

Metal Language

In *Metal Language* series, XU ZHEN® collects conversations and texts from public cartoons and represents them using metal chains. With the all-encompassing texts, the artist acutely captures the characteristics of discourse in public cartoons: direct, spontaneous, and diverse. All the discourses are extracted from their original contexts and densely arranged in a random manner, creating a cacophonous ecosystem reminiscent of video barrage comments. Similar to the mission of public cartoons and street graffiti, this series of works appears casual but actually conveys a deeper level of satire. It mocks the proliferation of information and communication while interrogating the limitations of individual expression in the contemporary society. Together the works constitute landscapes of 21st-century spirits.

Under Heaven

Launched in 2011, the Under Heaven series has become one of XU ZHEN®'s trademark series. The artist fills the oil paint in the cream piping bag and follows the cream cake mounting procedure. *Under Heaven* series has not only retained the creaminess and sweetness of real cream, but its dense visual appeal and exaggerated dimension also present a false illusion. *Under Heaven*, the title of the work, which commands authority, reflects the carnival under the trend of globalization and hedonism. The dense cream flowers make people's eyes and mouths dizzy with color and exaggerated size. Under Heaven reveals a subtle compositional relationship between materials and form, where layers and spaces are skillfully integrated into thoughts on painting and action. The creamy *Under*

Heaven, or a world filled with cream, faithfully names an exciting, maddening, and sensual reality with optimism.

“SIGNAL” - Project Introduction

Unlike XU ZHEN®'s large-scale paintings, thousands of small paintings of the same series appear neatly and densely on the wall, resembling lines of code ready to be called upon. These small paintings are the protagonists of the artist's "Signal" project. Over the past year, more than 2,000 small paintings have been gifted to the artist's friends and audiences from various countries. These paintings are also displayed on their social media platforms (WeChat, TikTok, Instagram, etc.) to reach a wider audience. In the exhibition at the Golden Eagle Art Museum, Xu Zhen juxtaposed selected screenshots of passionate paintings uploaded by the audience themselves from social media platforms with the *Passion* paintings in the gallery space. Here, the artist incorporates the gestural strokes from his own paintings into the actions of sharing, liking, commenting, and posting these social media images. Xu Zhen appropriates how the audience interacts with his paintings and overlays a new painting on top. He implies the question of "how a painting appears today" and mobilizes our sensitivity to the digital and real worlds.

“Signal” is a contemporary art project initiated by artist XU ZHEN in 2022. Xu Zhen gives as gifts some of his *Passion* paintings to the global audience, and each recipient is invited to display the painting they receive on their social media accounts. A long-term, unceasing “art exhibition” will thus take place on Internet media platforms. The project aims to send the

signal of art to people around the world and share with them the future of art.

Passion, a series of paintings in a seemingly abstract expressionist style, is both a derivative of smart social media and a representation of daily life experience on the Internet. The works are based on a great invention — screenshots on smartphones. The abstract-expressionist free writing vividly pours various kinds of emotion commonly seen in chatrooms onto the picture.

The *Passion* painting series explores the data-driven reality of the social media era and depicts the possible forms it may take. In the global era of cloud computing and artificial intelligence, it creatively continues and develops pop art, conceptual art, and abstract expressionism, giving the *Passion* paintings an iconic style. Xu Zhen fully adheres to the logical and visual habits of social media interfaces in his painting practice. Using oil paint as a medium, the artist expresses emotions from social media comprehensively within the constraints of three primary colors. Emotional communication, information exchange, thought rhythms and density of expression become the primary dynamic relationships on the canvas, directly influencing the language and visual expression of the artwork. Through this integration of painting and screens, virtual and real elements, which are ubiquitous in contemporary society, Xu Zhen expands and strengthens his visual language. The artist pushes this relationship to the extreme, guiding us to reflect on the tool logic and ethics of the social media era.

XU ZHEN®

Base

2021

Installation

iPhone、 iPad、 MacBook、 custom environment

Base is a work created by XU ZHEN® starting in 2021 and continuously updated until now. The design of the Apple Store has high recognition worldwide, allowing people to experience and consume within an atmosphere of innovation and high technology. Xu Zhen directly appropriates a complete set of display items from the Apple Store, such as tables and mobile devices, and designates them as sculptures for the exhibition. The devices, including iPhones, play content generated during their actual usage. These real digital contents disrupt the comfort, security, and professionalism typically associated with the commercial design and high-tech experiences. Here, the artist integrates various realities of social production, assembling industrial design, consumer experiences, technology, and big data platforms into this artwork. The entire set of products and its display methods becomes the "base" of the sculpture, while the content on the phone screens becomes its "shape." *Base* a conceptual artwork that continuously captures the reality of digital image production.

The entire artwork treats the content within the devices as facts, events, and new information to be used and announced. Today, our love, curiosity, and beliefs are transformed into data alongside our bodies, actions, and emotions. How we better utilize ourselves as data in everyday life is the reality we face.