

L.A. Galerie Lothar Albrecht presents:

Ren Xiaolin "Gardens of Pleasure"

April 27 to May 27, 2006

You and your friends are cordially invited to the opening on Thursday, April 27, from 7 p. m.

The artist will be present.

A catalogue is published for the exhibition.

Ren Xiaolin is a technically accomplished oil painter, even though the content of his work usually overshadows or even suppresses the sophistication of his technique in the eyes of the viewers. His work is an extraordinary mixture of fantasy, eroticism and humanism. In many of his oil paintings, natural scenery provides a tantalizing setting to intimate sexual acts or sexual postures in the foreground. He has ingeniously correlated a bodily landscape with a natural one. In *The Alert and Illusive Land*, trees grown on

are having sexual intercourse while the one in the back is turning back to look at a third figure in close proximity, who is striding over a bench, blatantly parting his/her legs and watching closely the other two in action, which intensifies the eroticism of the painting.

In traditional Chinese literature and art, the garden was often depicted as an ideal setting for love-making and erotic fantasy. Chinese erotica are a source of great aesthetic inspiration and pleasure. Ren Xiaolin has introduced elements from the



Ren Xiaolin, "Fenshui No. 2", 2004, Oil on Canvas, 190 x 280 cm

rocks are dotted with teeny pink buds, rich in sexual connotation. There are three naked figures, conveniently positioned on the highs and lows of a rock while engaging in a sexual act. As one of them enters into another from the back, a third one occupies a lower position to support a leg of the front one with his head. In *Landscape No. 1*, set against a mountain range, two figures



Ren Xiaolin, "w.T.", 2004, Oil on Paper, 44 x 58 cm

Nature, such as rocks, trees, blossoms, clouds and birds into his work as sites for all kinds of fictional erotic encounters.

While these images are a feast for the eyes and provide instant stimulations, Ren Xiaolin is really a painter who should be recognized for how he paints rather than what he paints. He rarely touches upon social or political issues in his



Ren Xiaolin, "From the paper Series", 2002, Oil on Paper, 80 x 55 cm

work, a popular option for many Chinese painters of his contemporary. He doesn't get philosophical or narrative either. He depicts rather regular folks and objects from his daily encounters and seems to obtain more satisfaction from and be committed to exploring the language of oil painting.

Ren Xiaolin's stylized language lies in a feeling that his paintings convey through his use of colors and the texture of his painting much more than any specific imagery. In "Fengshui No.1" (2004), the scenery almost dissolves into patches of colors alive with variants in shade, so do the characters, one of which appears to be done almost in one spontaneous stroke. In his series of small paintings on paper, he's entirely removed



Ren Xiaolin, "From the paper Series", 2002, Oil on Paper, 80 x 55 cm

the landscape and placed figures, isolated or in pairs, or potted plants in the middle of the paper and painted them in convulsive strokes as well as inexplicit colors.

The aesthetic appeal of Ren Xiaolin's paintings comes in many folds and undergoes organic evolutions in the course of his career. In his earlier works from the 1980s, there were heavy shades of blue and brown colors as the foundation on which patches and dots of brighter paints such as orange, green and red were applied. It was extremely vigorous. Subsequently, in the mid 1990s, the painter switched to a brighter tone for his work and inserted irregular-formed stretches of color into his paintings to replace his previous mushroom-shaped fragments and small rock-sized



Ren Xiaolin, "Landscape No. 1", 2003, Oil on Canvas, 80 x 260 cm



Ren Xiaolin, "Landscape No. 2", 2004. Oil on Canvas, 80 x 260 cm

dots of paint. At this time, the painter also paid homage to Chagall by introducing his color spots into his work without appearing decorative.

A softer color tone such as light purple and light green has characterized his more recent paintings from 2000. In these works, he fluently gives shape to the scenery, objects and figures in his painting simply with colors. His approach is similar to the *mogu* or "boneless" technique in traditional Chinese painting, in which forms were built with colors alone without ink contours or outlining. It's a comparatively fine freehand brushwork in an impressionistic manner. As a result, his oil paintings actually acquire the

quality of watercolors, more fluid, elastic, lively, transparent, emotive and uninhibited. It's a light, tender, moist and misty quality reminiscent of water ink landscape paintings from Jiangzhe, south of the Yangtze River in China, particularly the "boneless" painting of Qing Dynasty painter Yun Nantian. On the other hand, there is also the air of the Venice school of paintings in this work, vivid, refreshing and lucid.

From the development in Ren Xiaolin's work, we can almost observe the artist's own transformation from a melancholy youth to a more mature, gentle and peaceful middle age that he is today.

By Carol Lu



Ren Xiaolin, "The Aler and Illusive Land No.1", 2003, Oil on Canvas, 260 x 175 cm



Ren Xiaolin, "Fengshui No. 1", 2004, Oil on Canvas, 190 x 280 cm

Ren Xiaolin

born 1963 in Beijing. Graduated from Sichuan Institute of Fine Arts and studied at the Central Academy for Fine Arts in Beijing. He lives and works in Beijing

Solo-exhibition:

2006 - Shanghai Art Museum, Shanghai, China