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**Elpis CHOW: Ambiguous Spaces**

Exhibition period: 25 November – 22 December 2023

Exhibition opening: Saturday, 25 November 2023

Opening on 25 November 2023 and running through 22 December 2023, ‘Ambiguous Spaces’ features 14 new works by local artist Elpis Chow. Using painting as her chief medium of creation, Chow is an adept observer of urban spaces and corners who reconstructs regular lines and colours in architecture, representing another real space on the pictorial surface. Chow’s works depict the odd sides of Hong Kong cityscape, sites frequented yet very often neglected, such as street corners, buildings, corridors in housing estates and ramps, evoking a visual contrast that is at once familiar and strange.

In the scenes depicted in the new works can be found real or fictitious creatures, forming a collection of the artist’s favourite species and in a certain sense, her personal bestiary of imaginary beings. Circumventing real life circumstances that do not allow the satisfaction of her desire to collect, Chow selects interesting elements from her biological image database made up of animal documentaries, daily snapshots, internet images, etc., collaging them onto imagined scenes with a computer software. After transferring the black and white sketches onto the canvas, Chow then fills them with vivid colours. Chiaroscuro is represented by layers of different shades of the same colour scheme, dark outlines and neat composition all point to a flatness that belongs to illustration, with a hint of the Pop Art or the Superflat aesthetics. In addition to juxtaposing specific creatures and sites, the new works demonstrate a continued colour experiment, bringing the fantastic images towards a realm bordering on the surreal, reminding us once again of the fictional nature of the works.

In *Alien Dada*, the black and white patterned Dada (a character from *Ultraman*) stands in front of a greyish white building, mirroring one another with a dash of sky blue in each. Featuring an aquarium, *Aquarium – 1，Aquarium – 2 and Aquarium – 3* are rendered in a predominantly bluish tone, where shades of blue create a visual effect of glowing windows, punctuated by accents of red, yellow and white. In the centre of one painting a girl stands in front of the window, her blue and white plaid dress echoing the pattern of the fish behind. The triptych-like composition presents the same horizontal perspective, a panorama extending the boundaries that abruptly cut off the window panes. At first glance, the marine life behind the windows swims freely across paintings, and the viewer has the illusion of being inside the aquarium and establishes a spatial concept. However, upon closer inspection, it is yet another illusion: While the three paintings appear to be part of a larger picture, they are not connected. What is represented here are just visual fragments of an unknown spectator. Seen against the figure of the girl who may be the artist herself, standing with her back to us gazing at the aquatic species behind the window, the implied double gaze renders the image even more ambiguous and fascinating.

**Elpis CHOW**

Born in 1996, Hong Kong

Elpis Chow is a Hong Kong-based painter who also works with printmaking and drawing. Chow graduated in HKICC Lee Shau Kee School of Creativity in 2017, majoring in illustration and painting. Her solo exhibitions include: ‘Under The Sun’ (Touch Gallery, Hong Kong, 2023); ‘The Other Side’ (Gallery EXIT, Hong Kong, 2021); ‘Irozuki’ (Ryokosha Books, Kyoto, 2019), and ‘Blunt’ (Gallery EXIT, Hong Kong, 2018). She has participated in the following group exhibitions: ‘New Page’ (Touch Gallery, Hong Kong, 2023); ‘The Unsung’ (JC Contemporary, Hong Kong, 2021); Art 021 Shanghai Contemporary Art Fair (Shanghai, 2018); Art Shenzhen 2017 (Shenzhen, 2017) and ‘To Each, His Zone’ (Gallery EXIT, Hong Kong, 2017). Her works were also shown at Art Basel Hong Kong (2019, 2022, 2023).

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**周紫羚：無名場域**

展期：2023年11月25日至2023年12月22日

開幕：2023年11月25日（星期六）

本地藝術家周紫羚個展「無名場域」將於2023年11月25日於安全口畫廊開幕，展出藝術家十四件最新畫作，展期至12月22日。周紫羚以繪畫為主要創作媒介，擅於觀察城市中各個空間角落，透過再現建築裡規律的線面和色彩碰撞，呈現畫面中另一個現實地帶。作品多描繪香港城市景觀奇怪一面，人們常路經卻未駐足觀看的場域，如街角、建築物、建築工地、屋村走廊、坡道等，喚起一種熟悉又陌生的視覺對比。

是次展出新作描繪的場景中各有真實或虛構之生物出現，輯錄了周氏感興趣的生物生態，成了某意義上的藝術家個人生物圖鑑。現實限制令藝術家飼養收集不同種類生物的慾望未能滿足，她從動物記錄片、日常拍攝的相片、網上圖片等資料組成的生物圖像資料庫選取有趣的元素，以電腦繪圖軟件拼貼構成心目中的畫面。把黑白草圖轉移到畫布上後，遂以鮮明豐富的色彩將之填滿。層層深淺不一同色系油彩形成明暗光影對比，深色線勾劃的輪廓及工整的構圖強調了一種屬於插畫的平面性，帶有普普藝術或超平面藝術風格。除了生物與場景的配搭，新作亦作出更多配色實驗，令原本帶點奇幻的畫面更趨非現實領域，進一步指向作品之實屬虛構。

《達達星人》中，黑白花紋的達達星人與背後的黑白灰調建築物皆以彩藍點綴，相互呼應。三張水族館作品《水族館 - 1》《水族館 - 2》《水族館 - 3》以藍色為主調，描繪了水族館玻璃窗內外的風景，多層次的藍調營造出玻璃窗發光的視覺效果，只間以少量紅黃白色點綴。其中一張畫中央描繪了一名站在玻璃窗前的少女，其藍白格子洋裝對應了玻璃窗內的魚身上的魚鱗紋理。三連畫般的構圖設計以同一平面視覺呈現，又如全景視覺，延伸了畫面兩邊被切割的玻璃窗的突兀界限。驟眼看，玻璃窗內的海洋生物於畫與畫之間來去自如，觀者如身臨水族館，並建立水族館空間的概念。然而仔細一看，那卻又是另一個幻象：三張畫作看似連貫，卻不能合成一個畫面，只代表了某位不知名在場人士的視覺斷片。加上正在凝視魚缸內的水生物種的疑似藝術家本人的背影，當中暗示的雙重凝視使畫面變得更加曖昧而耐人尋味。

**周紫羚**

生於1996年，香港

周紫羚2017年畢業於香港兆基創意書院，主修插畫及繪畫，現於香港生活及工作，主要創作媒介為繪畫，亦從事版畫和插畫創作。曾舉辦個展包括：「日光之下：再看見」（香港Touch Gallery，2023年）、「另一面」（香港安全口畫廊，2021年）、「色づき」（京都旅耕社，2019年）、「鈍」（香港安全口畫廊，2018年）。其他聯展包括：「New Page」（香港Touch Gallery，2023年）、「韌生」（香港賽馬會藝方，2021年）；ART021上海廿一當代藝術博覧會（上海，2018年）、2017藝術深圳（深圳，2017年）和「各自角」（香港安全口畫廊，2017年）。自2019年起，她的作品亦於香港巴塞爾藝術展上展出。