

# secession

Vereinigung bildender KünstlerInnen Wiener Secession  
Friedrichstraße 12, A-1010 Wien  
T. +43-1-587 53 07, F. +43-1-587 53 07-34  
office@secession.at, www.secession.at

## Press release

**Zhou Siwei**

***I Sold What I Grow***

21.6. – 8.9.2024

Galerie

**Press conference:** Wednesday, June 19, 2024, 10 a.m.

**Opening & summer party:** Thursday, June 20, 2024, 7 p.m.

Zhou Siwei translates the contradictions of living and working in contemporary China into playful, personally fragmented and nonlinear works on canvas and painted objects. Probing the ambivalence of digital technologies, the unceasing global traffic in goods, and the sleeplessness of the late-capitalist era, Zhou interweaves diverse visual and cultural influences in ways that make everyday items and signs feel at once familiar and alien, accommodating a wide range of interpretations.

On the occasion of his exhibition *I Sold What I Grow* at the Secession, Zhou has created a series of new works that revolve around the leitmotif of the apple: from the humble fruit that is harvested in every corner of the globe, to its simulacra in the still life paintings of Bruegel and Cézanne (which were in turn assiduously studied and copied in the arts academies of China), to its greyscale ubiquity on laptops, phones and various other “i-products”. The viewer encounters three markedly different configurations of objects unfolding across the lower galleries of the Secession, as well as spaces of circulation and contemplation. The first room exhibits two recent works that explore the concepts of dreaming and fantasies: *APPLE (EV SLEEP naked)* (2021–2023) depicts a figure enclosed within a bulbous, semi-organic form recalling the “Project Titan” electric car that Apple was said to be developing (only to then ditch in order to focus on generative AI projects), with wheels that similarly allude to all the various iterations of apples within visual culture. This is paired with the work *Tattoo (Drifting Flame Malevich)* (2023), in which the Chinese characters for “wandering” (流浪) are embedded (“tattooed”) into one of Malevich’s Suprematist paintings, which is then anchored back in the real world by the incorporation of a popular tattoo design of a flame (also recalling the Western proclivity for getting tattoos of Chinese characters).

Surrounding these two works are a series of painted objects which resemble, upon first glance, mobile phone and iPad cases. Created using a 3D printer and comprising delicate or organic materials such as corn starch, these vibrant yet fragile objects speak to both the cases’ frequent use as the personal, intimate point of encounter between the electronic device and the skin of the person making the call, as well as to the more standardised forms of “personalisation” that accompany the switching of colours or designs of one’s mobile device.

Further illustrating the confluence of the “touch of the person” with the “personal touch”, each of the cases also displays a message or slogan—such as “missing you” (想你) or “not tired” (不累)—which is roughly scratched into the surface in a manner akin to somebody “keying” a car, another form of “tagging”. This exemplifies

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Zhou's use of language in his work: the titles of his works are restricted to nouns, with the adjectives either inferred via the viewer's direct engagement with, or reaction to, them or inscribed across their surfaces.

This idea of mark-making is then carried over into the two small works which, akin to grammar, punctuate the next space. A tiny silver case (which is surely too small for any phone) upon which the word "emotion" (情) is etched and a still life of an apple amidst an indeterminate purple field function as a parenthesis for the myriad of allusions and associations throughout the exhibition as well as Zhou's own artistic journey from the academy (where aptitude was assessed based on one's ability to replicate the realism of painted objects such as this) to the current moment of digital image circulation on handheld devices.

These themes are then further expanded upon in the final gallery space, which exhibits several new groupings of painted objects and works on linen revolving around the themes of the figure, myth, as well as the ubiquitous apple. In addition to the subject matter of each work, the paintings in this gallery also demonstrate a convergence of various stylistic and material considerations with which contemporary painters continually grapple. This is seen, most evidently, in the recurrence of the modernist grid in several of the paintings—in one instance, it appears to simply denote the pattering of a dress, whilst in another, it shifts from resembling a bamboo fence (a key frequent motif in Zhou's work) to an almost neo-plasticist demarcation of abstract space à la Mondrian. This hard-edged treatment of line is then completely abandoned in another work, where it is instead deployed in increasingly expressive and tempestuous strokes across an otherwise almost flat plane of colour. (In order to achieve this effect, the artist attached his brush to the end of a fishing rod; contrasting the seemingly arbitrary nature of painting in this manner with Matisse's careful, controlled use of a bamboo stick for his later large-scale works). This study into the confluence of form (line/grid) and matter (bamboo) is then finally reconciled in the final work in the exhibition, in which the hard-edged line returns to delineate a bamboo hat commonly worn by farmers, but on this occasion adorning the head of a serpent who is itself decorated with heart-shaped tattoos and who proffers an apple—from Eden or Cupertino, one cannot tell.

