

Ling · Yun - solo exhibition by Jin Sha

凌·云 - 金沙个展

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Few in the West may be aware that Europeans presided as painters in ancient China. Such history is not forgotten by contemporary artist Jin Sha nor to broader China, where famously it is known that in the early 1700s – at the end of European Renaissance and the dawn of the Enlightenment – Giuseppe Castiglione of Milan was appointed for four decades as the official Jesuit court painter to three Qing Dynasty emperors. Castiglione conversed and learned from his contemporary Chinese masters and experimented combining Western colours with Chinese ink, painting and documenting the Orient's extraordinary people and pageantry through Catholic eyes. From an art history perspective, well over 300 years ago these Europeans were thus mastering the practice of infusing classical Italian Renaissance techniques with the orthodox Chinese discipline of *Gongbi*; and their experimentation in applying Western aesthetic philosophy onto Eastern paper and silk made painters such as Castiglione one of the foremost international contemporary artist of his time.

Come the 21st Century, Jin Sha now reconsiders this history and reverses the *Gongbi* style back onto contemporary art with his ***Salute to Masters*** series, a surreal provocation and re-combination of Western and Sino-Confucian art history with Eastern philosophical thought. Mindful of Chinese tradition but also to historical Western innovators like Castiglione, Jin Sha collide worldviews to ponder the role of the individual as well as reveal paradoxes embedded in identity, power and temptation. His purpose is to produce works which “unite the recognisable with the unfamiliar so to form dialogue and discussion” on Chinese and world art. His method is a technical exploration of canonical Western art through *Gongbi*.

In the ***Conversations*** with the Italian Renaissance, ghosts of female figures are covered and clothed; most have their hair veiled and covered: what can be more Western than a portraiture? Relative to the East, Western philosophy places the individual at the universe's centre, however upon the patronage by either church or aristocrat history's masters often attain immortality by painting the flesh of a woman with supreme femininity. Absent in Jin Sha's works thus are the female flesh. In ***Conversations with Pisanello*** by the wayside of a pious female ghost an apple of desire entices butterflies awaiting to pollinate open blossoms, while ***Conversations with Piero del Pollaiuolo*** hint at the fair suppleness of an elongated ghostly female neck decorated with pearls and gems. Conceptually, these works are foremost about human nature and therefore about both woman *and* man. Temptation for the flesh are suspended with god's lures and exquisite invocations to sex are surreptitiously transformed into a Surreal power-play to Rene Magritte's idea of identity and desire; as the saying goes: “everything in the world is about sex except sex itself. Sex itself is about power”. Jin Sha thus speaks to Eastern philosophy of the diminished role of individual identity; and Western representation of the female flesh as a coveted object for draping affluence and power. Similarly, in ***Conversations with Sandro Botticelli*** the depiction of the Annunciation by Gabriel to Mary is reimaged as a Surreal scene of transaction and temptation. The ghost of Virgin Mary – impregnated by the Holy Ghost – extends her sleeve towards the apple of desire while a pouch of gold marks the transaction. Gabriel's welding the purity of white lilies is absurd as the vanitas of war and ruin.

The human form – often with a sexualised undertone – has the strongest gravity in Western classical art; while the sacrifice of individuality to a greater good is a general hall mark of Eastern tradition. Jin Sha unites the familiar and unfamiliar in this exhibition to form a dialogue on the ghosts of Western and Eastern thoughts; sex, power and all. Jin Sha is a leading authority of the *Gongbi* style. He trained at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing and his works are held in China and Australia, including at the National Art Gallery of China in Beijing.

About *Gongbi*

Gongbi (loosely translated as “the discipline of the brush”) is considered the most precise and realist style of classical Chinese painting. It emphasises the exquisiteness of discipline and detail in executing Chinese ink-brushes; and when applied to paper or silk leaves the artist no room for error or revision. A typical work takes Jin Sha's minimum of months to complete.

