

Catalogue: Commoners, Kings, and the Buddha | XIANG Zhenhua

Address : Unit 302, 2879 Longteng Avenue, Shanghai

Opening: Sunday, April 12, 2020

Open to public on Saturday 10:00-18:00 and other times by appointment

In April, 2020, Don Gallery is launching Xiang Zhenhua's new exhibition -- *Catalogue: Commoners, Kings, and the Buddha* -- for the first time. Over the last five years, Xiang's Catalogue series has been made up of images sourced from commercial fashion catalogues, which serve to construct a behavioral landscape reflecting rapid consumption in society.

Fashion catalogues and magazines display the most up-to-the-minute styles to spur rapid consumption. Products A through Z are arranged in a dazzling matrix, which comprises the "fast fashion" of this Internet Age. Yet we have not clearly delineated the relationship between "consumption" and image within this new mode of consumption.

Catalogue describes a dynamic landscape in which "depletion" and "consumption" occur simultaneously. Instead of creating images by "capturing a moment," Xiang Zhenhua uses advertising images as the object of creation.

Images of models' faces and silhouettes of garments are gradually layered, so that the characteristics of "things" and "humans" become increasingly blurred, and images become illusion. These stacked images are interwoven in reverse into scattered and isolated textures. "Production" and "waste," "depletion" and "consumption" -- processes that are sharing the same moment in time are made clear.

Consumption is spurred onward, while the process of depletion is often obscured or hidden in real life, while the extensive use of images and the software we use to process such images are able to make these illusions more realistic, thereby forming a new illusion of aesthetics and desire. Through *Catalogue*, we are confronted by those objects which have been "depleted" by "consumption." They drift away from our fields of vision, yet they are not erased. The artist purposefully compresses the massive amount of images produced via the fast fashion cycle, and such compression solidifies into a "fossil," which offsets how objects in our modern age tend to appear and disappear "without a trace."

Furthermore, Xiang's moving or static images present a sweeping texture, wherein portraits and objects emanate endless sound waves as they hover on the brink of losing their substance and voice. Through such illusions, Xiang simulates a form of non-behavioral resistance arising from

persons, events, and objects which have been restricted to an “objectified” state -- natural objects which cannot survive beyond industrial shelf lives, fashion models consumed by consumption, models transformed from human beings into demigods of fashion, humans labeled as infected by the “virus,” and more...

Catalogue: Commoners, Kings, and the Buddha will also feature Xiang’s new work. Created during the coronavirus pandemic, *FUVID-2020* is composed of gene maps of known viruses, which are extracted and re-read through code to produce new visual images. This unique mode is not a way of re-describing the morphology of viruses of the past, rather, the use of images and the deconstruction of images serves as a prophecy about viruses yet to come. Xiang’s prophecy exhorts us to awaken ourselves from the spell of worship and fear, to escape from a fate of endless “objectification” of ourselves and others.

About the Artist

Xiang Zhenhua (b.1984) is a native of Chongqing. In 2006, he graduated from Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics with a major in New Media Art Design. In 2007, he obtained his Master’s degree at Gobelins, L’École de L’Image and the Academy of Fine Arts in Paris. Currently, Xiang lives between Paris and Shanghai. His videos are often continuous works and projects in progress, which use behavioral intervention to create dynamic contexts for observing objects and things, as well as unique narratives. In recent years, Xiang has been experimenting with the use of video and image to explore the attributes of “things” in a consumerist society and the relationship between man and object.