

Xiyao Wang

The Blue Hour

26.06.2024
02.08.2024

MASSIMODECARLO is pleased to present *The Blue Hour*, a solo exhibition by Berlin-based, Chinese-born artist Xiyao Wang. This marks Wang's debut exhibition in Italy, featuring a selection of works from the past year. Wang's art embodies a continuous and composed yet relentless exploration that merges traditional Oriental tales and practices with her personal experiences and disciplined approach. *The Blue Hour* captures this evolving process, guiding viewers through a journey from one brushstroke to the next across the various rooms of Casa Corbellini-Wassermann.

The exhibition unfolds gently, drawing inspiration from Li Bai's poem "春夜宴从弟桃花园序" (Spring Night Gathering with Friends in a Blossoming Garden). Li Bai's reflections on the fleeting nature of life and moments of happiness - such as walking by candlelight at night, witnessing a foggy spring, spending time with family in a blossoming garden, and creating poetry - serve as a muse for Wang. These ephemeral, airy scenes depicted in the poem resonate throughout her work, capturing the transient beauty and delicate joy that define this season.

In 2014, Wang moved to Germany to further her studies, finding inspiration in Western artists such as Cy Twombly, Günther Förg, and Albert Oehlen. Fascinated by their use of colour, the interplay of hues, gestural lines, and the bold contrast of voids and traces, Wang absorbed these practices and synthesised them into a new pictorial language that reflects her unique identity as a Chinese artist in the West.

Being far from her homeland, family, and cultural roots allowed Wang to rediscover a deep connection to her heritage, which permeates her art. Her daily routine begins with the teachings of Zhuangzi, a foundational Taoist philosopher whose work has shaped Chinese thought and art for centuries. With a tea ceremony, she centres her mind and spirit. In recent years, she has mastered the guqin, a seven-stringed instrument with a history spanning thousands of years. Often used by Taoists for meditation rather than performance, the guqin is typically played in natural settings, sometimes behind a waterfall or by a lake. The instrument captures a

unique ambivalence, drawing inspiration from the sounds of water, wind, and animals, and serves as a medium for meditation and connection with nature and the universe.

Every day, Wang performs this ritual that mentally and physically prepares her for the creative process that follows. This practice enables her to channel her impulses and thoughts, allowing her hands to move freely across the canvas. The culmination of her artistic process occurs during the blue hour, a unique twilight period when the sun is well below the horizon and the remaining indirect sunlight casts an intense blue hue.

The ethereal glow of twilight inspires Wang's brush, giving rise to her latest series. In *The Blue Hour No. 1*, Wang centralises a succession of tones and movements that gradually disperse towards the edges of the canvas.

Wang's compositions unravel introspectively and with lyrical grace, creating a cohesive narrative throughout the exhibition. Spanning various periods yet interconnected, her works reveal a profound coherence. The *Échappé* and *Adagio* series embody Wang's admiration for ballet, echoing the body's precise movements with a sense of fluidity and balance. In the *A little Story* series, Wang explores simplicity and essentialism, emphasising the contrast of smoky black charcoal against pristine white canvas.

Inspired by Tao Master Zhuangzi's contemplations on identity and existence - "Now I do not know whether I was then a man dreaming I was a butterfly, or whether I am now a butterfly dreaming I am a man" - Wang's *Zhuangzi Dreaming of Becoming a Butterfly* series explores the elusive nature of self and the realm of subjectivity. Through her nuanced use of charcoal, Wang invites viewers to ponder the enigmatic interplay between the infinite and the deliberate yet unknowable movements of the body and mind.

The lines in Wang's works, alternating between bold and pronounced, soft and essential, weighty and profound, dashed and whispered, guide the artist towards boundless expression. With *The Blue Hour*,

Wang leads us on a journey towards the limitless, a realm that undeniably stretches beyond the horizon.

Xiyao Wang

Xiyao Wang is one of the most prominent young voices in abstract painting. Born in 1992 in Chongqing, she currently lives and works in Berlin.

Renowned for her powerful, immersive paintings, Wang's distinctive use of colour, volume and texture spells out her unique vocabulary. As a way for her to transfer experiences and feelings from her internal space into the external world, her work is highly informed by her personal awareness and sensitivity.

Combining various techniques such as oil and acrylic paint, chalk, graphite and oil sticks, she seeks balance between the canvas and the body in physical displacement. Expressive multicoloured lines evoke the broadness of landscapes, movements and thoughts, composing lyrical arrangements that grace the canvas in harmonious, energetic movements layered onto compact pastel-coloured backgrounds. Through a profound knowledge of both Asian and Western traditions, she instinctively combines influences from Taoism and dance with martial arts. Brimming with energy, her large-scale works capture movement on canvas.