This final painting is a perfect example of the critical examination of fluctuating signs and objects that has informed Zhou's work over the past few years; a period demarcated by the radically truncated flows of information and bodies brought about by the COVID-19 health emergency and its aftermath. In foregrounding these contradictory trajectories—the expedited flows of signs and data, contrasted with decelerated or delayed movements of bodies and objects—the seemingly brightly coloured objects also allude to the arbitrary forces that continue to pull at society: both backwards towards the indeterminate bucolic "past" so beloved by populist leaders and conservative societal forces, and forwards towards the idealized future of frictionless digital networks proselytized by tech entrepreneurs. In embracing these similarly irreconcilable future/past tensions—indicated by the title's "broken" English (con)fusion of simple past and present tenses—*I Sold What I Grow* speaks to the experience of being a painter in the midst of an increasingly fragmented contemporary moment.

Zhou Siwei was born in Chongqing in 1981 and currently lives and works in Shanghai.

Programmed by the board of the Secession  
Curated by Damian Lentini

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**Publication****Zhou Siwei**

Format: 14.8 x 21 cm

Details: softcover, dustjacket, 104 pages, sticker

Series design concept: Sabo Day

Graphic design: Sabo Day

Texts: Fiona He, Damian Lentini (conversation)

Languages: German, English

ca. 60 images

Secession 2024

Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther und Franz König, Cologne

ISBN 978-3-7533-0625-4

EUR 18.-

This publication is released on the occasion of Zhou Siwei's exhibition *I Sold What I Grow* at the Vienna Secession, June 21–September 8, 2024. It includes an in-depth essay by the Beijing-based curator and arts writer Fiona He as well as an interview between the artist and Damian Lentini that probes the manifold influences that have informed his painting practice across the years. Furthermore, as an artistic intervention, Zhou has included a limited-edition sticker that depicts a half-eaten apple—which bears an uncanny resemblance to the logo of a certain mega corporation—alongside the characters 想你 (“thinking of you”) carved into its flesh. Through the almost arbitrary action of biting and carving into the fruit, Zhou Siwei wishes to re-inscribe the apple with a sense of both the haptic and the personal-subjective—always “thinking of you.”

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### Current exhibitions

Hauptraum

**Simone Fattal *metaphorS***

21.6. – 8.9.2024

Galerie

**Zhou Siwei *I Sold What I Grow***

21.6. – 8.9.2024

Grafisches Kabinett

**Susana Pilar Delahante Matienzo *Achievement***

21.6. – 8.9.2024

### Permanent presentation

Gustav Klimt, *Beethoven Frieze*

*Beethoven – Painting and Music* in cooperation with  
Wiener Symphoniker

### Opening hours

Tuesday – Sunday 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

### Admission

Regular € 12,00 | Students under 26 € 7,50

Seniors 65+ € 10,00 | Free admission for children under 12

### Press contact Secession

Julia Kronberger

T. +43 1 587 53 07-10, [julia.kronberger@secession.at](mailto:julia.kronberger@secession.at)

### Press images

download at <https://secession.at/presse>

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## Zhou Siwei

### Biografie | Biography

Zhou Siwei, \*1981, Chongqing, China  
www.zhousiwei.weebly.com

### Bildung | Education

2005 BA in Oil Painting, Sichuan Fine Art Institute, Chongqing, China

## Ausstellungen & Projekte (Auswahl) | Exhibitions & projects (selection)

### Einzelausstellungen | Solo exhibitions

- 2024 I Sold What I Grow, Secession Vienna Austria
- 2020 New Phone for Everyweek Antenna Space, Shanghai, China
- 2019 The Last Bridge, Kraupa-Tuskany Zeidler, Berlin, Germany
- 2017 Antenna Space hosting Galerie Urs Meile, Antenna Space, Shanghai, China
- 2015 Galerie Urs Meile, Lucerne, Switzerland
- 2014 A Round Studio, Aike-Dellarco, Shanghai, China
- 2007 Twilight, 82 Republic, Hongkong, China

