

JI DACHUN

›Bird Painting without Bird‹

Exhibition: September 9 to October 15, 2011

For OPEN ART we will be showing works by Chinese painter Ji Dachun. China is in the midst of an economic and social sea of change. Amid the euphoria over the country's unbridled economic ascent, frenzied modernization, and the simultaneous fear of losing identity, art is discovering new, individual paths to take.

In his bizarre scenarios Ji Dachun has invented his own inimitable visual vocabulary. Thanks to his knowledge of classical Chinese painting, his works are closely interwoven with this tradition. Since finishing his formal education, he has undertaken an intensive study of Western modernism and contemporary painting, including Mondrian, Picasso, Baselitz, and others, and has been impressed by artists such as Maurizio Cattelan and Robert Gober. Without ever imitating Western art, he has succeeded in creating a natural synthesis that has led him to unforeseen visual innovations.

For the exhibition in Munich, Ji Dachun has painted a series of landscapes with obvious references to the *Shanshui* tradition, classical Chinese landscape painting. From the amplitude of traditional motifs he has selected the mountain and the tree - natural elements with an unmistakable emotional quality, which he does not mimetically imitate, but depict on open ground, with a stylized sensibility. Contrary to the West's visual conventions of central perspective, a free space for the spirit and imagination is opened up here. Instead of using ink and brush on paper, he paints in a gestural impasto in acrylic on canvas. Amorphous and organic shapes unite with the representative to form a unique visual world.

Ji Dachun succeeds in visually combining divergent perspectives. By using traditional subjects, yet breaking them open at the same time, artistically, he creates space for mystery and contradiction, without, however, losing the contemplative, inward quality of Chinese *literati* painting.

Born in 1968 in Nantong, China, Ji Dachun now lives and works in Beijing. He studied painting at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, and the Shanghai Art Museum showed the first retrospective of his work in 2007. That same year, he had a solo show at the Kunstmuseum Bern in Switzerland, and in 2005, at the Posco Art Museum in Seoul, Korea. His work has been seen in many group surveys of Chinese art, including the Sigg Collection, an important collection of contemporary Chinese shown at the Kunstmuseum Lucerne in Switzerland, in 2011, and at the Hamburger Kunsthalle (2006); the Ludwig Museum, Koblenz (2008), Lausanne Art Museum (2008), and the Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna (2007). In 2001 he took part in the first Chengdu Biennial, China.