

MUNDUS

Zhou Zhiwei



HJ Art Gallery

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Biography

Zhou Zhiwei was born in Shanghai in 1954 and started to paint when he was 9 years old.

He was a disciple of two famous Chinese painters Yu Yun-Jie and Liu Kemin and attended the Fine Art and Theatre Academy in Shanghai. When he was 25, enticed by Italian art treasures, he reached Italy to attend the Academy of fine art in Venice and immerse himself in methodical research of the places and the works lying in the extensive repertoire of knowledge he had acquired during his early education in China.

He enhanced his technique in Rome in the atelier of Riccardo Tommasi Ferroni, one of the great masters of contemporary figurative painting. Since 1980, he has, mainly, been living in Italy, where he attended famous contemporary artists such as Pietro Annigoni, Giacomo Manzù, and Gregorio Sciltian.

Indefatigable traveler, he explored Asia, Africa, and Europe spiritually retracing the silk route. He continues his research and study of the work of the greatest masters in museums all over the world, his life being a continuous pilgrimage between the western and the eastern world. He considers himself a guest in both worlds, always in search of his own personal route. His thought has roots in philosophical Taoism. Tao, which means life, is the supreme unity where oppositions of life find unison: the good one, Yang, and the dissolving one, Yin.

Professor Mario De Micheli, the famous Italian art critic wrote about him:” The plot of his entire work is rich in imagination, skill, experience. He reveals his poetic and technical secrets without difficulty because, in fact, they are not secret, they are absolutely evident. In other words, he paints with extreme simplicity....”

Zhou Zhiwei has presented his works in many exhibitions in Europe and China: in Rome, Florence, Venice, Trieste, Padova, Vienna, Shanghai, Beijing, Inner Mongolia, etc. He currently lives in Padova and works both in Europe and China.

Zhou Zhiwei in London

In spring-time West London, the restlessness of the world seems very far away. Yet, in the H.J. Art Gallery, where the Zhou Zhiwei's exhibition is on show, the endless debates and harsh realities of our times occupy the minds of hosts and visitors alike.

Reading through the many themes arising from the works of this Italian-Chinese artist, we perceive a subtle but profound question: why is the search for beauty in art unable to positively affect the present? Perhaps, a possible answer is related to the process underlying these paintings, realised in the last twenty years.

The mountain peaks of Tibet and the Taoist's sanctuaries, beautifully traced by the soft and incisive brushwork, appear to be cloaked by scattered clouds, mitigating their roughness. Even the mythical characters of the Greek tradition, whether Sisyphus or Medea, seem to be removed from their burdensome destiny. They draw the visitor's attention without inducing uneasiness. And so do the lagoon landscapes or the nostalgic views of ancient Rome. In Zhou Zhiwei's works, the dramatic dimension is overcome by a veil of calm and intimate joy, detectable in every element of the painting, whether it is a representation of the naturalistic landscape or of the human condition. He expresses the feelings of his life experience, seeking the harmony of shapes and colours, the founding elements for beauty in art. Even Sisyphus, in his terrible suffering – trapped in the hardship of life, without an end in sight – does not look condemned by mysterious divine forces. On the contrary, we read him as a free thinker, reflecting on the issues of beauty and ugliness, good and evil. And of so many other possible opposites. As if the enormous rock he is supposed to carry had evolved into a greyish shadow of a doubt - the necessary life companion of those who still find fulfilment in exercising their own will.

Here, among the veins of colour, carefully modulated by the artist's expert hand, we can detect an arcane musical melody. Around those figures, behind the peaks of the mountains and in the shallow waters of the lagoon, we perceive an invisible orchestra. This music caresses our souls and reassures us with answers to our deeper questions.

Everything around us can nurture our bodies and our mind. Even the events surrounding us now, for the better or the worse, will remain part of us. We should be grateful for art's extraordinary potential and its quasi-shamanic prowess to overcome the impasse of our unanswered questions. Perhaps, if we want to internalize Zhou Zhiwei's message, we should immerse ourselves in the quality of his reflections, and adapt our sensory perceptions to this permanent psychodynamic equilibrium.

