed like historical sites to him, pointing from the past toward the present – and probably into the future. By transferring the interplay between art and commerce into a gallery space (thus closing the circle), the artist reflects critically on the nature of their interdependency and the parallels in their aesthetic appeal.

About Ce JIAN

Ce Jian has always been drawn to the intersecting realms of technology, knowledge and visual experience, of artistic and non-artistic image production. Usually she begins with relatively concrete concepts and digests and transforms them through the process of painting, thereby allowing the rational idea and formal structure to collide with the spontaneous expressive potential of the material medium and her own hand. The productive tension between constructive principles and destructive fragmentation or gestures is a consistent trait of her work. While she ruminates on a given work concept she set herself and the issues surrounding it, she also explores painterly details as a space for free abstraction – and on this level, she raises fundamental questions regarding painting itself and its ontology.

Ce Jian was born in 1984 in Shandong Province, China and moved to Germany in 1988. She studied at Goldsmiths College, London from 2006-2007 and graduated in 2008 from the Berlin University of the Arts in the master class of Georg Baselitz, Daniel Richter and Robert Lucander. She also earned a Magister Artium degree in Art History from the Humboldt-Universität and Freie Universität Berlin in 2009. She received a PhD in Art and Visual History from Humboldt-Universität of Berlin in 2017. Her recent solo exhibitions include *Paradise*, WHITE SPACE BEIJING, Beijing, China (2021); *Words of Art*, Yell Space, Shanghai, China (2019); *Armada*, WHITE SPACE BEIJING, Beijing, China (2018); *Bannermen*, Gallery SU, Seoul, Korea (2018); *Transeuropa*, Whiteconcepts, Berlin, Germany (2017); *CAPTCHA*, Galerie Philine Cremer, Dusseldorf, Germany (2017); *The Grand Illusion*, WHITE SPACE BEIJING, Beijing, China (2016); *Elephant*, NON Berlin, Berlin, Germany (2016). Recent group exhibitions include *Sonderlage*, Lage Egal, Berlin, Germany (2021); *El Lisztzky's Rooms*, Surplus Space, Wuhan, China (2020); *A World in a Grain of Sand: Mapping Shapes and Sites for Social Deometries*, Atlantis, Sanya, China (2018); *Art Patrons*, Qiao Space, Shanghai, China (2018); *The Second Self*, Peres Projects, Berlin, Germany (2017). She currently lives and works in Berlin and Beijing.

简策 | 乐园
2021.5.15-7.3

空白空间很高兴地宣布，简策的第六回个展“乐园”将在 2021 年 5 月 15 日开幕并持续至 7 月 3 日。展览将展出简策于 2020 年至 2021 年创作的全新作品。

本次展览有关“承诺”，一种对于激动、享受、魅力、快乐与地位的承诺。这一允诺诞生于约 170 年前，第一座堪称庞然的百货商场于 19 世纪在巴黎诞生，使得“巴黎女郎”（Parisienne）成为了风靡世界的生活方式的代称，亦为现代商业奠定了根基。瓦尔特·本杰明在他的《拱廊计划》中对上述现象于文化历史和复杂的符号层面的角色进行了探索。随着百货商场的发明，一种传统开启了，时至今日仍持续影响着我们的生活。

它生长为一处独立的王国，一块投射欲望的画布，一座令人得偿所愿的幻象宫殿。埃米尔·左拉（Émile Zola）在其 1883 年写就的小说《妇女乐园》（*Au Bonheur des Dames*）中创造了一番惊人的当代画像，他捕捉到了商场那令人倾覆的力量，其对传统商人造成的浩劫，以及痴迷于奢华的消费者。然而左拉并非对消费主义加以简单批判，而是对创造性商业策略给予了卓越的评价：除广告、免费送货及退货等以外，最令人印象深刻的便属展示商品的美学。通过充斥、堆叠眼花缭乱的產品，商场将其自身呈现为一处视觉华美与愉悦之地，为人们提供着一种有别于日常生活的升华——古典意义上来讲，这一使命乃是分配给艺术或宗教的。

