

空白空间 WHITE SPACE

简策 | 怪兽之腹

2023.10.14-11.25

空白空间将于 2023 年 10 月 14 日开幕简策在画廊的第七次个展“怪兽之腹”，展示其新近创作的绘画作品。展览将持续至 11 月 25 日。

展览标题“怪兽之腹”援引自美国作家、神话学学者约瑟夫·坎贝尔（Joseph Campbell）于其《千面英雄》（The Hero with a Thousand Faces）中有关“鲸鱼之腹”（the belly of the whale）的概念。在坎贝尔这部讲述英雄事典与诸神话共通秘密的书籍中，鲸鱼之腹象征着英雄征程叙事中的一个阈限状态，一个进入另一重境界的过程；英雄如同被鲸鱼吞没般陷入险境，摇摆彷徨，经历失败，却也借此重生。

受此启发，并得益于简策对神话于当代的异变、技术知识、视觉经验与文化生产等领域的关注，她将上述主题发展为“怪兽之腹”这一概念。在此，怪兽既指向来自西方神话中的某些经典形象，也昭示着未来生命进化形态的工业机器人；腹部提示着被怪兽吞噬后抵达的器官，也暗示了收容机器人的工厂车间。两者共同融汇于画面之上，借以探讨人造“生命”及其背后文化编码、机制所承载的意涵。

对于简策来说，古代神话中的怪兽与现代工业中的机器人均享有多重意义上的临界状态并有着诸多共通之处。于前者，作为人类情感、欲望投射物的怪兽始终是难于分类的混合生物的形象。它们常常分享了某些人类的外形特征，却又独树一帜。它们神圣而强大，却也狡黠而危险。它们常常作为守门人的角色守护着已知与未知的世界边界。于后者，工业机器人（机械臂）虽然并不具备人类的外型，但它们往往借鉴了人类的解剖结构与动态运行方式，又有着远超人类的力量；人类利用它们进行生产，以此满足人类的欲求，却也常恐惧于它们的潜能。而两者均由人类所创造，却也同人类保持着某种暧昧不明的关联：人们一面赞美它们的力量与智慧，却也将其贬斥为兽类或机械。

在作品中，简策抛弃了旧有艺术史描绘中对上述两者赋予的人形，将来源于远古有机体的怪兽和处于当下并预示着未来的无机物机器融合，将它们再造为颇具视觉隐喻的流体形态。此外，简策还特别关注到了神话叙事中的那些性别化怪兽的形象，如斯奇拉、斯芬克斯、九头蛇、哈比等。她们往往具有女性的性别，却丧失了女人的外貌。这些被描绘为邪恶的女性怪物与诸多被妖魔化的女性品质相连。同样，那些被性别化的机器人（如《银翼杀手》、《机械姬》等）同样受到人类自我否定、欲望与恐惧的投射。而对简策来说，重要的是研究和破解其中的她们被虚构的方式，重构并肯定她们所具有的神秘、复杂和美丽体魄，并以此审视我们自身。由此，绘画的皮肤（平面）与被绘画的皮肤（怪兽/机器的外形）相交融，并在简策的创造中获得了全新而丰富的外观，以及有机而开放的生命状态。

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Ce JIAN | *Belly of the Beast*

10.14–11.25, 2023

White Space presents *Belly of the Beast*, an exhibition of new paintings by Ce Jian. The artist's seventh solo presentation with the gallery, the exhibition opens from October 14 to November 25, 2023.

The title of the exhibition references “the belly of the whale,” a notion described by American writer and mythologist Joseph Campbell in his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Untangling the shared mysteries behind heroic adventures and world myths, the book posits the belly of the whale as a metaphor for the liminal state in a hero's journey, a passage of transcendence: as if being swallowed by a whale, the hero who finds themselves in perilous situations goes through periods of uncertainty and failure, through which they achieve rebirth.

