

ART IN TIME OF PLAGUE 2020

Under the circumstances where the COVID-19 virus is spreading worldwide, Amanda Wei Gallery decided to launch this group exhibition as a response to the current global crisis.

Facing the catastrophe, the power of art seems intangible, but it can offer people the greatest spiritual comfort. Each piece of art is a story, behind which memories and reflections of a generation are stored. The original intention of this exhibition is to spiritually support people struggling in this catastrophe. At the same time, we would love to take this opportunity to participate in the discussion for the art ecosystem as a whole: how would the identity and function of art change in this special historical period, and in what way would art keep being presented in society and life.

In this online exhibition, Amanda Wei Gallery specially invited eight established international artists to jointly bring you a journey of innovation and reconstruction. Our participating artists include Lai Chi Man, Jin Rilong, Tan Ping, Zhou Chunya, Hua Xiyu, Alixe Fu, Cyril Kongo, CEET Fouad.

The exhibited artworks include nine paintings and one sculpture, most of which were created by the artists after the outbreak of the COVID-19. The content and form of these artworks directly reflect the process of creation. However, the connotations of them are not only limited to the capture of social reality but also a floating signifier to the viewer from the perspective of semiotics, leaving unlimited possibilities for interpretation. The visual effects and emotional experiences presented by these artworks are different, ranging from ideological appeals to private memories of pain and loss, or to show a yearning and expectation for a calm and beautiful future. Although the eight artists come from different nations and districts, ethnicity, and cultural background, they share a worldwide belief that all human beings should stand together to overcome the hardest period for all.

LAI CHI MAN

Sculpture “Community” uses multi-colored marbles to analog social individuals in the world today, reflecting their different values, ethnicity, gender, culture, and even beliefs. The boat-shaped wooden vessel not only symbolizes the Earth all human beings rely on but also a metaphor of the “Ark” to sail people through the tribulations. In this assemblage of lives, conflicts and contrasts shine in their own ways while fundamentally whole-heartedly help each other in the same boat.



Community, 2020 | teak and colored marble, 63 x 32 x 22cm



Landscape, 2014 | acrylic on paper, 67 x 49cm

“Although human beings have different nations and nationalities, we all live on the same planet that connects us from multiple aspects. We should work together to overcome the COVID-19 ”

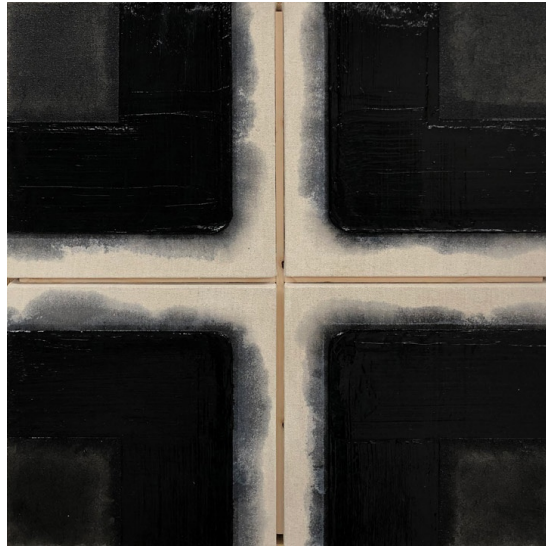
— **Lai Chi Man**

JIN RILONG

The year of 2020 might have already become a symbolic sign which signifying a series of painful reflection. In the eyes of the artist, this is a kind of sign. Under the countless "isolated spaces", we are more soberly aware that every life form of nature is precious and irreplaceable, and we coexist with each other. The interplay of black and white echoes the silent thought of life.



2020.2.22, 2020 | acrylic on canvas, 61 x 61cm



2020.2.2, 2020 | acrylic on canvas, 61 x 61cm

“During the epidemic, I thought a lot, including the problems of the Earth, environmental protection, and human beings. The entire Earth is truly a community where every single part is inseparable. The unpredictable "Novel Coronavirus Pneumonia" interrupted our routine of work and life. 1.4 billion people were isolated at home to prevent and control the epidemic during the Chinese New Year.

For me - over more than 30 years, my schedule of regular visits to my teacher has also been canceled. I can only dial him a phone call at home. On February 22, it was the day of my birthday. My family reminded me from abroad to eat “Long-life noodles”. This is the reason why I named my artworks by date. ”

— **Jin Rilong**

TAN PING

In an era of catastrophes, art exists within scars and reflections, drawing the power from an unpredictable future. With emotions as the medium, abstract art reaches human life by providing faith and hope. Continuously reviewing the deconstruction and reconstruction of society, we will eventually find therapy and inspiration from art.