艺术家简策由此出发。在《偶像》（Icon）和《透景画》（Diorama）系列中，她展现了商店橱窗视觉逻辑的构造：在刺激性的正视图中，诱人的物品融汇在虚构而奢靡的场景中，如同一位舞台剧上的主演。一系列被照亮的、夺人眼球的空间图像从周身的建筑中脱颖而出，其陈列方式阐释出了传统绘画中的窗格概念。而奢侈品商店在其广告宣传中不断地艺术性征用，比如蒙德里安、立体主义、波普艺术以及和当代艺术家的合作等，更加深了这一剧场般的奇观。通过将些“精妙的”图像转化到绘画中，简策解析了这一感官体验的修辞之术，创造出由著名的爱马仕凯莉包、娇兰口红、蒂芙尼手镯“出演”的超现实场景。同时，艺术家也在作品中隐晦地使用了如虚空派符号、窗帘以及哥特玻璃窗在内的历史元素。

艺术家使用了柏林卡迪威百货（KaDeWe）的网站作为作品中的素材来源之一。卡迪威百货建造于 1907 年，至今仍是德国最为著名的高端商场。华丽的商店橱窗成为了每一季的公共景点，其装饰繁复的铁艺门廊与这座从二战中幸存下来的建筑其余部分大为不同，仿佛通往另一界别的入口。门廊的图案将以墙纸的方式融入展览，有如天堂之门亦或是奇境花园的围栏。

展览空间将沉浸在交替出现的日光与紫光中，构造出疏离的变幻。如同在 X 射线下，短波光线将揭示出绘画的不同面貌，暗藏的质地亦将以霓虹之色显现。我们的日常感知被这诱人的变形扰乱：当画布的物质形态消隐在黑暗中，其图像的幻觉将赢得实质的权力——展览成为一种全然的、引人入胜的体验，一种对商场势不可挡的策略以及橱窗展示之幻象的回应。

在世界范围内，疫情使得百货商场加速地衰落，这一过程也进一步激发了线上购物的兴起。零售业的未来与消费者文化潜藏在网络追踪器与个性化广告中。然而商品销售策略的心理学和美学仍在生效，如同我们将在展览的声音作品《海市蜃楼》（Mirage）中听到的那样，左拉小说中的选段将与来自本杰明文本构架的当代市场导购建议交织相会。

当本杰明写作巴黎拱廊时，他发觉出那些活生生的文化通过细节、装潢与材料进行着自我的表达。他以敏锐的好奇心辨析出时尚的现象以及“行将消逝”之事物。对他来说，商业与美的领地本就像是历史的遗迹，由过去指向当下——并可能通往未来。通过将艺术与商业的合谋转化入画廊的空间中（并由此形成一个闭环），艺术家对它们的共生本质与并行不悖的美感进行了批判性的反思。

空 | 白 | 空 | 间
WHITE SPACE BEIJING

关于艺术家

简策长期关注技术、知识、视觉经验与（艺术的与非艺术的）图像生产之间的交叉区域。她的绘画往往从某些相对具体的概念、形象出发，并在绘画过程中逐步消解它们。这一过程使得理性的观念、严谨的结构与富有表现力的媒介质感、艺术家的手感相互碰撞。在建构原则与“破坏性”的拆解，以及绘画性的笔触之间，生成的那种创造性的张力，成为她作品的重要特征。在她反复思考自己为作品设置的清晰概念以及随之而来的那些问题的同时，利用一种绘画性的细节来进行自由的抽象处理——在这个层面上，她既讨论了绘画的一些基本问题也触及了绘画的自体。

简策，1984 年出生于中国山东，1988 年移居德国。2008 年毕业于柏林艺术大学美术系，Georg Baselitz, Daniel Richter 和 Robert Lucander 大师班。2009 年毕业于柏林洪堡大学和自由大学艺术史系（硕士）。2006-2007 年，就读于伦敦大学金史密斯学院。2017 年，获得洪堡大学艺术与图像史博士学位。近期个展包括：乐园，空白空间，北京，中国（2021）；关于展出艺术家作品高品质绘画，加快建成世界著名作品图像的若干意见，要空间，上海，中国（2019）；舰队，空白空间，北京，中国（2018）；Bannermen, Gallery SU, 首尔，韩国（2018）；穿越欧洲，简策 & 程昱峥，Whiteconcepts, 柏林，德国（2017）；验证码，Philine Cremer Gallery, 杜塞尔多夫，德国（2017）；大幻影，空白空间，北京（2016）；大象，NON Berlin, 柏林，德国（2016）。近期群展包括：Sonderlage, Lage Egal, 柏林，德国（2021）；形式的“密谋”，剩余空间，武汉，中国（2020）；一沙艺世界：探索社会几何形态，三亚·亚特兰蒂斯，三亚，中国（2018）；艺术赞助人，乔空间，上海，中国（2018）；The Second Self, Peres Projects, 柏林，德国（2017）。简策现工作生活于德国柏林与中国北京。