

ARARIO GALLERY SHANGHAI | 阿拉里奥上海

By nature, be alike. By practice, be wide apart | Li Fan Solo Exhibition



ARARIO GALLERY SHANGHAI is pleased to announce the opening of Li Fan's solo exhibition *By nature, be alike. By practice, be wide apart* on January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

**Opening Reception:** 2018.1.19 (Fri) 5-7pm

**Duration:** 2018.1.19 (Fri) – 2018.3.11 (Sun)

**Venue:** Arario Gallery Shanghai, 1F, No. 2879 Longteng Avenue, Xuhui District, Shanghai, China

## About the Exhibition

*My journey of creation is rather long. For all the time, I have kept following my heart. My works parallel with the social environment but are not tightly related with the artistic environment.*

——Li Fan

Depicting diversified topics and numerous media images, Li Fan's paintings always reveal a bizarre or even a spooky temperament, furthermore, convey a feeling of "phantom". Incorporating depictions of objects in traditional styles and the understandings of the freehand brush stroke techniques, Li Fan brings his worries, sensibility, solitude, and curiosity into his work. During tirelessly hard work and via a self-imposed enclosure, the artist confronted a second self and overcame the inherent narrow-mindedness, exploring his art towards an ever deeper understanding. From the obedient child to the quiet adolescent, from the purposeful abruptness to the bitterness within the happiness, the self-transformation of Li Fan underwent a rather long journey. As an important summary of Li Fan, *By nature, be alike. By practice, be wide apart* will present his recent works. Except ink paintings, one highlight of the exhibition is the first showcasing of Li's woodcuts. As the representation of the "pleasing the spirit" stage of the artist, through the skilled manipulation of the form, the spirit and the meaning, Li Fan's art journey ultimately traces to the root of humanity.

This exhibition brings Li Fan's recent works from 2015 to 2017. Inspired from the mass media and selected the interesting images, the artist interprets and recreates figures and objects onto paper. From dramatic facial expression of a partial view to the life-size images and group portraits, Li Fan portrays different figures with specious faces. Skillfully mixing the ink with acrylic, the artist applies a higher color purity than the traditional Chinese ink. The color flows rapidly through the center of the image, adds a very dynamic energy into the work, and provides a shocking emotional experience to audiences. Besides ink paintings, as another important part, the woodcuts also consist of the whole exhibition. The learning experience in the Printmaking Department of Central Academy of Fine Arts deeply influenced Li Fan, through woodcuts, the artist expresses richer types of scenes and contents. The high contrast character of woodcut also exaggerates the vivid visual effect of the works. As a comprehensive presentation of Li Fan's woodcuts, the exhibition will specially showcase the original wooden panels. The way of wood cutting demonstrates Li Fan's wealth inner world, and in the end, leading viewers enter into Li Fan's secret art tunnel.

*By nature, be alike. By practice, be wide apart* is a conclusion of Li Fan's creation in recent years. Previously, his art creation mainly went through four stages. The years between 1992 and 2000 mark the initiation of Li's enlightenment, where he took faithful records of life. His works directly responded to what he perceived. From 2000 to 2005, started to self-reflect, Li confronted all aspects of his inner space and took tremendous courage to reveal the most original of himself. This is a period where, in his works, Li interpreted his "filthiness" into the motif of "sexuality". In the next, his solo exhibition, *Xingben*, in 2005 is a transgression against hypocrisy. Finally, the artist found the courage to face himself, started to observe the world from a personal perspective and enjoyed the pleasure of looking at the world as an individual.

A large collection of ink works was created then. Subsequently, the solo exhibition *Shengyi* in 2010 presented the period of imitating objects and marked the completion of Li Fan's "self-redemption".

Throughout Li Fan's creation, once being an onlooker as a child and the detached participant as an adult, he is now actively avoiding all kinds of environmental influence. The broad range of topics and images eventually point to the inner world of the artist, as well as, act as the visual representations of Li Fan.

Selected Artworks



Li Fan, *Enjoyment*, Acrylic and Ink on Hemp Paper, 138 x 70 cm, 2016 © Artist and Arario Gallery



Li Fan, *Desire*, Acrylic and Ink on Hemp Paper, 109 x 200 cm, 2016 © Artist and Arario Gallery



Li Fan, *Untitled*, Engraved Wooden Panel, 45.7 x 31.5 cm, 2016 © Artist and Arario Gallery

**About the Artist**

Li Fan was born in 1966 in Beijing. From 1988 to 1992, he studied Printmaking Department at the Central Academy of Fine Art in Beijing for both Bachelor and Master degrees, where he also has been teaching as a Deputy Director and a Master Tutor since his graduation. Throughout his entire oeuvre, Li Fan has attempted to describe the sensibility of contemporary Asians, and possibly to reveal their identities through his works. However, his paintings do not only stay on the surface level of 'expression', but also embed the beauty of vanishing moments of daily life. His works can be also read as homage to the people diligently and so vigorously continuing their life.

Li Fan's works have been shown in several major institutions, including *Homage to Life*, Arario Gallery, Cheonan, Korea, 2014; *Paper • Non pape, Chinese and Japanese painting exhibition*, CAFA Art Museum, Beijing, China, 2012; *Power of Academy*, Museum of Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts, 2011; *Life and Vitality*, CAFA Art Museum, Beijing, China, 2010; *Scenery, Sketch Exhibition*, Institute of Arts and Crafts, University of Tokyo Arts, Japan, 2009; *Chinese Art Today*, The China Millennium Monument Museum, Beijing, China, 2008; Arario Gallery, Seoul, Korea, 2006; *The 11th International Triennale*, India, 2005; National Library, Paris, France, 2002; Terre de Chine Gallery, Paris, France, 2001; *1960/2000 Chinese Art on Paper*, Paris, France, 2001.

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