Drawing inspirations from this motif, Ce Jian fuses her interests in the contemporary renditions of classical myths, technological knowledge, visual experience, and cultural production into the development of her own concept — “the belly of the beast.” Here, the beast refers both to the classic portrayals of monstrous figures in Western mythology and modern industrial robots, a symbol for future life forms. The belly at once suggests the organ inside the beast's body where the devoured individual enters, as well as the factory space that houses manufactured robots. Interwoven in Ce Jian's compositions, the two motifs become vehicles to explore artificial “life” and the meanings behind its cultural encoding and mechanisms.

For Ce Jian, beasts in ancient myths and robots of the modern industrial age have many similarities, both embodying the state of liminality on multiple levels. The beast is a hybrid creature who has always resisted classification, while serving as a projection screen for human emotions and desires. They tend to share some physical traits with the human being but possess unique characteristics of their own. They are divine and powerful, yet cunning and dangerous. Often portrayed as the gatekeepers, they guard the border between the known and unknown worlds. On the other hand, industrial robots—essentially mechanical arms—do not resemble humans, yet their structures and operations often reference the anatomies and movements of the human body, but with powers far surpassing that of humans. Humans use robots for production purposes to fulfill their own needs but are frequently intimidated by their potentials. Both beasts and robots are creations of humans, yet they maintain an ambiguous relationship with humanity: man praises their formidable strength and intelligence, while dismissing them as primitive animals or machines.

In this new body of works, Ce Jian departs from the conventional art historical depictions that assign humanoid forms to both beasts and robots. Blending the ancient, organic bodies of the beasts and the futuristic, inorganic machines of our present time, she recreates from them fluid forms rich with visual metaphors. The artist also pays particular attention to the gendered portrayals of beasts in mythological narratives, including but not limited to Scylla, the Sphinx, the Hydra, and the Harpy. Despite their female gender identities, these monstrous figures lack the appearances of women. Their association with evil echoes the demonization of various feminine qualities. Similarly, gendered robots such as those portrayed in *Blade Runner* and *Ex Machina* are also subjected to humans' projection of their own self-denial, desire, and fear. For Ce Jian, the essential task lies in the study and decoding of the fictive narratives that created these figures, thus reconstructing and affirming their mystery, complexity, and beauty, in order to critically look at our own existence. The skin of the painting (the canvas) thereby merges with the skin of the painted subjects (the beasts and the robots); they take on a renewed and rich appearance in Ce Jian's works, inhabiting a state of being that is organic and open.

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关于艺术家

简策所关注的是身体的物质性以及它在绘画中所体现的真实与幻觉。她借鉴艺术史中的图像传统，将其在当代数字视觉的语境中重新构造。由此，她探索了被技术改造的身体的人造结构与美学，这种身体既可能是人体，也可能是物体。通过不同的手段，她进一步放大了抽象与变形的作用。

简策将绘画视为一种历史悠久、蕴藏知识与情感的媒介。她致力于寻求一种能够反映当今图像世界复杂性的视觉语言。在实践中，她始终强调着绘画的双重状态——既是一种物质存在，也是一扇虚拟之窗。她的作品有明确的构图，清晰的几何造型与激烈的笔触；大面积的色块与细腻的线条在绘画中被融合在一起，从而创造出层次丰富的表面质感，绘画自身的身体性在此呼之欲出。

在近期的创作中，简策创造了一系列以欧洲神话怪兽命名的混合生物。这些奇幻生物的造型来源于工业机械臂，并结合了技术与艺术史及自然史。借以这些游走万变的形态，简策探索了人类与非人类、生物与机械之间的边界。她尤为关注“怪物”这一被性别化的概念，古典神话中的斯芬克斯与现代科技中的赛博格都有着强大的复合之躯与诡谲的智慧，她们均被塑造为危险的(恶魔)女性形象。历史与未来主义联结在一起，构成了她的工作方式。

