

Times

Art Center

Berlin

KAN Xuan: *Racing Gravels*

26 April – 29 June 2019

Opening: 25 April 2019, 6 pm

Press preview upon request

The exhibition *Racing Gravels* assembles a series of new works by KAN Xuan informed by her parallel career as a commercial video director, who has worked with automobile manufacturers, internet companies and information technology businesses from China and beyond for nearly two decades. Naturally, such continual exposure to brands and technologies has imbued her with related interests, urging her to explore the rites of commerce, technological ethic, and economic policy behind these commercial enterprises. Rejecting metanarratives, KAN opts to examine the most mundane and seemingly trivial moments from a deeply personal perspective. Her work is devoid of ostentatious, assertive critique – she relentlessly attempts to expose the devils in the details of our consumerist society, alienated into spectacle.

KAN Xuan's work has an irresistible charm, a singular style at once composed and precise, straightforward and humorous. Her frequent use of personal experience allows her work to evoke powerful emotional responses from audiences. At the same time, it raises alarming questions: who exactly are we in all this? Are we the headless cucumbers shuffling and roaring in a queue, or the metal washers spinning endlessly on an industrial screw-rod (*New Middle Class*, 2018)? Can the *détournement* of quotidian life still suffice as an effective, critical tool? Through her unique artistic language, KAN Xuan articulates vivid situations filled with contradictions: a metaphor for China, for the entire world, for us, living in the society of the spectacle amidst rapid commodification and technological acceleration, heading towards an inexplicable end, like automobiles racing through gravel at night. The essence of life lies, perhaps, precisely in this enmeshment of absurdity and reality, speed and obstacle, joy and helplessness, disappointment and hope.

Video artist KAN Xuan, born in 1972 in Anhui, splits her time between Beijing and Amsterdam. She has gone from exploring identity politics in the dynamics of mainstream ideology and social custom, in such early works as *Kan Xuan! Ai!* (1999), to interrogating the objecthood of commodities in the global economy and the consumer culture in which they circulate, to investigating and revisiting the vanishing ruins of ancient settlements time and again in the recent work *Kū Lūè Èr* (2016): always taking personal experience as point of departure, KAN aims to unveil the complex relations between objective reality and subjective emotion. Precise, witty and biting, KAN's singular visual lexicon merges playful subtlety with metaphorical profundity.

The exhibition is curated by TAN Yue.

A range of works on view at Times Art Center Berlin are new commissions for *Walk Strangely, Stay Strangely—Sora Kim vs. Kan Xuan: A Double One Woman Show*, presented at the Guangdong Times Museum, from 15 December 2018 to 1 February 2019.

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Opening hours: Tuesday to Saturday 11 am – 6 pm

(Special opening hours during Gallery Weekend:

Friday, 26 April, 11 am – 9 pm & Sunday, 28 April, 11 am – 6 pm)

Free admission

Times Art Center Berlin is an initiative by the Guangdong Times Museum.

Press contact

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