Gerardo Lo Russo

Artist, former director of the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome



Venetian Caprice, 1998, oil on canvas, 450 x 220 cm



Venetian Caprice, detail.



Pines of Rome, Tribute to O. Respighi, 2018, oil on canvas, 70 x 100 cm



Maddalena, 2021, oil on canvas, 60 x 50 cm

Life on the Water



Awakening, 2010, oil on canvas, 80 x 120 cm



Life on the Water, 2016, oil on canvas, 60 x 80 cm



The Departure, 2014, oil on canvas, 70 x 90 cm



Before the Rising of the Sun, 2019, oil on canvas, 60 x 80 cm



The Light Moon, 2020, oil on canvas, 50 x 70 cm



Coming Back, 2016, oil on canvas, 60 x 80 cm



Life on the Water, 2017, oil on canvas, 70 x 50 cm



Life on the Water, 2016, oil on canvas, 60 x 80 cm



Life on the Water, 2018, oil on canvas, 60 x 70 cm



Shuzhou - The Venice of the East, 2015, oil on canvas, 60 x 50 cm



Songs Without Words, Tribute to Mendelssohn, 2021, oil on canvas, 50 x 80 cm



Song Without Words, Tribute to Mendelssohn, 2021, oil on canvas, 50 x 80 cm



Life on the Water, 2019, oil on canvas, 50 x 70 cm

The Symphony of Life



The Symphony of Life - Awakening, 2021, oil on canvas, 80 x 120 cm



The Symphony of Life - A Summer Night Dream, 2021, oil on canvas, 80 x 120 cm



The Symphony of Life - The Power of the Sun, 2021, oil on canvas, 80 x 120 cm



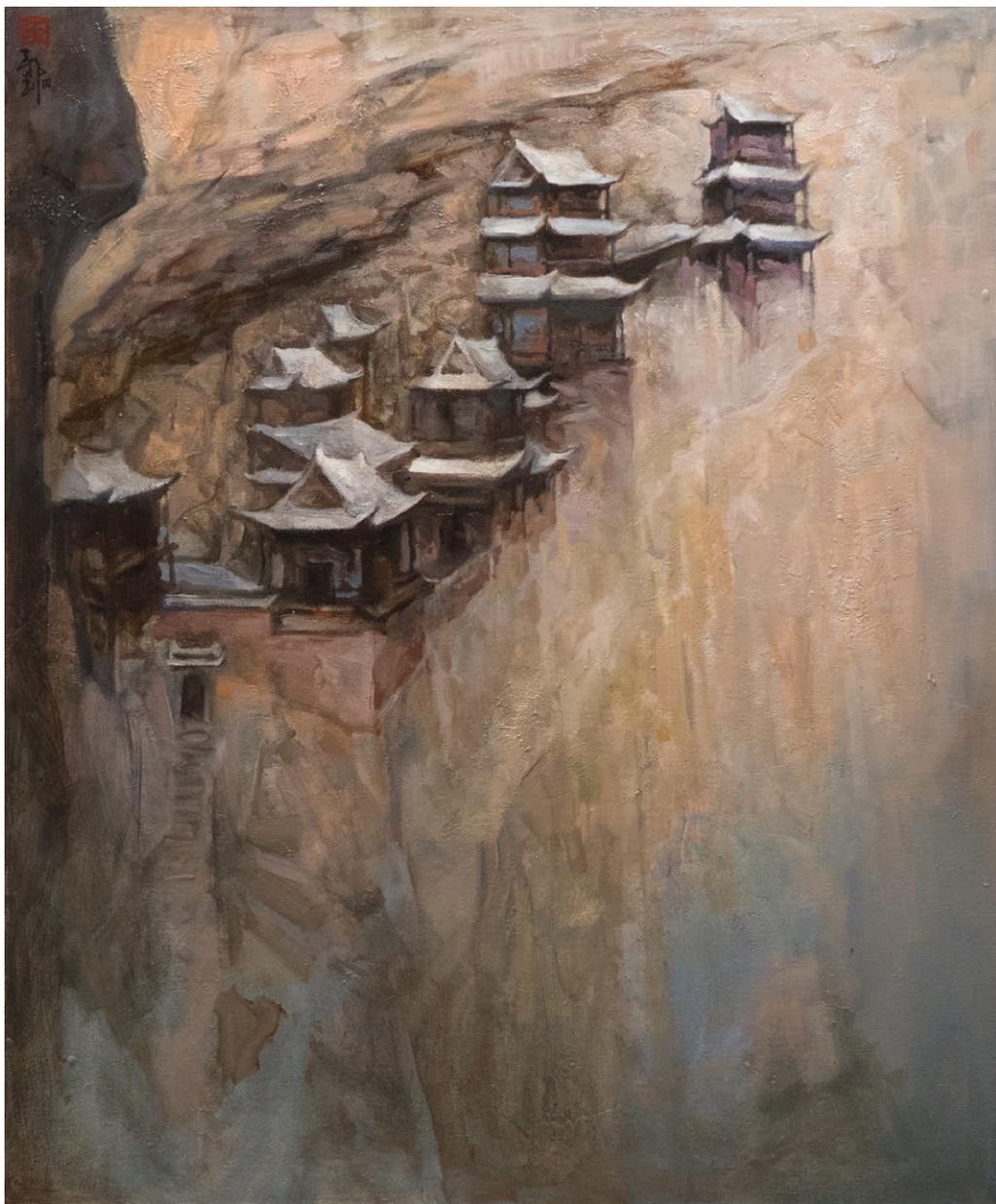
The Symphony of Life - Silence, 2021, oil on canvas, 80 x 120 cm



