

10 Things About Shi Zhiying

1. She was born in 1979 in Shanghai, China. It is still where she lives and works. She graduated with a MFA in 2005 from the Fine Arts College of Shanghai University, where she studied oil painting.
2. She was part of a show called My Generation, which OCMA hosted in 2015. My Generation provided an extended look at the artists emerging in mainland China since 2000, the year that China opened its doors to international artists and when Chinese artists commanded attention in the global arena.
3. She is best known for her monochrome oil paintings of oceans, fields of grass, and zen gardens.
4. She favors a monochromatic color palette, because she believes that black and white sometimes allow for greater imaginative space.
5. Her artistic process is very meticulous and careful. Shi often takes her own photographs and creates small scale versions of her work before transferring the image to a large canvas.
6. She uses thin washes of black oil paint and calls attention to her visible and expressive brush strokes.
7. She is deeply informed by readings of Buddhist scriptures and a deep understanding of Chinese history and traditional culture.
8. Her paintings are a visual form of her spiritual practice. She often uses repetitive elements, which reflects a sense of meditation or the emptying of the mind.
9. Her works explore themes such as the passage of time, the combination of Eastern and Western techniques, and understanding the connection between people, objects, and the universe.
10. She is particularly influenced by photographer Sugimoto Hiroshi, dancer Pina Bausch, painter Yan Pei-Ming, and light and space artist James Turrell.

Useful links:

- Good overview by Luise Guest
 - <https://theculturetrip.com/asia/china/articles/the-paintings-of-shi-zhiying-searching-for-the-sublime/>
- Article from Luise Guest's book - "Grains of sand in the Universe" - *Half the Sky: Conversations With Women Artists in China* (2016)
 - <http://shizhiying.net/?p=83>
- Video Interview from the Tampa Museum of Art - My Generation Exhibition (2015)
 - <https://vimeo.com/131499467>
- Artist Bio from her gallery
 - <http://www.jamescohan.com/artists/shi-zhiying>

Shi Zhiying Quotes/Philosophy

- Her artistic process
 - “In the past, I had also tried to use photographs that I downloaded directly from the internet but then I found that it was impossible for me to enter into the real context and the painting I made was very flat. Given this, I had to take photos of the subjects or scenes that I intend to use in my paintings in person. By doing this, the subjects in my paintings look more real and the spatiality of the images can be achieved.”
 - “Size is not something I organize in a conscious way. It was something I arranged according to the context of the painting.”
- Philosophy
 - “Painting is not meditation. Painting is painting. But it can be like meditation because I do it carefully, honestly, and truthfully.”
 - “I wish to face things quietly, attentively... I treat painting [and objects] sincerely; I am communicating with them...”
 - “Just as Buddhist teachings always say that there is no ‘me’ in this universe. Instead, we all coexist in something bigger together and that’s where we ultimately all belong to.
- Passage of time
 - “Some things haven’t changed, from the distant past all the way to the present and future. They are things which everyone possesses.”
- Ocean and Sea
 - “...the observed sea represents the order and disorder of nature; disappearance, instant overlapping and infinity; and tranquility and speech. The characteristic of freehand drawings, which is presented here, is a way of reading the outside world beyond knowledge and theory. It is a direct path to the sense and heart.”
 - Visited Point Reyes, CA - “What I experienced in front of the ocean was... a sense of infinite distance. It would make you feel that you are part of the universe. At that moment, you are not just an individual alone by yourself, but you are connected with every other individual in this world.”
 - “Staring at the sea became my personal pathway to infinity... When I am working I see the ocean in my mind. I can hear it in my heart. It’s like a slow, infinite expansion of inner calm.”