The open dialogues of art will lead us to our own way out.



Sewing, 2020 | acrylic on canvas 60 x 80cm



Floating, 2020 | acrylic on canvas, 60 x 60cm

“In this unusual period in 2020, we are sealed in a sturdy square box. Everyone feels faint fear deep inside, and the soul is unstable, nowhere to land, no place to live. The nerves that were once numb will be awakened by "injury"! Art becomes a memory of ‘pains’ ”

— **Tan Ping**

ZHOU CHUNYA

The Peach Blossom series was widely accepted to be Zhou Chunya's most welcoming focus in art creation which conveys a sense of freedom and aimlessness.



Peach Blossom No.1, 2014 | screen printing limited edition I/J, 121 x 160cm

As a Chinese artist who is familiar with western culture, Zhou Chunya uses peach blossom to show his complexity and ambiguity between neo-expressionism and Chinese literati aesthetics. In such a grey period for everyone in the world, the peach blossom enlightens our life by presenting the highest love for life and the hope to see the spring after the gloomy days.

HUA XIYU

The Snowman in the painting carries the complicated inner world of human beings under such difficult circumstances, looking at hope and death from a childish perspective. In the rippling of water, is humanity heading to the prosperity or withering? Life is as fragile as the snowman that is disappearing tragically; while life is also as powerful as the spring water that is unfreezing the coldness and indifference.



Snowman, 2020 | oil on canvas, 30 x 40cm

"The snowman is usually seen as a symbol of innocence and loveliness which is often accompanied by a standard smile. When snowman was put in such a 'beautiful' environment, maybe the danger or maybe the immorality is getting closer. "

— **Hua Xiyu**

ALIXE FU

The Cuckoo's Nest is a metaphor for a lunatic asylum which is an extremely surveilled space without humanity in the classic film. Artist Alixe Fu applies a surreal method in his painting to resonate and inspire viewers. Under this beautiful utopian vision, we all "flew over" the restriction of death, absorbing the infinite hope for a better future.



One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest COVID-19, 2020 | oil on canvas 19 x 24cm

"When our arrogance and ignorance opened up Pandora's box and released all the evil (the virus) to the world, this whole civilization of human beings is under the threat of dispersion. In my artwork, I portrayed an image that everyone is flowing over our lunatic-asylum- COVID-19-virus with sincerity, conscience, courage, and wisdom. Humanity will be more united than ever to open a brand new era. "

— **Alixé Fu**

CYRIL KONGO

Rebellion, visual shock, fearlessness, the eternal spirit of graffiti art. Destroying and recreating, it could be the strongest belief and support for human beings in the current catastrophe. Contemporary graffiti has entered the category of pop art, symbolizing the liberated spirits. Combining with the blurry contour of China on the map, Cyril Kongo applies rich colored strokes and a slogan-style declaration in his painting to convey the energy of overcoming difficulties.



Untitled, 2020 | mixed media on canvas, 100 x 130cm

"I would like to support the people who are suffering in Wuhan, I wish them to recover quickly and continue living their lives as normal again."

— Cyril Kongo

CEET FOUAD

The chicken in CEET Fouad's painting is like a metaphor for people which shows that every single person seems so similar and compressed together in society. But in this new artwork, those cute and childish chicken are isolated from each other rather than gathering in crowds. The brand new squared shape is also a symbol that people are currently trapped in different boxes which reflected in real life are their rooms and apartments. However, even though it's such a severe time, life is still colorful and hopeful like the painting expresses.



Quarantine, 2020 | mixed media on canvas, 60 x 120cm

"People are confined in their houses and apartments, surrounded by colorful virus wandering everywhere. Although the fact is that human beings are the most fragile beings rather than the most powerful beings in the world, this artwork is to remind us that human beings are not invulnerable."

— CEET Fouad

For each individual in the catastrophe, the freedom of outside activities is greatly restricted. Everything can only become a "second choice" after our life safety. At this time, art does add more color to the days when the pause button is pressed. Moreover, people are more able to dive deeper into their hearts and focus on contents beyond the physical world. A catastrophe is not only about life and death but also affects all aspects of society, which might even lead to a global crisis. The collapse of the spiritual world, the economic bubble, the suspicion and resentment towards the media, the lacking discourses of individuals, the oversaturation of empathy.

Art provides the living space for all these less beautiful but extremely important concepts. It is an indispensable set of attitudes, it works beyond the subconscious and reality, invisibly constructing a sensitivity for the viewer to think and perceive, through which the broken heals, and the withering becomes alive again.