The Last Light, 2014, oil on canvas, 50 x 60 cm



Master Tao's Home, 2017, oil on canvas, 60 x 50 cm



Master Tao's Home, 2016, oil on canvas, 60 x 50 cm



After the Storm, 2019, oil on canvas, 70 x 50 cm

The Music of Life



The Night, 2003, oil on canvas, 120 x 100 cm



Silence, 2008, oil on canvas, 80 x 120 cm



Bach Sonata, 2021, oil on canvas, 100 x 130 cm

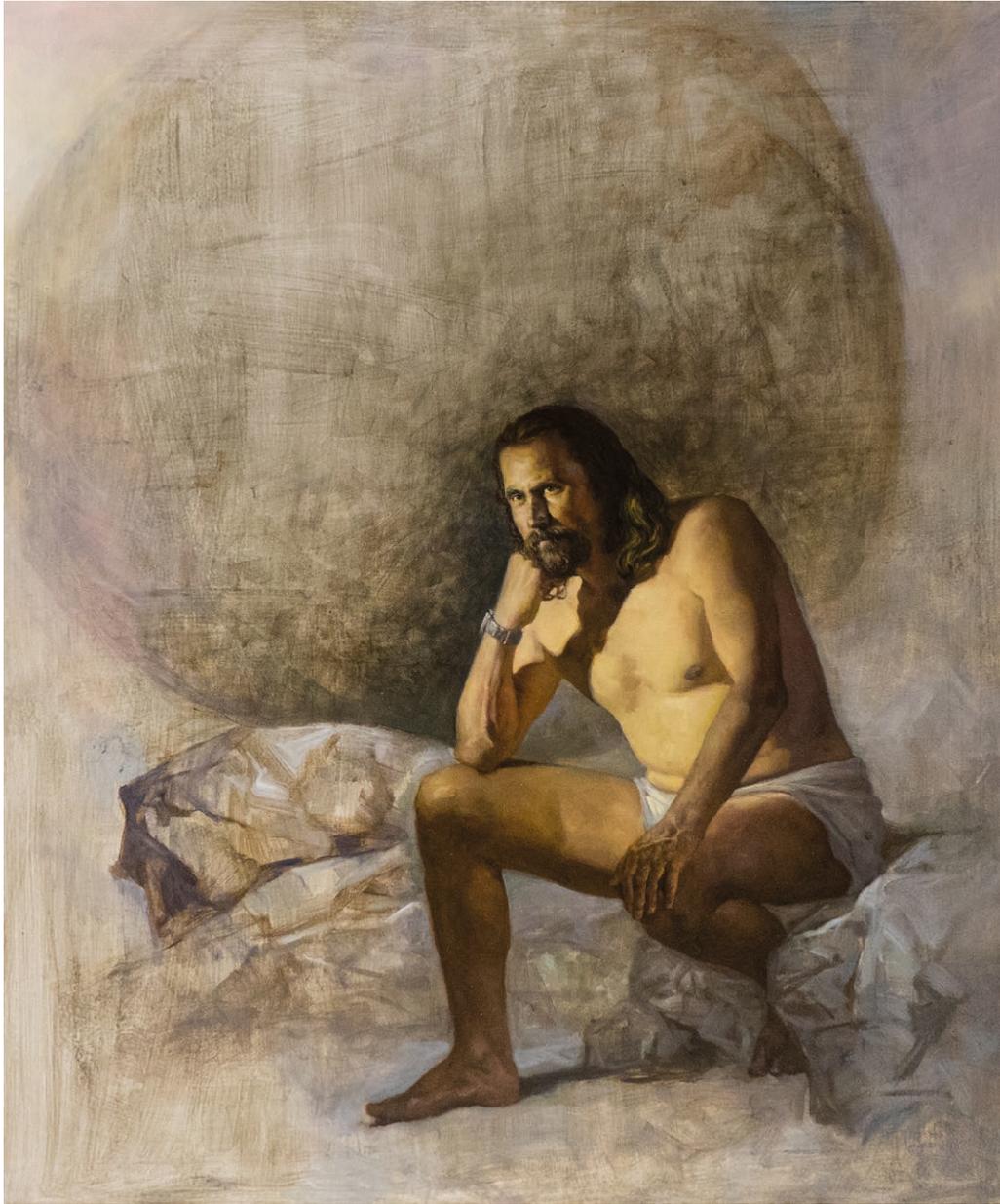


