

Press Release FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

KLEIN SUN | 畫凱
GALLERY | 廊尚

Klein Sun Gallery
525 West 22nd Street
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Gallery Hours:

Tel: +1.212.255.4388
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Monday - Saturday, 10AM-6PM

Closer To The Beautiful World

525 West 22nd Street, New York
October 12 - November 25, 2017
Opening Reception: Thursday, October 12, 6-8 PM
Curated by Janet Fong

Klein Sun Gallery is pleased to announce the exhibition: *Closer to the Beautiful World*, on view from October 12 through November 25, 2017. Curated by Janet Fong, the show includes selected works by **Chen Xi, Hu Yinping, Wang Jiajia, Yang Xinjia and Zhang Zhaoying**.

Abraham Maslow, the renowned American psychologist, once suggested, "The reason why we attempt to approach the 'beautiful world' is because we live in a world that lacks choices and in reality is filled with perversity, ignorance, hypocrisy, and ugliness." [i] While we all agree that there is some distance that separates the "beautiful world" from reality, do the two at least overlap in some respect?

Maslow maintained that the hierarchy of needs is supported by basic necessities such as food, shelter, and safety, and is crowned with self-actualization which can be achieved through "peak experience". Throughout a person's lifetime, if he or she can have at least one type of "peak experience," the "beautiful world" will emerge naturally [ii]. During peak experience, one's senses become keener and more receptive, therefore becoming more aware of the essence of the world as well as nature itself, which, per se, is a beautiful world [iii]. According to this philosophy, even though human beings live in a reality of menace and insecurity, they need the courage and perseverance to pursue the "beautiful world" in the sense that it represents the highest level of self-actualization.

The five artists presented in this exhibition have each had their own moment of "peak experience" in different times and locations. Originating from more than just sources of joy, these experiences can be trivial, or can even result from an epiphany after suffering a traumatic event. In *A Fatty's Sorrow*, Yang Xinjia sublimates the most commonly published political image by carrying out surgeon-like separations on a number of characters or objects, altering the original image as a tromp l'oeil. A peak experience is catalyzed by this switch into a cosmic perspective, and by the artist asking a few "what if's". Similarly, Zhang Zhaoying's oil paintings pull viewers into a bizarrely cheerful, yet alien atmosphere. This unfamiliar setting promotes questioning and thinking, opening our senses to appreciate the artist's peak experience. Chen Xi, on the other hand, takes a different approach to accessing the "beautiful world". As more artists seek to create and improvise three- and four-dimensional experiences, Chen Xi's *Single Layer Acrylic* series seemingly goes against this trajectory as all the colors

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and forms he utilizes are placed in a way that minimizes dimensionality. This approach masterfully emphasizes the first dimension on a two-dimensional surface.

According to Maslow, an individual's personality can affect the type of peak experiences he or she has. A sense of humor, for instance, is a defining personality trait conveyed in each of the artists' works, and the audience of this exhibition is invited to enjoy the unique humor of each piece on view. Hu Yinping was once deeply bothered when a friend of hers told her she looked like a slightly overweight stranger. Hu embraced this adversity with humor to create the series *Identity*, which deals with the definition of one's social identity versus how he or she defines his or her true self. Wang Jiajia's paintings were influenced by the ever changing nature of pop culture, and welcome viewers to enter their colorful and uniquely humorous environment. His work ignites a playful discussion about the process of art-making in the digital era, in a multi-cultural, international world.

Art can provide a vehicle for enhancing the mind, and possibly even the personality, but it is not a shortcut to the top of Maslow's pyramid. For both creators and viewers, art can be a valuable process of focusing on the pursuit of the beautiful. *Closer to the Beautiful World* is the process of pursuing different levels of artistic achievement connected with peak experiences. It is due to the diversity of these personal experiences that the worlds created by the five artists in the show - Chen Xi, Hu Yinping, Wang Jiajia, Yang Xinjia, Zhang Zhaoying - might prompt viewers to think about the artists' moments of highest fulfillment in different ways. The show enables us to approach the "beautiful world" by entering proximity with five completely distinct types of experiences.

For press inquiries please contact Alexandra Goldman at the gallery (212.255.4388) or via email at alexandra@kleinsungallery.com. For all other inquiries, please contact Phil Cai at the gallery (212.255.4388) or via email at phil@kleinsungallery.com.

[i] Robert Allen, *History of Philosophy*, trans. Liu Hua (Beijing: New World Press, 2015), 337.

[ii] Abraham H. Maslow on Perfect Personality, Ed. Gao Shi (China: Huazhong University of Science and Technology Press, 2017), 175.

[iii] *Ibid.*, 181.