简策，1984年出生于中国山东，1988年移居德国。2008年毕业于柏林艺术大学美术系。2009年毕业于柏林洪堡大学和自由大学艺术史系(硕士)。2006-2007年，就读于伦敦大学金史密斯学院。2017年，获得洪堡大学艺术与图像史博士学位。近期个展包括：乐园，空白空间，北京，中国(2021)；关于展出艺术家作品高品质绘画，加快建成世界著名作品图像的若干意见，要空间，上海，中国(2019)；舰队，空白空间，北京，中国(2018)；Bannermen, Gallery SU, 首尔，韩国(2018)；穿越欧洲，简策 & 程昱峥, Whiteconcepts, 柏林，德国(2017)；验证码, Philine Cremer Gallery, 杜塞尔多夫，德国(2017)；大幻影，空白空间，北京(2016)；大象, NON Berlin, 柏林，德国(2016)。近期群展包括：From Body to Dream, Braverman Gallery, 特拉维夫，以色列(2023)；不安的绘画, UCCA Edge, 上海，中国(2023)；情况良好, Glue Berlin, 柏林，德国(2022)；The Hearing Trumpet, Galerie Marguo, 巴黎，法国(2022)；Sonderlage, Lage Egal, 柏林，德国(2021)；形式的“密谋”，剩余空间，武汉，中国(2020)；一沙艺世界：探索社会几何形态，三亚·亚特兰蒂斯，三亚，中国(2018)；艺术赞助人，乔空间，上海，中国(2018)；The Second Self, Peres Projects, 柏林，德国(2017)。简策现工作生活于德国柏林。

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About CE JIAN

Ce Jian's works deal with the physicality of bodies and the illusionism through which they are represented. She draws on historical pictorial traditions and reformulates them in the context of a contemporary digital visuality. In doing so, she explores the artificial structure and aesthetics of the technically transformed body, be it a human figure or an object, using different approaches to highlight the role of distortion and hybridisation.

Seeing painting as a historically rich medium in which both knowledge and emotions are encoded, Ce Jian aims for a visual language that reflects the complexity of today's image worlds. Throughout her practice she emphasises the dual existence of painting as a material body and a virtual window. Set in a compositional framework, her paintings unfold their own physicality through the texture of their layered surface, which combines clear geometry with expressive gestures and colour fields with delicate drawings.

In her recent works Ce Jian creates hybrid figures named after mythological beasts from European culture. The fantastic creatures are modelled on the anatomy of industrial robots, merging the technical components with elements from art history and natural history. With metamorphic fluidity, Ce Jian explores the boundaries between the human and non-human, the biological and mechanical. Her focus lies especially on the gendered concept of monstrosity both in classical mythology and modern technology, where the sphinx and the cyborg meet in their role as threatening (demonic) females, defined by their powerful composite bodies and uncanny intelligence. The connecting arc between history and futurism runs like a constant through her work.

Ce Jian was born in 1984 in Shandong Province, China and moved to Germany in 1988. She studied at Goldsmiths College, London from 2006-2007 and graduated in 2008 from the Berlin University of the Arts. She also earned a Magister Artium degree in Art History from the Humboldt-Universität and Freie Universität Berlin in 2009. She received a PhD in Art and Visual History from Humboldt-Universität of Berlin in 2017. Her recent solo exhibitions include *Paradise*, WHITE SPACE, Beijing, China (2021); *Words of Art*, Yell Space, Shanghai, China (2019); *Armada*, WHITE SPACE, Beijing, China (2018); *Bannermen*, Gallery SU, Seoul, Korea (2018); *Transeuropa*, Whiteconcepts, Berlin, Germany (2017); *CAPTCHA*, Galerie Philine Cremer, Dusseldorf, Germany (2017); *The Grand Illusion*, WHITE SPACE, Beijing, China (2016); *Elephant*, NON Berlin, Berlin, Germany (2016). Recent group exhibitions include *From Body to Dream*, Braverman Gallery, Tel Aviv, Israel (2023); *Painting Unsettled*, UCCA Edge, Shanghai, China (2023); *The Situation is Excellent*, GLUE, Berlin, Germany (2022); *The Hearing Trumpet*, Galerie Marguo, Paris, France (2022); *Sonderlage*, Lage Egal, Berlin, Germany (2021); *El Lissitzky's Rooms*, Surplus Space, Wuhan, China (2020); *A World in a Grain of Sand: Mapping Shapes and Sites for Social Deometries*, Atlantis, Sanya, China (2018); *Art Patrons*, Qiao Space, Shanghai, China (2018); *The Second Self*, Peres Projects, Berlin, Germany (2017). She currently lives and works in Berlin.