### Gruppenausstellungen | Group exhibitions

- 2024 Weaving in Entanglement, Mending in Punctures, curated by Leo Li Chen, 69 Art Campus, Beijing, China  
Follow the Feeling, curated by Qu Chang, times museum, Guangzhou, China  
Project Space Opening: Antenna-Tenna, Antenna-Tenna, Shanghai, China
- 2023 Horizons: Is there anybody out there?, curated by Robin Peckham, Antenna Space, Shanghai, China  
Blink - The Collection of Trond Mohn, Stavanger Art Museum of Fine Arts, Norway  
White Holes: The Mysteries and Modern Perceptions of Oracle Bone Script, 798CUBE, Beijing, China
- 2021 House of Perception, Antenna Space, Shanghai, China
- 2020 Women in Exile and Kub, Kraupa-Tuskany Zeidler / online  
Normal Days, Antenna Space x POP-UP Gallery, OōEli, Hangzhou, China  
Collective Care: A House With Many Guests, M Woods, Beijing, China  
Those who see and know all, are all and can do all, 798 Art Zone, Beijing, China
- 2019 Blasted Heath, A.M.180, Prague, Czech Republic
- 2018 Emerald City, K11 Art Foundation, Hong Kong, China  
Transcen-Dental Empathy, Antenna Space, Shanghai, China
- 2017 I Could See the Smallest Things, Antenna Space, Shanghai, China

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- Guangzhou Image Triennial: Simultaneous Eidos, Guangzhou, China
- 2016 Huayu Youth Award: Inception, Sanya, China  
Art Beijing Salon Exhibition Program 1: Paintings of Thought (Plane),  
Dongshan Shu (East Mountain Villa), Beijing, China  
Painting as Strait Gate, Hive Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China
- 2015 Not Likely, Aike-Dellarco, Shanghai, China  
Your Silent Face, VIASATERN, Milan, Italy  
Absolute Collection Guideline, Sifang Art Museum, Nanjing, China  
To Be Confirmed, Jewelvary Art & Boutique, Shanghai, China
- 2014 Ministry of Truth II: The Factitious and its Realm, Boers-Li Gallery, Beijing, China  
7th A+A, Too Smart to be good, PIFO Gallery, Beijing, China
- 2013 Studio, M50 Art Space, Shanghai, China  
Rendering, Aike-Dellarco, Shanghai, China  
MEMO I, White Space, Beijing, China  
Painting Lesson III: Elementary And Extreme Structure, Gallery Yang, Beijing, China
- 2012 Cohere & Unroll, Space Station, Beijing, China  
Memory between Inspiration and Media – Chongqing,  
International Artist-In-Residence and Workshop 2012 (No.1), Chongqing, China  
China - Chongqing 2 Künstler in Düsseldorf, Artist exchange program, Düsseldorf, Germany
- 2009 Sichuan Hot!, Queensland College of Art, Griffith University, Brisbane;  
Ray Hughest Gallery, Sydney, Australia
- 2008 Anything is possible, Centre Culturel de Rencontre Abbaye de Neumünster, Luxemburg
- 2007 The 3rd Guiyang Biennial Exhibition, Guiyang Art Museum, Guizhou, China
- 2005 Archaeology Of The Future, The 2nd Triennial Of Chinese Art, Nanjing Museum, Nanjing, China
- 2004 Backpacker, Artist Commune, Hongkong, China

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**Zhou Siwei**

***I Sold What I Grow***

**Werkliste | List of works**



**Thief, 2024**

Oil color on linen | Öl auf Leinwand, 200 x 150cm  
bamboo fence



**Bamboo, 2024**

Oil color on linen linen | Öl auf Leinwand, 150 x 150cm  
Basket (I SOLD WHAT I GROW)



**Village (Apple, 5G, Wind), 2023**

Oil color on linen linen | Öl auf Leinwand 200 x 250cm

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**Apple EV Sleep naked , 2024**

