

Downs & Ross

96 Bowery, 2nd Floor, New York NY 10013

HOU ZICHAO

Everlasting

March 24 - May 1, 2021

The curtain rises on yet another allegory to reveal a lifeworld beset with problems shocking in their undead, nearly non-invasive familiarity. Lipstick, tree moss, granite. Doses of things and doses of people – they are enshrined in self-same communities of sense; our shared viewpoint is our not knowing.

Painting's ponderous elisions: the conversion of objects into raw materials belies that pictures are always objects. If painting, like a collage that is always already its false bottom, is never totally itself, its chief quality is a loss of distinction – a terrain of plastiglomerates – a coalition of indurated rock and singed plastics. A sirloin marbled through with the absence of identifying particulars, a mushroom mushrooming. Both enshrined or entombed in the syntax, that continental palette, of paint straight, as though lifted on its hind-legs, from the tube.

Call it a political economy of taste. Then cross it out, the way cubism is never just a diagram with its back to the world. While painting is a recipe for variable relationships between inside and outside, the presence of escape lofts onto the ten wings of apophenia. Probability is the busiest of networkers, an avalanche of doubt broadcasts doubly as calmly-alerted curiosity. Painting's hieroglyphic muteness gives it advantages over the spoken word from the bay windows of a cliff-side chalet – that off-modern, not-quite-right imagery of leisure.

One crosses from one side to the next – a divisibility as thin as the nervous edge of a rat's whiskers – weighted with oils, fruitful, ascendant. Like clockwork, the measurable difference between possibility and chance sniffs at an anti-anthropomorphic cartography; the ideological production of the era reassessed to relieve or relive boundlessness as mise-en-scene, forgetting that vespertine work of mise en place. A jungle of exchangeabilities sways wind-sweeper arcs between hexagrams and plump zeros: macro-pointillist dots of big-data divination in a machine producing its own assumptions. The general law of obedience to the course of things, to rigid proprieties dangling a ladder of yarrow stalks, seeds false antinomies. The true character of the negative is play, and where painting is a parked domain beginning to blossom, they say a xenoconomy is a sober sobriquet for a suddenly reached end.

Colors pulse their juicy intervals of jade, coke, lead – wavelengths measured with moon launch precision. You call this a dead ringer and very picture of capital's caricatural inorganicism. A key feature of the model: graven images are seldom calligraphic; you never travel without these elaborately cunning, graphic proxies for language. We find different ways of entering and inflecting ponderous elisions – the conversion of objects into raw materials belies that pictures as inveterate objects. Acknowledging still lives as the poetics of shape, chameleons and taimen demand different forms of attention. Banana republics, banana plutocrats, where it never rains.

When an ideological matrix asks us to genuflect for grandeur and contingency at once, we recognize disease as a state of health, vacation as sacrament. Mezzotint off the old block; atlas of a life lived in the snowdrift of half tones. A lace of peach leaves, the splay and spray of everlastings. No more is needed – all sign and no territory, the place you break bread from binary, and pause just so.

Hou Zichao (b. China, 1988) lives and works in Beijing. Solo exhibitions include: "Everlasting," Downs & Ross, New York, New York (2021); "No Time for Romance," Mine Project, Hong Kong (2020); "Light Breaks Where No Sun Shines," Boers-Li Gallery, Beijing (2019); "FOUNTAIN," AOMA, YT Creative Media, Beijing (2018); "Ray. Stone. Wave," Aura.a Gallery, Shanghai (2017). Hou Zichao's works and projects have been presented in group exhibitions including, "CLEAN," SPURS Gallery, Beijing (2020); "LOVE LOVE LOVE: Intimate," Today Art Museum, Beijing (2018); "Elite Young Artists Program," Rightview Art Museum & Guan Shanyue Art Museum, Beijing & Shenzhen (2016). The artist completed his BA Honors degree from Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design, London, in 2013, and earned his Master's degree from Chelsea College of Art and Design, London, in 2014.

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EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

First Room (counter-clockwise from sign-in)

Mountain hotel, yelling & shouting, the world in color

2021

Acrylic on linen

65 × 59 inches / 165 × 150 cm

Scenic construction, unfamiliar game goes extreme

2021

Acrylic on linen

47^{1/4} × 35^{1/2} inches / 120 × 90 cm

Near the tree, soul on holiday, how long is it?

2021

Acrylic on linen

65 × 59 inches / 165 × 150 cm

Snowman-huge snow, mountain top, black shadow, heart the same

2021

Acrylic on linen

78^{3/4} × 59 inches / 200 × 150 cm

Hallway

Top notch data collection, out of control of flowers and alcohol

2021

Acrylic on linen

19^{1/2} × 15^{3/4} inches / 50 × 40 cm

Second Room (clockwise from entrance)

Hero runs, falling stone, stutering occurs

2021

Acrylic on linen

78^{3/4} × 59 inches / 200 × 150 cm

Hole sells the mind, flickering Kanas Lake, mountain reservoir

2021

Acrylic on linen

19^{1/2} × 15^{3/4} inches / 50 × 40 cm

Uneasy jade formation, butterfly visuality, wins dinner

2021

Acrylic on linen

31^{1/2} × 23^{1/2} inches / 80 × 60 cm

Mountain booms, smoke appears, trees on fire, banana temple

2021

Acrylic on linen

78^{3/4} × 86^{1/2} inches / 200 × 220 cm

Office

Present spending, goal unaccomplished, don't trust hope

2021

Acrylic on linen

19^{1/2} × 15^{3/4} inches / 50 × 40 cm