



GALLERY ARTS

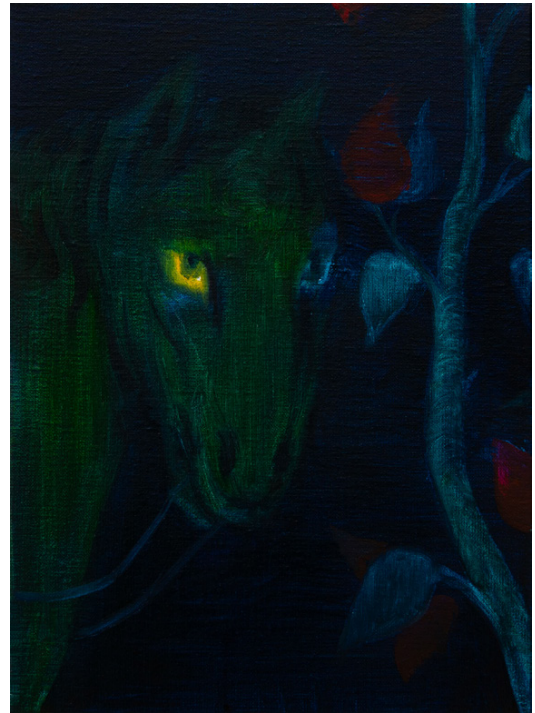
EST 2016

## XIE LEI

On View: 21 February - 23 March 2019

Artist Reception: Thursday, 21 Feb 2019. 6PM - 8PM

Location: 102 - 1688 W 1st Ave, Vancouver, BC



Stare, 2018, oil on canvas, Xie Lei @ Z Gallery Arts

This is the first time I have written something for my own exhibition. It's not a statement, but some fragments of thoughts and notes merging as stream of consciousness.

I discovered quite recently a popular 1970s British sketch '*How Not to Be Seen*' from Monty Python's Flying Circus in which the narrator introduces people who are hiding in the landscape. The narrator explains the importance of not being seen and then he delights in blowing them up.

The landscapes were no more peaceful than before, neither were the on-screen images themselves, and that which was even more invisible (I might say *humanity*, but wouldn't like to use this word here) was destroyed by this obsessive and ironic perversion.

Paradoxically (like Poussin's 17th Century landscape paintings that depict hiding and mysterious tragedies) it reminded me of an image I came across in a newspaper last summer, which, ever since, has stuck in my mind.

The photograph showed Turkish-German footballer Mesut Özil at his controversial meeting with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan during his presidential campaign. In the image, Özil was silently praying on the football pitch. I have to admit that I have never been interested in football and know nothing about it. Nonetheless, I was very intrigued by his presence in the image and by the potentiality of the image's banality, within which another image was hiding, or, beyond this image, something new could appear and disappear. I wondered why some fans had adopted a racist attitude towards Özil, and how he has managed to balance his dual identity, as asking him to choose one side over the other is somehow like asking him to disobey himself.



This image attracted me, but I saw it with the detachment shaped by my own experience: That of an artist born in China and living in France for over twelve years, a period not yet so long, but neither too short.

I bring a new body of work exploring the themes of ambiguity and sociocultural identity to this exhibition in the city of Vancouver, a place where significant immigration has continued for centuries and where questions of diversity, integration and cohabitation still remain to this day.

My paintings are here, talking without speaking...

Xie Lei

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Xie Lei was born in 1983 in Anhui Province, China. He has been living and working in Paris since 2006, where Galerie Anne de Villepoix regularly organizes solo exhibitions of his work. French public institutions have organized solo exhibitions of his work, including Palais des Beaux-Arts, Paris (2016); Château d'Ardelay, Les Herbiers (2014) and Les Rencontres d'Art Contemporain in Cahors (2014). He had recently other solo exhibitions at the Galerie Charlotte Moser, Geneva; Feast Projects, Hong Kong and Fondation Yishu 8, Beijing. His work was also shown in group exhibitions at Langen Foundation, Neuss (cur. Gianni Jetzer); Musée national de l'histoire de l'immigration, Paris (cur. Anne-Laure Flacelière, Isabelle Renard); Palais des Beaux-Arts, Paris (cur. Jean de Loisy, Ulla von Brandenburg); Fondation Fernet-Branca, Saint-Louis; Saline Royale in Arc-et-Senans and Fondation Ricard in Paris. In 2016, Xie Lei has received his practice-based PhD in visual-arts at Ecole normale supérieure and Ecole nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris (PSL). His work is included in public and private collections, such as Musée d'Art Contemporain du Val-de-Marne (MAC VAL), Burger Collection.

For further inquiries please contact the gallery at [info@zgallryarts.com](mailto:info@zgallryarts.com)

Gallery Hours: Fri - Sat 11AM - 5PM, and by appointment