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Press Release

Hauser & Wirth Veteran Vanessa Guo and Paris Art Dealer Jean-Mathieu Martini Announce Opening of Galerie Marguo in Paris this October with Inaugural Exhibition Devoted to Chinese Artist Zhang Yunyao



Paris -- Vanessa Guo, formerly Director of Hauser & Wirth's activity in Asia, and Paris art dealer, Jean-Mathieu Martini, announced today that they are launching a brand-new gallery in Paris, Galerie Marguo, on October 19, 2020. Galerie Marguo will be inaugurated with an exhibition of new works by Shanghai-based emerging artist Zhang Yunyao, which runs through December 19, 2020. The opening will take place during Paris's art fair week to celebrate the spirit of contemporary art at one of the most tumultuous times the art world has seen.

The program at Galerie Marguo will focus on emerging artists from around the globe with a strong Franco-Chinese element, stemming from Guo's experience building artist relationships in Asia and a desire to provide greater visibility to Asian artists in Europe. Exhibitions will be presented in a 1,200 sq ft space inside of a refurbished historical military complex on Rue des Minimes in the heart of the Marais district. Sited inside of a beautiful courtyard, Galerie Marguo is only steps away from Place des Vosges and

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Musée Picasso, and in close proximity to The Centre Pompidou and other international galleries in an area known as the center of Parisian arts and culture.

Galerie Marguo's inaugural exhibition is Shanghai-based artist Zhang Yunyao's first solo show in Europe, featuring eighteen new works created by the artist at his Shanghai studio last year as well as in Paris this year. Zhang got stranded in Paris while traveling in early 2020 due to the initial outbreak of Covid-19 in China and subsequent spread of the pandemic in Europe. He remained steadfast, made Paris his second home and went on to create a body of new works during and after confinement which will be presented in all three spaces at the gallery.

Vanesa Guo and Jean-Mathieu Martini, co-founders and partners of Galerie Marguo, said: "We are thrilled to be opening a new gallery in Paris, in the Marais, in the most unexpected time of our lives. The Covid-19 crisis has impacted us all, but it has also brought about changes and opportunities we would not have otherwise foreseen. The Chinese for crisis is Wei Ji, a two-character word with Wei meaning crisis while Ji meaning opportunity - it perfectly describes where we are now. We recognize that, in a moment when it is difficult for collectors to travel internationally to view art, it is even more critical for us to bring the art we love to Paris, a city that is becoming increasingly important in the world of global contemporary art."

About the Exhibition



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Zhang has long worked with graphite and pastel on a unique fabric-like medium, felt, as a way to experiment with and expand beyond the traditional idea of drawing, constituting what the artist calls “felt drawings.” The textured surface of these “felt drawings” are covered with tiny knots of fabric fiber as a result of the artist’s hands repeatedly applying and rubbing graphite and pigments into the felt— —a lengthy, labor-intensive and almost spiritual process that has come to define the core of Zhang’s artistic practice. The result is often an imagery of contrasting colors and so full of texture and depth that the audience almost wants to physically interact with it.

The eighteen “felt drawings” on view in the gallery’s 1,200 square feet space vary in subject matters from the grand narrative with frequent references to western classical sculptures and Greek mythologies to the personal stories touching upon intimate almost fetish themes. However different they may seem, the subject matters are simply Zhang’s objective studies of human bodies, gestures and emotions.

The core of Zhang’s artistic practice is fully realized in the centerpiece of the exhibition, Floating II, a striking image of Medusa’s bust inspired by Italian sculptor Gian Lorenzo Bernini’s Baroque rendition of the eponymous character from the classical myth. Layered in rich burgundy and magenta, the Medusa head seems to be leaping out of a brightly hued purplish-blue background, producing an intoxicating visual blurring the lines between two-dimensional and three-dimensional, the static and the moving.

As a second and complementary chapter of the artist’s first solo exhibition in Europe, Zhang will also present a special project Drawing Room, in collaboration with CMS and curated by Hervé Mikaeloff, at this year’s Asia Now fair in Paris, which takes place during the same week as the opening of the gallery.

About the Founders

Prior to founding Galerie Marguo, Vanessa Guo led Hauser & Wirth’s activity in Asia with a focus on China and established the gallery brand in the region by opening its Hong Kong space, placing the gallery program with a new audience and connecting the artists with leading institutions in Asia. Before entering the gallery world, she worked at Christie’s for four years and helped launch its auction business in mainland China and drove business development and client advisory efforts in the region.

Martini is a photography specialist with more than 20 years of experience in the field and has mainly worked with top institutions like The Getty and The Metropolitan Museum of Art by placing with them important collections of photographs.

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Martini's previous photography bookshop in Paris's 1st arrondissement will continue to operate and be transformed into a "lab" space for Galerie Marguo, enabling artistic "experiments" beyond gallery program such as artist residency, special exhibitions, crossover events, etc. Publication is both founders' passion and will also be a focus of the new gallery's activity.

About the Artist

Zhang Yunyao was born in 1985 and graduated from the Department of Oil Paintings from Academy of Fine Arts at Shanghai Normal University in 2007. By employing felt as the main medium of painting, he attempts to explore the unfixed meaning of emotions and desires. His works have been widely exhibited in various institutions such as chi K11 Art Museum (Shanghai, 2016), CAFA Art Museum (Beijing, 2015), Museum of Contemporary Art Shanghai (Shanghai, 2013), etc. His solo exhibitions include *Zhang Yunyao* (Galerie Marguo, Paris, 2020), *Zhang Yunyao: Drawing Room* (Asia Now Paris Asian Art Fair, Paris, 2020), *Palace of Extasy* (Qiao Space, Shanghai, 2019), *Skin Gesture Body* (Don Gallery, Shanghai, 2017), *Nec Spe, Nec Metu* (Perrotin Gallery, Hong Kong, 2017), *After Evensong* (Don Gallery, Shanghai, 2015), *Touch Point* (01100001 Gallery, Beijing, 2013), *Mirage* (Don Gallery, Shanghai, 2013), *Paradbox* (Don Gallery, Shanghai, 2011).

Press Inquiries

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1. Galerie Marguo co-founders and partners
Vanessa Guo and Jean-Mathieu Martini
2. Exterior of Galerie Marguo
3. The artist Zhang Yunyao
4. Zhang Yunyao, *Floating II*, 2020, Pastel on felt,
217 x 200.5 cm. © The artist. Courtesy the artist
and Galerie Marguo. Photo: Mike Derez