- Joe Zhang

“...Jin Sha’s exhibit paintings are innovative examples of China’s new art. Indeed, these paintings showcase the artist’s flawless signature style: a perfection of realistic painting techniques of linear perspective, foreshortening, and three- dimensional modeling all found in Renaissance oil and tempera painting. But Jin Sha has achieved this effect by using ink and watercolor Gongbi brushwork on silk. Indeed, Gongbi is considered China’s most conservative and most difficult brush technique, characterized by combining fine lines with multiple layers of both ink-shadings and colors to achieve its three-dimensional qualities. In addition, Jin Sha has imaginatively preserved his painting subjects’ attire, but has eliminated their original figures, leaving his viewers to contemplate corresponding contemporary replacements... ”

- Julie M. Segraves

*“...his series of works titled **Salute to Masters** presented his “conversational” tributes to the Renaissance painters he admires - Giovanni Bellini, Sandro Botticelli, Pisanello, and Lucas Cranach, among others. The wry post-modern humour that Jin Sha often brings to these works should not obscure his profound revelation that China’s traditional fine brush techniques have a place in the world tradition of fine art history that once excluded Chinese art. By eliminating the original figures from iconic works and leaving only their finely delineated, sumptuous garments and appurtenances in the “portraits” he titles **Salutes**, Jin Sha effectively affords new perspectives on familiar art masterpieces. This process of “dehumanization” ironically re-humanizes and universalizes art history, as well as showcasing Jin Sha’s consummate brushwork...”*

- Bruce Doar

*“...I asked Jin Sha why he selects such iconic images from the western art historical canon – **Durer’s** ringleted self-portrait in the Zhong Jian show; and in this one, Bellini’s powerful Venetian Doge, all gravitas and brocade, as well as Piero’s double portrait. He told me that he appreciates the interplay of east and west, past and present, and enjoys playing with symbolism. “In Salute to the Masters - Conversation with Piero Della Francesca No.2, I’ve appropriated Magritte’s iconic image ‘This is Not a Pipe’ ... referring to the temptations of man. I’ve also drawn from Biblical passages, to reinforce the imagery, the apple as a symbol for sin, for example.” He alludes to the notion of apocalypse in these works, to the destructive power of nature, and to the impact of mankind upon it, a common theme in the work of Chinese artists, which is hardly surprising when one considers the pace of Chinese modernization and the consequent environmental damage.” In China, we have developed economically very fast, but in other ways we have lost our sense of tradition, we have lost our respect for culture, and we have little power to stop this”, says the artist. “If only we could slow down”...”*

- Luise Guest



Conversation with Sandro Botticelli
Ink & Colour Pigment on Silk
105 x 85 cm
2013

*Digital Print available



Conversation with Sandro Bo
Ink & Colour Pigment on Silk
74 x 48 cm
2015



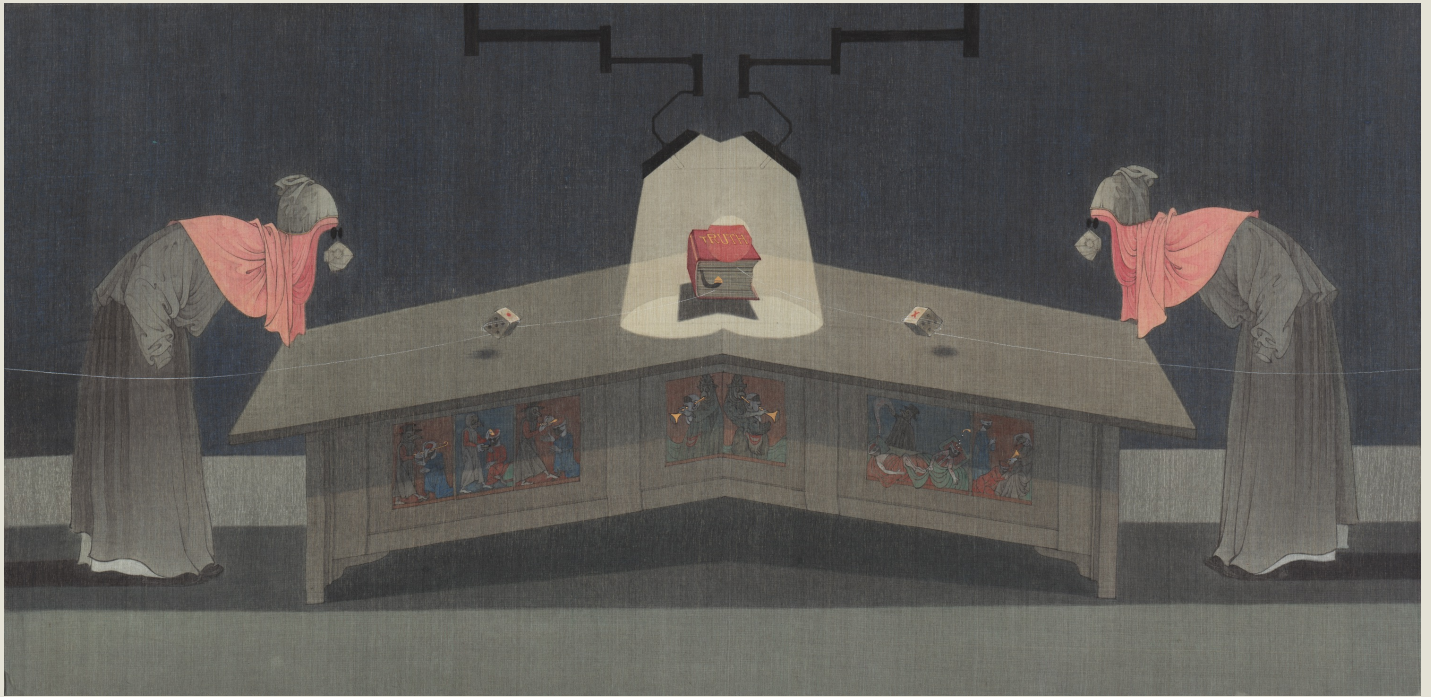
Conversation with Pisanello
Ink & Colour Pigment on Silk
43.5x 60.5 cm
2012



