

AUREL SCHEIBLER

Zhang Wanqing

Lonely Hills

22.08.–23.09.2017



Landscape 201401, 2014, Oil on canvas, three-part, 190 x 300 cm

Berlin – Aurel Scheibler is pleased to announce the first solo exhibition by the young Chinese artist Zhang Wanqing in Europe. Zhang Wanqing, born in 1985, emerged as an up-and-coming artist in China in 2011. At that time, she decided to live a recluse life in Shenyang in Northeastern China. She continued to paint and remained almost invisible to the outside world, which is very rare among young Chinese artists. The exhibition *Lonely Hills* shows her work after five years of solitude and confinement.

The title *Lonely Hills* derives from the poem *The Deer Enclosure* by Wang Wei, one of the famous poets of the Tang Dynasty. The poem opens with:

So lone seem the hills; there is no one in sight there,
But whence is the echo of voice I hear?

This describes the first impression of Zhang's paintings. During the past five years, she focused on landscape, the *Lonely Hills* without any human traces. However they embody a strong human presence by addressing a psychological and emotional experience.

The LuXun Academy of Fine Arts where Zhang graduated is known for its doctrine on realism, but Zhang does not depict any scenery or pictures of reality. Her inspirations and sources come from a vague image from newspapers or other media and her painting is rather abstract and rarely describes the details in nature. She replaces these elements with brisk, swirly and fluid strokes which dissolve the original gigantic structures. A firm body of a mountain scenery disappears behind the net of dense and directionless brushwork. This could be seen as Zhang's hallmark, first extracted from the pattern of roadside grass, which is carried out in her early work more strongly. A touch of vitality and wilderness, yet delicate and gentle, speak of the sensitivity toward life and form. Zhang's landscapes only seemingly conform to our stereotype about landscape painting. Her journey in painting brings us to a very unique fusion of painting styles from the East to the West.

A group of portraits of criminals from her *Exposure* series from 2009/10 accompanies this exhibition as part of the artist's examination of human nature - the face as a vulnerable landscape of emotion.