

Where are the Fantastic Beasts?



Artist: Wu Junyong

2019.12.13 – 2020.02.14

KWM artcenter is pleased to present Wu Junyong's solo exhibition *Where are the Fantastic Beasts?* from 12.13.2019 to 2.14.2020. The title comes from the 4th century B.C Chinese mythology compendium *The Classic Of Mountains And Seas (Shan Hai Jing)*, a book that implies ancient both mystery and playfulness. The show displays more than 20 works, including ink on paper works from 2016 to 2019, a newly produced six box animation installation and a site specific wall work. The exhibition is a record of both of the artist's "slow" production process in our present ever accelerating world and his engagement with tradition and classical literature.

Wu Junyong is accustomed to thinking through images, and his current primary creative media are painting and animation. Prosperous folk art and mysterious countryside legends from childhood are analysed by the artist in various pictures that grow freely, composed of Wu Junyong's magical, spiritual and unique narratives. His production wanders between reality and imagination, East and West, resulting in conflictual, preposterous and anxious images. The topic of the exhibition consists of classical legends and stories from East and West. However, the original literary backgrounds dissolve into the simplest figures and scenery with neutral and descriptive work titles. Wu Junyong emphasises, "The information in the my paintings usually lie in the shadows of literature. But this time, I deliberately attempt to dodge obvious literary connotations, leaving the audience to interpret and imagine for themselves."

A professional training in Printmaking at the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou gave Wu Junyong supreme and confident modelling skills. He can paint without drafts and experiment manually. Art is more like a game for him as he disobediently plays with oil painting, ink on paper, sculpture and animation. Wu Junyong's animation work exudes a modern spirit on traditional paper, injecting a classical vein into digital media. In his opinion, tradition has always been fluid and innovative, such as Janus, the double-faced god in Greek mythology, looking forward or backwards while standing in the present. As one of the first in his generation of Chinese artists engaged with multimedia art, Wu Junyong is capable of playing joyfully in the Internet world.

The first impression of Wu Junyong from the outside world usually highlights his animation and bizarre imagination. However, through the newly exhibited paintings, from the last three years, and his latest animation installation, Wu Junyong tries to focus on the validity of painting itself. What does painting mean? How can traditional images and inks emit new vitality and breath today?

Leading up to the opening day Wu Junyong painted a site specific wall work in the art space. The audience experienced live how the artist develops and expands forms from one into another and was able to appreciate the charm of his improvisation.

Special Thanks: Han Feng Art Space

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About the Artist

Wu Junyong was born in Fujian in 1978. In 2000, he graduated from China Academy of Art in Hangzhou with a BFA in Printmaking. In 2005, he also earned his MFA in New Media Arts from the same school. Besides being a professional artist, Wu also teaches at School of InterMedia Art of China Academy of Art. Wu now lives and works in Hangzhou. Since 2002, Wu has been exhibiting extensively at home and abroad. His selected recent group exhibitions include: Ballade – Animamix Contemporary Art, Macao Museum of Art (2017); THE EXHIBITION OF ANNUAL OF CONTEMPORARY ART OF CHINA 2016, Beijing Minsheng Art Museum (2017); ANIMAMIX Biennale 2015-2016, Daegu Art Museum (2015); POST POP: EAST MEETS WEST, Saatchi Gallery (2014); Fuck Off 2, The Groninger Museum, Netherlands (2013); ON | OFF: CHINA'S YOUNG ARTISTS IN CONCEPT AND PRACTICE, The Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (2013); 9th Shanghai Biennale, Shanghai Museum of Contemporary Art (2012); The First "CAFAM · Future" Exhibition, CAFA Art Museum (2012); MADE IN POP LAND, the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Korea (2010); Farewell to Post-Colonialism, The Third Guangzhou Triennial, Guangdong Museum of Art (2008).

KWM artcenter

The KWM artcenter opened on 20th October 2016. It is located on the second floor of the WFC centre CBD in Beijing. The art center is supported by the law firm King & Wood Mallesons. The KWM artcenter presents and promotes artists both domestically and overseas as well as building up its own collection. In particular, it acts as a rare art institution at the heart of the economic central area in Beijing. It provides high-quality art educational activities and courses aimed to cultivate art lovers and collectors. It serves to improve the international influence of Chinese Art and become a powerful communicator of Chinese Contemporary Art.