

PRESSBOOK

XU ZHEN®

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XU ZHEN UNVEILS GLORIOUS SHOW IN HONG KONG

The 'greatest hits' exhibition at Perrotin displays paintings, installations and sculptures taken from three seminal series by the Chinese artist



'Evolution - South Wall of Mogao Cave No. 172, Makonde Mask, 2018', oil on canvas (above). 'Evolution - North Wall of Mogao Cave No. 220, Boa Pongdu Mask 2018', oil on canvas. Photos: courtesy the artist and Perrotin

Art gallery Perrotin Hong Kong has launched Chinese artist Xu Zhen's solo exhibition, "The Glorious", in Central. The show, which began on March 25, is just in time for Art Basel and other parallel events.

Running until May 11, "The Glorious" is a greatest hits compilation, filled with pieces from three of the artist's signature series: *Under Heaven*, *Eternity*, and *Evolution*, from installations to paintings and sculptures.

Considered by many as Xu's most representative works, *Eternity* and *Evolution* are an examination of global culture. The inspiration for *Eternity* is rooted in the headless statues found throughout China and the West. The juxtaposition of these symbols from both regions acknowledge both art history and the human terms around it, such as humanity's colonial past.

In turn, *Evolution* follows up from *Eternity*. Drawing from art on the fringes of the mainstream, pieces like African masks and Dunhuang frescoes are transformed into a mix of cartoon and traditional art.

Although each series stems from a different context, they share a common theme: cultural disparity in the current global environment.

Shanghai-based Xu, who describes his style as "filled with energy", explained to the *South China Morning Post* how his works converge.

"*Evolution* and *Eternity* revolve around our current understanding, experience and knowledge about faith. It is a display of how the contemporary uses the traditional. Experiences are repeatedly presented as eternal dissatisfactions - a characteristic of our times," says Xu.

The third series, *Under Heaven-Gold*, is an opulent update of his *Under Heaven* series. Its defining characteristic comes from the way bright, coloured pigments are densely and profusely applied onto the canvas with piping bags. This creates a paradise of baroque-style squiggles and swirls, interspersed with the yellow glint of the precious metal. It was the visual centrepiece of the 2014 Armory Show in New York, and has been featured in other instalments since then. *Under Heaven-Gold* is also referenced in the title of the Hong Kong exhibition. "This series manifests a tempting radiance, such as a health supplement that purifies and soothes. In this exhibition, the three series overlap. Unconventionally, they aspire to claim the qualities of this era," says Xu.

The *Glorious* brings up the artist's third solo outing with

Perrotin, following his *Civilization Iteration* show in Paris and a subsequent solo exhibition in Seoul.

Uli Huang Zhiheng, director of Perrotin Hong Kong and Shanghai, says, "Xu Zhen is an artist who keeps reinventing himself and pushing new boundaries. Perrotin is grateful and proud to be able to provide opportunities for the artist to grow and produce something great, as well as for the public to appreciate his work."

He believes Hong Kong audiences, in particular, will be able to derive special meaning from Xu's works.

"As a city that has always possessed a blend of culture, Hong Kong provides an optimal stage for Xu, particularly his philosophy of beauty existing across time, continents and civilisations," says Huang.

Huang says he sees in Xu's work a combination of "harmonious yet drastically different cultures melted together."



Xu's philosophy [is about] beauty existing across time, continents, civilisations

ULI HUANG ZHIHENG

"I think the people of Hong Kong can understand this especially well, for the exhibition comments on our strange contemporaneity and moves us to think about our accustomed way of life," says Huang.

According to Perrotin, "The Glorious" offers a window into our present-day culture and social situation. In a statement, the gallery noted that "the scepticism and ideological trends of post-modernity have long been at the very root of Xu Zhen's creative practice. Cultural appropriation and shifting iconographies are recurrent in his oeuvre".

Xu has produced works as a brand since founding the Madeln Company in 2009 (the name is a play on the phrase "Made in China"). The artist makes use of modern production mechanisms to train the spotlight on the current state of art against a backdrop of globalisation and capitalisation.

The Madeln Company also has a self-titled gallery, located in the West Bund Shanghai contemporary art district, which functions as a platform for international talent.



XU ZHEN® 徐震®
THE GLORIOUS 辉煌

HONG KONG 香港
MAR 25 - MAY 11, 3月25日 - 5月11日

17TH FLOOR, 50 CONNAUGHT ROAD CENTRAL
中環干諾道中50號17樓
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'Eternity - Northern Qi painted Bodhisattva, River God Hissos from West Pediment of Parthenon', 2018, by Xu Zhen.

