

Wu Yiming

邬一名



Shanghai Man in a Suit, Ink&color on paper, 2006, 380x192 cm

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*RED (Joseph Beuys), Sculpture, 2006
98x98x118cm*

IN the context of the concerns with individual identity that are so astutely positioned in Wu Yiming's work on paper it seems inarguable that he within portraiture's limits has found the most adequate aesthetic style. A combination of individuality and anonymity informs his subtly poignant painting. The figures depicted are presented as both intimate of the artist's and mythical allegories. But the most significant feature of his characters is the paradoxical notion of blankness: His portraits come without any facial features. No indications of individuality, alluding to an escape from or intrusion into an unwanted reality. Identity isn't necessarily visible, and the paintings do oscillate between the notions of respectively recovering a lost image and shattering an illusion. Like ambiguous gestures, the images change as one negotiates them. Drawing an analogy to the present state of Chinese society and its unprecedented and frenzied development followed by estrangement and identity-loss is perhaps too shallow a reading. Instead, the images suggest a strong engagement into the themes of cultural amnesia and the authorized tabula rasa approach to history. In trying to erase certain aspects of the cultural heritage, people gradually lose a sense of belonging to the world. The past being distorted it manifests itself as a haunting power with no face. Juxtaposing current and mythological elements in his paintings, the artist suggests that art and aesthetics might be the platform to re-contextualize past occurrences in the context of today.

In further developing the themes of trauma embraced by the curing effect of art, Wu Yiming has recently engaged in creating significant sculptures of Joseph Beuys suggestively entitled RED Beuys (2006). As everyone knows, Beuys saw it as his foremost mission to 'cure' the German people from the trauma of a recent past consisting of pain and atrocity. Wu Yiming – on a very subtle and extremely sensitive level – allude to similar ideas of what art is and what it can do.

Wu Yiming was born in Shanghai in 1966. He graduated from the fine Arts Department of East China Normal University. Today he lives and works in Shanghai. Recent exhibitions include Focus: Wu Yiming's works on paper and sculpture, ShanghART Gallery, Shanghai, China (2006), Time Ex, UMA Gallery, Hong Kong (2005), China – Contemporary Painting, Fondazioni Casa di Risparmio, Bologna, Italy (2005), and Dreaming of the Dragon's Nation – Contemporary Art Exhibition from China, Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, Ireland (2004)



*Shanghai Girl, 2005
Ink&color on paper
136x68 cm*



*Stylish Lady & Modern Man, 2005
Ink&color on paper
136x68 cm*