Oil color on linen linen | Öl auf Leinwand, 100 x 120cm



**Snake (East Asia Farmer), 2024**

Oil color on linen linen | Öl auf Leinwand, 100 x 120cm



**Apple 0.5, 2024**

Oil color on linen linen | Öl auf Leinwand, 40 x 50cm | Ten CNY for 1.5kg



**Tattoo (Drifting Flame Malevich), 2024**

Oil color on linen linen | Öl auf Leinwand, 120 x 100cm



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***Apple 04, 2024***

Oil color on linen linen | Öl auf Leinwand, 20 x 20cm



***Apple 01, 2021***

Oil color on linen linen | Öl auf Leinwand, 70 x 80cm



***Untitled (iPad Cover), 2024***

3D Printing Nylon, putty for modeling, acrylic,oil color, 27.8 x 41 x 1.9cm



***Untitled (iPad Cover), 2024***

3D Printing Nylon, putty for modeling, acrylic,oil color, 27.8 x 41 x 1.9cm

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***Untitled (iPad Cover), 2024***

3D Printing Nylon, putty for modeling, acrylic, oil color, 30.8 x 40.2 x 1.3cm



***Untitled (iPad Cover), 2024***

PLA 5, putty for modeling, acrylic, oil color, 9.5 x 18.4 x 1.2cm



***Untitled (iPad Cover), 2024***

3D Printing Nylon, putty for modeling, acrylic, oil color, 10.2 x 20 x 1.3cm



***Untitled (iPad Cover), 2024***

PLA 5, putty for modeling, acrylic, oil color, 7.6 x 14.8 x 0.8cm

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***Untitled (iPad Cover), 2024***

3D Printing Nylon, putty for modeling, acrylic,oil color, 7.6 x 14.8 x 0.8cm



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3D Printing Nylon, putty for modeling, acrylic,oil color, 7.6 x 14.8 x 0.8cm



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***Untitled (iPad Cover), 2024***

PLA 5, putty for modeling, acrylic, oil color, 7.6 x 14.8 x 0.8cm



***Untitled (iPad Cover), 2024***

3D printing stainless steel, 3.6 x 7 x 0.4cm

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## Art Education Program

**Free admission on the first Wednesday of every month:**

August 7, 2024, September 4, 2024

Thursday, June 20, 2024, 5.30pm

### Exhibition talk

With Simone Fattal and Emma Enderby (in English)

An event organized by the Secession Friends

July 2 – September 3, 2024

### Tuesday@Secession

Our successful weekly art program continues this summer: Every Tuesday from 8 pm until midnight in the garden of the Secession

09.07.2024 – „Constanze Ruhm presents“ Lila-Zoé Krauß (dance performance) and Alexandra Wanderer (stand-up)

16.07.2024 – Michael Zinganel (installation with talks and live music)

23.07.2024 – Billy Roisz (performative sculpture)

30.07.2024 – Bronwyn Lace (performance lecture)

06.08.2024 - Katrin Plavčák/Kinky Muppets (performance)

13.08.2024 – Michael Gumhold (musical accompaniment) + Peter Zolly (projection)

20.08.2024 – Lisa Holzer (discursive event)

27.08.2024 – Susana Pilar (performance)

03.09.2024 – “Carola Dertnig presents” La Georgetta (performance) + Renate Kordon (projection)

A series of events by and with members of the Secession. More information: [www.secession.at](http://www.secession.at)

Wednesday, July 3, 2024, 10 am–6 pm

### Ver mehrt Schönes! Family Day

Together with our long-standing main sponsor Erste Bank we invite you to the Vermehrt Schönes! Family Day. Free admission.

Short guided tours in German:

At 10 am, 11 am, 12 pm, 1 pm, 2 pm, 3 pm, 4 pm, 5 pm

We would like to thank Erste Bank for making this day possible.

Sunday, September 8, 2024, 5 pm

### Nearly missed it?

Join us on a last-minute tour of the exhibitions by Simone Fattal, Zhou Siwei, and Susana Pilar Delahante Matienzo.

Every Saturday

### History of the Secession and its architecture, and current exhibitions

Overview tours at 11 am in English and at 2 pm in German.

Admission plus € 3,- guide fee per person.

Kids under 12 free of charge.

The guided tours are also available by appointment.

Contact: [kunstvermittlung@secession.at](mailto:kunstvermittlung@secession.at)

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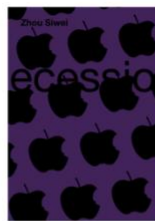
## /publikationen

### Aktuell



Simone Fattal

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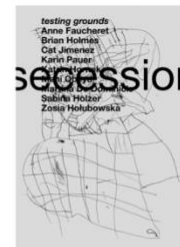
Zhou Siwei

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Susana Pilar Delahante Matienzo

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Katrin Hornek. testing grounds

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