

## Press Release

'The chief forms of beauty are order, symmetry and clear delineation' – Aristotle

'In portraying ideal types of beauty... you bring together from many models the most beautiful features of each' – Socrates

KWM Art Center is pleased to announce it's first show of 2017: Beauty Without Beards. A defining feature of KWM is our support of contemporary creation inspired by or connected with different histories, cultures and traditions. Beauty Without Beards is our first exhibition curated from an art historical point of view highlighting how ancient Greek notions of beauty have crossed cultures and media and still influence how we read the world.

The title 'Beauty Without Beards' translated into Chinese is Wu Xu Zhi Mei. "Wu Xu" has two meanings. First of all, it literally means "without beards". The Ancient Greeks were great admirers of the beauty of the human body and for them, the most beautiful living form of existence was the young man before he began puberty or was able to grow facial hair. The 5th century BC Greek sculptor Polykeitos' 'Doryphorus' (the Spear-Carrier) is not only an epic sculpture of a beautiful youth in the ancient greek tradition, but also exemplifies his aesthetic theories of the mathematical bases of artistic perfection, perfect proportions and muscular tone. The second meaning is "unnecessary". Greek body aesthetics is not necessarily experienced or natural in our contemporary context. The 'unnecessary' or 'unnatural' feeling caused by this body idealisation positions us on the other side of the abyss and exposes us to an incredible hidden landscape, one that can stand short of present day politically correct standards.

The gallery space comprises of 48 works; 15 large paintings by Chinese French artist Li Xinjian and 33 photographs by Chinese photographer Ren Hang.

Between the years of 2005 to 2011, Li Xinjian painted his son growing up in various locations including New York, Paris, the south of France and Beijing. When he painted, his gestures on the canvas were natural and relaxed, because the subject was also a reflection or fantasy of himself. The boy always stays half naked. If he isn't painted surrounded by the dangers of nature, he is placed in a surreal futurist city. If he is not playing with sharks in a deep sea, he is jumping on top of a city roof to watch 9/11. His body is strong and fragile, light and tough. He looks like the delightful and fast Greek messenger Hermes, moving between the grand backdrops of nature and the future, always innocently jostling with the uncertainties hidden inside them.

Ren Hang's youthful subjects attract in two particular ways: through the beauty of exuberance and through the beauty of abstraction. The bodies in his works are naked, alive, tactile and desirable, at same time, they are also compositions, gestures, arrangements and forms. The American abstract expressionist William de Kooning (1904–1997) won his fame from his series "woman" by dissolving the female body into an abstract combination of paint. He once said: 'they say that I am painting females, no, I am painting a landscape'. Just like de Kooning, Ren Hang also finds abstraction in the human body absorbing. A body is also a landscape and an abstract structure. The young males in his works are wild animals or plants when positioned a deserted natural scene, but they change into brush marks or artisanal materials when they are twisted in front of a white wall in an internal setting. When you examine the photos as portraiture, you still receive the psychological information and the poignance of desire but enter a bubble of fantasy. The attraction of the young masculine bodies lies in their ability to appear both inhumane and humane simultaneously. The subjects do not reveal a deep complicity with the mundane. They are at their peak of physical energy and youthful fantasizing.

美的主要形式是秩序，对称和清晰的界限。

— 亚里士多德

在描绘美的理想形式时，你从许多模特身上汇集他们每个人最美的特性。

— 苏格拉底

金杜艺术中心将于2017年1月18日推出今年的第一个展览：《无须之美》。我们一贯支持一种穿越文化时空，与历史和传统发生关系的当代创作。《无须之美》就是第一个从艺术史背景来策划的展览。“无须”在这里的第一层意义是：没有胡须。意指没有长出胡须的少年。古希腊美学崇尚人体美，他们认为人体最美的时段是少年还没长出胡须的时候。波利克里托斯创作的《执矛者》就是一个典型的古希腊美少年像，也是古代雕塑中人体比例美和肌肉美的典范。第二层意义是：“没有必要”，意指这种美在我们此时此地的语境中不是必须和必然的，不会被正常的审美心理和习俗自然推动。而正是这种“无须”和“不正常”的东西，才会拎着我们的后脖颈飘向悬崖的另一边，给我们一片回头反观中才能看见的森然美景。

参展将呈现48件作品。15幅由华裔法籍艺术家李新建创作的大型油画，以及33幅中国摄影师任航的摄影作品。

我们选择了油画家在2005-2011年间对自己儿子的描绘。只在描绘儿子的时候他的笔法是最自然和放松的，因为俨然这个孩子是艺术家自己的化身和幻想。他笔下的男孩子总是半身赤裸，不是在生机蓬勃而危险的自然中，就是在超现实的未来城市景观里。不是在深海里跟鲨鱼嬉戏，就是跳跃在城市上空观看911大火……他的身体既强壮又柔弱，既轻盈又坚实，仿佛轻松快捷的希腊信使赫尔墨斯，游走在自然和未来的盛大图景中，跟孕育其中的不确定因素永远戏谑相对。

摄影师任航镜头中的少年有两种奇特而并行不悖的美：蓬勃美和抽象美。他作品中的身体既是肉身，呼吸，触碰和欲望，也是构图，笔法，布局和形式。抽象表现主义的代表艺术家德库宁创作过著名的《女人》系列，把丰满的女体溶解在一片无可辨识的油彩中。他曾经说过：“你们都说我在画人体吗？不是，我在画一片风景”。正如德库宁一样，任航也在肉身中找到了最大的抽象。一个身体，也就是一片风景，也就是一个结构。任航作品中的少年身体被放置在荒幽的自然中时，似乎就是树花犬马本身；而他们在室内一堵白墙前扭转成一个花结时，似乎就是一段笔迹一种工艺。而每每细看，却仍然有心理的裂缝，欲望的酸辛，人性的气泡……因为“少年”身体的迷人之处，就在于这个年纪中，他们既是最“非人”的，

也是最“人”的。他们生涩残忍，离复杂世故的情感甚远，却散发着人类生命过程中独具的荷尔蒙气息，和强劲的幻想能力。