

ZHANG CHUNHUA:  
A STRANGER IN BROOKLYN  
Dec 16, 2019 - Jan 6, 2020

Time Arts Greenwich Space  
178 Bleecker St, New York

## A Stranger in Brooklyn

—The Art of Zhang Chunhua: A Memory Trace

By Michelle Y. Loh



Zhang Chunhua, *Still-7*, 2019, oil on canvas,  
30 x 40 inches (76.2 x 101.6 cm)

The influence of western oil painting practices on contemporary artists in China has been an on-going subject of discourse. The first solo New York presence of artist Zhang Chunhua at Time Arts offers an insightful perspective on the social and political realities in China.

Artist Zhang Chunhua was born in Anhui, and he studied painting at China's Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing. Since leaving his home town, Zhang has found himself at the receiving end of the disruption and uncertainty which have been a disconcerting aspect of China's centrally planned urban development and political restructuring. Zhang, like many other artists in Beijing, was caught up in a flurry of dislocation — forced to move his home-turned-studio three times. This experience became one resource and inspiration for Zhang's artistic practice.

By turning his rough and simple painting style to images that are mundane, sometimes theatrical and inexplicably anxious, Zhang prods viewers to sense the uneasiness of being upended, of becoming untethered from history.

This exhibition encompasses the artist's work from the past two months during his residency at the International Studio and Curatorial Program in Brooklyn. Zhang is a recipient of the 2019 Wang Shikuo International Residency of Today's Contemporary Chinese Young Artists jointly sponsored by Today Art Museum and the Wang Shikuo Foundation. The award supports Zhang's ISCP Brooklyn residence which began in October. Experiencing New York as an outsider has profoundly impacted Zhang's studio practice. These works are by "a stranger in Brooklyn." Zhang's cross-

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Zhang Chunhua, *Globe*, 2019, oil on canvas,  
30 x 24 inches (76.2 x 61 cm)

cultural disorientation has only added resonance to the articulacy he cultivated in China.

The representational aspect of Zhang's paintings is transformed and troubled by memory and emotion. They exude a darkly cinematic tone. Zhang has developed a dynamic painting practice that combines Western and Eastern influences while reflecting on the vast infrastructure and social undertakings that are affecting his native country.

Wittgenstein famously maintained that not everything that can be thought can be said. The corollary in this case is that not everything that can be seen can be described. The more rewarding experience lies in an interpersonal connection with the work, a moment of encounter where our memories cross with Zhang's; his story is enriched by our interpretation. The distinction between subject and object no longer exists; what's left is the ineffable.

Zhang Chunhua was born in 1976 in China's Anhui Province. He holds Master's Degrees from the Central Academy of Fine Arts and the School of Fine Arts at Beijing Normal University. He currently works and resides in Beijing.

His most recent solo exhibitions include *A Kind of Memory*, ArtDepot, Beijing 798 Art Zone; and *Image of Time*, Gallery Beijing Space. Zhang has participated in the 13th Havana Biennial; and 11th Florence Biennale among others.

*Michelle Y. Loh is a New York-based visual arts consultant, curator, and gallery director with extensive experience with New York and Asian artists and art institutions. Loh is the director of Boers-Li Gallery New York. She was a member of the founding team of the Asian Contemporary Art Fair, New York (ACAF NY), 2007 and 2008. From 2003 to 2005, she was co-publisher of the magazine Art Asia Pacific.*

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