

Heart Tree Yansha Zi'an's First Solo Exhibition

It is a sentimental process that makes me feel helpless and uncertain about everything deep inside. The old tree, remains the only constant thing in my life in the past years...

-Zi'an, Winter, 2013

Following the success of He Sen and Ai Jing's concurrent exhibitions in June, Longmen Art Projects is delighted to announce "Heart Tree", the first gallery solo exhibition for the young artist Yansha Zi'an. Opening on July 26th, the exhibition will highlight 14 oil on canvas works of various sizes executed in 2013 and 2014. Born in Shanghai in 1984, Yansha Zi'an graduated with a post-graduate degree from the oil painting department of Sichuan Fine Arts Institute under the tutelage of Pang Maokun. In this series focusing on ancient trees, it is a dramatic departure from his highly acclaimed realistic portrait series. It is also the first time the young talent will reveal his new motif to the public.

Looking back at the history of visual culture in Chinese and Western art, you will find that there are many works exhibiting the "willpower of life". The watery waves and whirlpool patterns found on ancient Chinese pottery embody the natural and pure life experience of our ancestors. The intimidating ornamentation on Chinese bronze vessels of Shang Dynasty underline our ancestor's class consciousness and their imagination about fate. Egyptian pyramids display the majesty and solemnity of life, and ancient Greek sculptures call up the great humanism. Life is a material existence, and willpower suggests some kind of spiritual sense of direction. Warm lively bodies from colorful oil paintings, aspiration for freedom in Chinese water and ink paintings, both of them reflect the artists' personal understanding of willpower on specific cultural and aesthetic bases.

Life experience is the inspiration well of artists. From "Life Images - Birth Mark" to the latest series "Night", many of Yansha Zi'an's artworks reflect the theme of willpower. In "Night" series, we can see that the artist has gained a deeper understanding of life. Cloaked in night and darkness, the tree gently waves its branches, stretching out with its twigs. It shows the undying willpower of a tireless life, a spirit of growth and perseverance, a state of self-assurance. It also shows the artist's attitude for life. It is the willpower that keeps life eternally young.

In terms of subject matter, the artist took a drastic change from painting realistic figures to a more casual and prevalent life force: trees. It is the artist's commentary on the persistence and perseverance of commonality. He tends to use perspective

technique from an angle of low elevation to highlight the subject of the painting, that is, admiration for life. It signifies a major breakthrough in Yansha Zi'an's artistic language. In "Night" series, the mottled tree bark and outstretched branches are a perfect reflection of his art language that is neat, refined and exaggerated. Obviously the willpower of the trees is the embodiment of the artist's poised and meticulous attitude for life. The planarization of the background is one of the most representative techniques of Chinese water and ink painting. By combining the two different languages of Chinese painting and oil painting together, the artist gives the painting a fresh new look with poetic imageries and thought-provoking sense of life.

From new born babies to children and teenagers to trees, the subject matter of Yansha Zi'an's paintings changes as time goes on, through which we can see that the artist has also become more mature and assertive in the past several years.

Exhibition Dates: July 26 – August 30, 2014 Tue-Sat 10AM-6:30PM

Opening Reception: Saturday July 26, 2014 4-7PM

Exhibition Venue: Longmen Art Projects, 338 Nanjing West Rd., 102 Tianan Center, Huangpu Dist., Shanghai

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1. 阎沙子安 Yansha Zi'an 夜 No.3 *Night No. 3* 油彩布面 *Oil on Canvas* 200 x 150cm 2014

2. 阎沙子安 Yansha Zi'an 松 No.1 *Pine No. 1* 油彩布面 *Oil on Canvas* 200x130cm 2014

3. 阎沙子安 Yansha Zi'an 古树 No.2 *Ancient Tree No. 2* 油彩布面 *Oil on Canvas* 120 x 80cm 2014

4. 阎沙子安 Yansha Zi'an 夜 No.4 *Night No. 4* 油彩布面 *Oil on Canvas* 160x100cm 2013