

EvaLi Hui: First Solo Show Showcases Shanghai Artist's Unique Vision

A successful artist who has lived in the UK and Japan for many years, EvaLi is representative both of China's growing cultural power and its increasingly global nature.



Shanghai, Nov 6, 2019 (Issuewire.com) - A series of delicately-captured moments in time, Shanghai painter EvaLi Hui's works depict staircases, alleyways, figures and shadows, or as she says "truth as I perceive it".

A successful artist who has lived in the UK and Japan for many years, EvaLi is representative both of China's growing cultural power and its increasingly global nature – although her paintings themselves remain intensely personal meditations on the world around her.

Now holding her first solo show, she is exhibiting 23 of her most recent pieces at JINART gallery near Shanghai's famous Nanjing Road and Art Space, run by the Hurun Art Foundation at art incubator M50. This will potentially be followed by similar shows in Europe and elsewhere.

Under the theme "East of Route Pichon" – referring to a street in the heart of Shanghai's fabled French Concession, an area of leafy avenues and stylish villas – EvaLi says the artworks are "inspired by the local space and infused with a nostalgic yet forward-looking sensibility".

They include landscapes, figures – including that of legendary 1930s film star and singer Zhou Xuan, EvaLi's grand-aunt – and her cat.

"My work is not edgy nor avant-garde; it is simply the truth as I perceive it. That is what I hope viewers take away with them," she says.

"The subject of a painting may be an old building, a still figure or a street view, but each is as

monumental as the other. These paintings are memories and fantasies of moments in time, and each is a representation of an emotion or an idea.”

EvaLi's training took her from her native Shanghai – where she studied at Huashan Art School under Zhang Mingyan, who also taught famous painter Chen Danqing, and Lasalle College in Donghua University – to London and Sotheby's Institute of Art, where she majored in Art History, Criticism and Conservation.

Sotheby's offered the opportunity to immerse her in the London art world, helping, she says, to broaden her perspectives and “nurture the artist in me”. In the UK she is a member of the Arts Society and the Nottingham Society of Artists and in Shanghai, she is the founder and general manager of the Art House studio.

EvaLi Hui has been a Featured Artist in exhibitions such as the 2018 Shanghai Art Fair, the China Small Oil Painting Exhibitions in 2018 and 2017, Paintings of the Heritage Buildings in Modern Shanghai 2019 and the 2017 Autumn Auction in Art Works.

The paintings she is now exhibiting were all created this year and range in size from 40cm x 50cm to 2m x 3m.

They include “Summer Bloom”, the inspiration for which came as she passed a French restaurant in Shanghai's Fuxing Road. The final work includes a blue wall, a bride in a wedding dress and a black moped. EvaLi says its “somber inward-looking tonal subtlety” is representative of much of her other work.

The biggest piece on display is “90 degrees”, which took two months to complete and contains elements of her half-British daughter, her own intoxicated face, various geometric forms and the figure of a woman in a close-fitting cheongsam dress.

“These elements are a unique perspective on my life and also contain an appealing contradiction in terms of the existential versus the illusory,” she says.

Her work has been hailed by art critics and fellow painters, who wax lyrical about her talents.

Professor Florin Baeriswyl, who set up the Shanghai Institute of Visual Arts-DeTao Brand Strategy and Management Program, says EvaLi's paintings create emotional associations and resonances.

“Excitement, sincerity, competence and sophistication are the attributes based on her personal approach,” he says. “She understands how to put her feminine perspective in a greater context to create room for interpretation and response.”

For Li Xiangyang, Dean of Shanghai Oil Painting and Sculpture Institute, gazing at EvaLi's art is “just like meeting yourself”.

“Her paintings are intelligent, charming, exquisite, and candid. Her techniques are superb. There is no trace of an ordinary girl's reserve and affectation in her work. Her gaze wanders to the corners and nooks that people around her turn a blind eye to,” he says.

“Her brushstrokes extend out to an unknown world. It seems to be within reach but also disappears without a trace. Just like this city, her paintings unceasingly emanate a particular allure.”

Acclaimed literature and art critic Wu Liang says EvaLi's emergence presents an anomaly in Shanghai, which he describes as “quite an obtuse metropolis that pays no heed to deviations and only acknowledges the latest fads”.

“EvaLi paints the city, her surroundings, and things that are in proximity to her, even those which are beneath her feet. Her work evinces neither narcissism nor admiration,” he says.

“Her objectivity, fantasy, and the universe are incorporeal, confounding viewers, and making it difficult for them to pin down her work, a blend of modernism and styles from outsider art overlaid with a layer of ambiguity.”

EvaLi acknowledges Shanghai's role not just as her home city but also in some form as her muse.

“I have a deep love for Shanghai's *laoyangfang* – the old villas – and I put them in my art a lot. It may seem nostalgic but I'm not idealistic about the past. On the contrary, I believe a true spirit of renaissance can be achieved through the old objects, those historic buildings and landscapes,” she says.

She also cites US abstract painter Mark Rothko and British figurative painter Francis Bacon as inspirations for her style. “I love Bacon's emotionally charged raw imagery and expressive, often grotesque style,” she says.

EvaLi, who recently moved into a new studio in Shanghai, says she cherishes the appreciation that her works have generated among both critics and the general public.

“We are born with instincts and drives – and I hope to harness them and give them a more beautiful shape,” she says.

“In my studio, I live with these words, which remind me that it is truly a gift to be an artist.”

SOURCE: Z. H. STUDIO

Reference Video : <http://art.ifeng.com/2019/1104/3490592.shtml>



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See on IssueWire : <https://www.issuewire.com/evali-hui-first-solo-show-showcases-shanghai-artists-unique-vision-1649457697188753>