Conversation with Alesso Baldovinetti
Ink & Colour Pigment on Silk
50 x 38 cm
2014



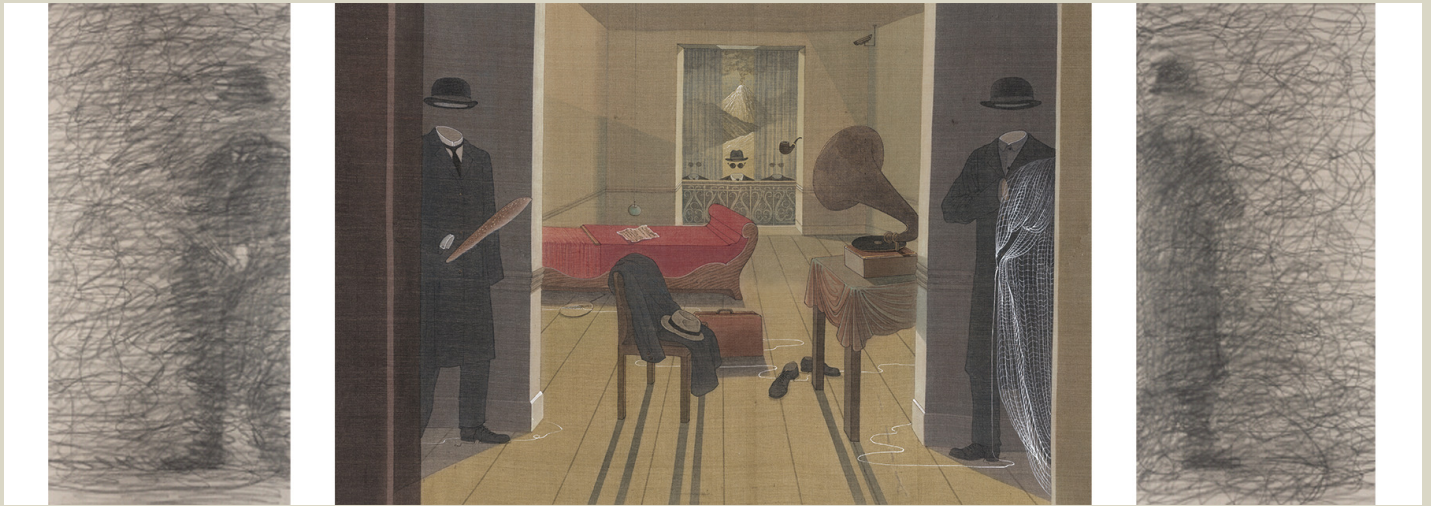
A Dialogue with Piero della Francesca
Ink & Colour Pigment on Silk
55 x 44 cm
1994



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Bosch's Fable: The Truth 2020
Ink & Colour Pigment on Silk
43 x 86 cm
2018

The Trap by Bruegel
Ink & Colour Pigment on Silk
43 x 86 cm
2018
v





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Meeting in Magritte's Room

Ink & Colour Pigment on Silk and Pencil on Paper

38 x 58 cm (1 panel), 38 x 19 cm (2 panels)