Saxophone, 2021, oil on canvas, 100 x 150 cm

Ancient Civilization of Life



Medea, 2021, oil on canvas, 100 x 120 cm



The New Day of Sisyphus, 2022, oil on canvas, 120 x 100 cm



Leda and the Swan, 2020, oil on canvas, 90 x 140 cm

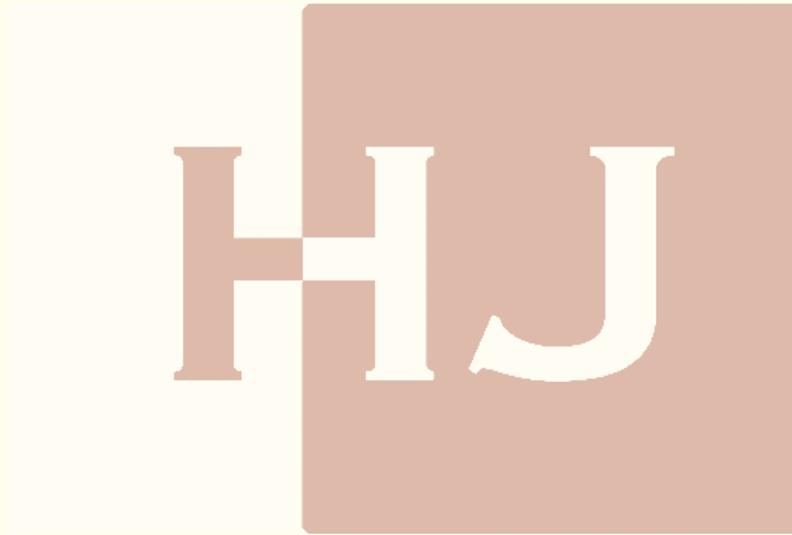
The Poetry of Life



Poetry, 2001, oil on canvas, 180 x 250 cm



Poetry, detail.



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