

Edouard Malingue Gallery

馬凌畫廊

Sixth floor, 33 Des Voeux
Road Central, Hong Kong

≡edouardmalingue.com

Cui Xinming

Differentiation

Opening

7 February 6 - 8 PM

Dates

8 February - 21 March 2018

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Swarms of ochred colour flush the canvases; figures huddle in the foreground, conversant, anonymous; spectral homes occupy the painterly surfaces. As if recalled from distant mnemonic incidents, the various elements populate 'Differentiation', the new series of works by Cui Xinming (b. 1985, China), presented for the first time at Edouard Malingue Gallery, Hong Kong. Marked by shifts in tone and gestural vivacity, Cui's latest paintings are defined by a fine balance between distant observation, atmospheric flushes and intimate delving. As such, the viewer is privy to oscillations, alterations between dynamic gest and stillness.

'Differentiation' has a distinct pulse from Cui's previous series, which over the last years have been mounting a tonal crescendo towards brightness and fluorescence. The aura is conversely more somber, the vivid reds of prior comparatively burnt (see *Genre Painting Study 1 & 2* (2017)), the impressions overall earthy rather than flash. Indeed, there seems to be an atmospheric hark back to several earlier works albeit with changes of form; an increasingly abstract swarm prevails, the filamentsque strokes giving way to a comparatively aqueous melding of form and detail. Upon first impression the pictorial range is wider, the spectrum between interpretational expression and depiction, expanded.

Despite the shift in aura there are various recurring characters and encounters in Cui's rich visual narrative. Punctuated by bouts of nostalgia, one notices the familiar scenario of two figures interacting - crouched, conversant, in motion. Similarly, a domestic structure reappears, fractured, resembling through its tweaked edges the delineations of a temple. A couple of works, however, such as *Portrait Study 6 (How to explain painting to my hometown)* (2017) introduce a novel and curious scenario, which seems to hint at European art history, in particular the emblematic image of a reclining female nude: a nod to Titian's romantic 'Venus' (1548-9); a reference to Manet's controversial 'Olympia' (1863). Cui's lounging figures, however, are conversely clad and visually indistinguishable, his responsive characters dashed with protective anonymity.

The voice running through 'Differentiation' is ultimately an omniscient one: the reflections of an observer, one who is somehow close to the subjects portrayed yet vaguely distant, able at once to straddle objective deliberation and sentimental evocation through melanges of subject, technique and tone. Whilst an element of outworldliness still prevails, the depicted visions seem to be grounded in a darker world, one inflicted by ruminations, shifts, changes. As such, Cui captures the spirit of an environment we are familiar with, one we describe and live through everyday, but one that is under the undefined auspices of flux.

Cui Xinming is a highly lauded emerging contemporary Chinese artist based in Chongqing. Recently selected for the prestigious 2015 'Luo Zhongli 10 Years Review Exhibition' at the Chongqing MOMA, he has previously held solo shows in Shanghai and Hong Kong and has been exhibited in Istanbul, Berlin, Beijing and Chengdu, amongst other locations. In 2010 he was nominated for the 1st Zhang Xiaogang Graduate Contemporary Art Scholarship and came in third place at the 2nd Chinese Institute Annual Art Exhibition. His work has been featured in multiple publications, including the South China Morning Post, ArtInfo, The Art Newspaper, Oriental Daily News, Flash/On, and Artron.