2016

*Digital Print available

Goodbye Piero
Ink & Colour Pigment on Silk
48 x 30 cm ea. (2 panels)
2016

v



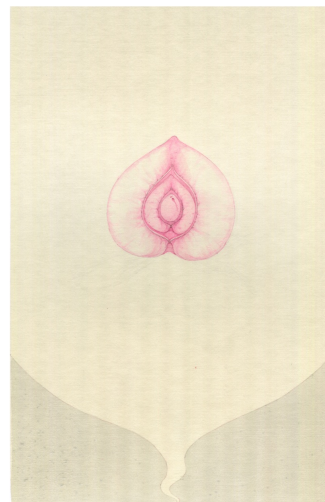
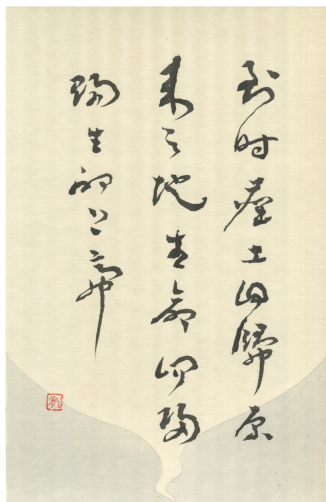


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The Last Gothic
Pencil, Ink & Colour Pigment on Silk
28 x 18 cm
2021

The Message 2021
Ink & Colour Pigment on Silk
28 x 18 cm ea. (3 panels)
2021

v

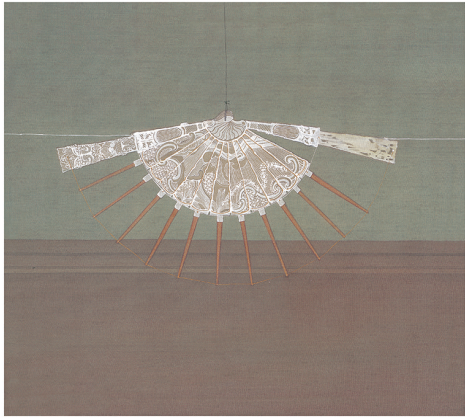




Conversation with Giovanni Bellini
Digital Print on paper
60 x 50 cm
2016



Conversation with Roger Vander Weyden 2015
Digital Print on Paper
65 x 45 cm
2018



Conversation with Petrus Christus
Digital Print on paper
26 x 29.5 cm (L), 50.5 x 43 (R)
2018



Prediction of Hieronymus Bosch
Digital Print on Paper
45 x 45 cm ea.
2018



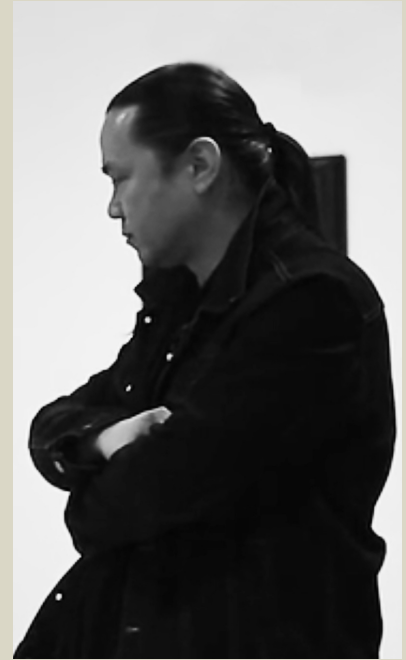
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The Message: A Dialogue with Robert Campin
Digital Print on paper
44 x 58 cm
2019

The Message: Salute to Leonardo da Vinci
Digital Print on Paper
58 x 114 cm
2018
v



Jin Sha 金沙

Jin Sha was born in 1968 in Beijing, China. After graduating from Department of Chinese Painting at the Central Academy of Fine Arts, he has mainly worked on Gong-bi painting which is characterised by the meticulous depiction of details. He is currently living and working in Sydney and Beijing. His work have been held in many solo exhibition in China, Australia, the United States and Japan and have participated in multiple solo and group exhibitions. Jin Sha is currently vice president of the Beijing Art Institute of Chinese Fine line Painting; Executive Director of China Hue Art Society; Researcher of Fine Line work Academy of Chinese National Academy of Arts; Supervisor of master student in School of Art, Anhui University.



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