

YOYO: "The First Emperor of Qin Is Not a Mountain" 2/3

Artist	YOYO
Opening	16:00 – 19:00, Nov 6, 2023
Exhibition Period	Nov 6 – Dec 23, 2023
Venue	MadeIn Gallery, No.1, -1F Sunken Garden, Lane 9 Qufu Road, Jing'an District, Shanghai

MadeIn Gallery is pleased to present "The First Emperor of Qin Is Not a Mountain" (2/3), the second chapter of YOYO's trilogy on the Qin Mountains, constituting the artist's second solo exhibition at the gallery. YOYO's mixed media paintings and sculptures created over the past seven years present a microcosmic record of the Qin Mountains' transformation, where "moral landscapes" that resonate with the dynamics of nature gradually unfold.

When one lives through the harsh winter of the Qin Mountains, nature and one's mind constantly intertwine and become each other's matter. With the Qin Mountains as his studio and object, YOYO's long-lasting portrait-making process never ceases. Amidst the subtle changes in climate, the Mountains reveal their stably varied looks in the artist's unique "media pathways": The massifs make their statement through the natural materials of wood, soil, straw and the texture of mineral pigments, fabrics and other artifacts. The colors tend to break out from the snowy mountain range. The sketched mountain forms differ no longer depending on the relocation of vision, but on the artist's mental state when looking at the mountains. Similar to those creators in art history who use portraits to capture human emotions, YOYO continues painting and sculpting in the midst of change, entrusting his time to his object (the range), until the volatility of environment is weakened by the consistent act of pure depiction, ultimately concluded as a realization of the self. In this sense, the portrait of a mountain is the portrait of a human being, and to look at a mountain is to look inward.

Within yet detached, gentle yet sinuous, this continuous physical and spiritual co-presence of humans and nature transcends the logos. Living with the Qin Mountains is like a practice and a journey. Due to the concentrated release of inner potential in art practice, the diversity of life experiences is bridged in seemingly singular actions, implicating samples of one's relationship with society, history, and his own kind. The evolutions of society and natural history are inevitably relevant, while each event independently exists. In this order, "The First Emperor of Qin Is Not a Mountain" (2/3) testifies to the circulation of the human spirit, and also precludes the termination of the trilogy, which narrates the change of society and self through nature.

About YOYO

YOYO, born in 1982, graduated from the Arts College of Xi'an Fanyi University in 2004, studied at the Düsseldorf Art Academy in Germany from 2007 to 2008, and currently lives and works in Xi'an, China.

YOYO was born in a city in northern China where ceramics production has been the pillar industry for centuries. As a child, he was intrigued by the crude, damaged, unfinished paintings and the unique decorative patterns on the ruins commonly found in the city. They demonstrated the development of art for him and had a profound influence on his later practice. Curator SUN Qidong attributes YOYO's art-making to a "Gaia" style of creative practice, which "seeks to realize his communication, negotiation, and dialogue with nature so as to gain force in a dynamic situation". Despite its emphasis on interconnection, the hierarchical, dichotomous, or centralist mindset under an outdated global order is still insufficient to grasp the dynamic force of life. YOYO's practice "allows the Qin Mountains to re-emerge from a concrete, closed locality as the 'Gaia' in motion, thus providing us with an opportunity to rethink and re-articulate the 'clash of civilizations' under the new, networked global order". The Qin Mountains, as Gaia, are no longer associated with the traditional connotations of harmony, nurture, and nourishment, but are rife with undercurrents of contradiction and conflict. The Qin Mountains are the personification of the force of life.

YOYO's past exhibitions include: "Blowing Rolling Rooting: Migration and Residence of Northwest Artists", Yinchuan Moca, Yinchuan, 2023; "Handwriting and Mind", Xi'an Art Museum, Xi'an, 2023; "Upstairs Cities", ASE Foundation, Shanghai, 2022; "YOYO: 'The First Emperor of Qin is Not a Mountain 3/3'", MadeIn Gallery, Shanghai, 2022; Hong Kong Art Week, Hong Kong, China, 2017; Hong Kong Art Week, Hong Kong, China, 2016; Asia Week New York, New York, U.S., 2011; Asia Week New York, New York, U.S., 2010.