

# Bamboo Dragonfly

Text by  
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**W**ith the hands clasped in a focused movement, eyes turned to the sky foreshadowing a great flight, children in China have played for generations with their bamboo dragonfly, a little toy light as the air, that explores the sky.

Playing is a cultural and social practice, an intimate and gathering moment, experienced during youth, but often abandoned after growth. Yu ChengChen's and Rui Wu's practice are characterized by a strong belief on the importance of playing as an element able to stimulate the imaginative freedom and a way to value old traditions and revive memories.

The exhibition presents a dialogue between the freedom of Yu's pictorial impulse and the precision of Rui's photography.

In her work, Yu ChengChen deeply sinks into herself, breaking free from all visual patterns to emerge with a scratchy, color-splattered painting, in which acrylics and oil pastels mingle with silvery ribbons, plastics and everted elements. Her works cross over the limit of the canvas, engaging the viewer in the journey she undertakes to discover her interiority. Each painting reflects her natural sexual instinctiveness perceived, as the children do, as an innocent moment to discover bodies and feelings. Yu's practice gives back a visual balance between funny little faces, affectionate hearts and vague biomorphic creatures, in a dialogue with morphological references to the vulva and the phallic form. In her work the experience of sexuality is presented with a pure attitude, without the use of any sensual reference, that brings back to

the children's world.

Yu repropose the painting act as a physical and immersive experience, during which the colors are spread with a frenetic movement of the body. Her maximum engagement comes with the coordination of all senses, where the frequencies of experimental music suggest rhythm in her paintings.

Rui Wu presents a series of Mao Zedongs analog portraits. This subject brings straight to China, where children are used to fold Yuan paper money to make a deformed, funny, smiling Mao out of them. Game is meant as an expression of curiosity, that helps to explore and discover the cultural environment to create a subjective reinterpretation of it. Similarly, Rui, fascinated by his own tradition, takes the image of a Chinese historical figure and rework it with a new personal vision focusing on the dialectic between the uniformity of the image and the diversity of the color of the banknotes sizes.

The empathy with the Chinese folk tradition is also the leitmotiv of the two shots *Raggi Rossi* and *Quando viene il rosso*, in which Rui creates an epic and romantic landscape, born and ended in the moment of the shot. Here the photographer takes action with an almost painted gesture on the Mediterranean landscape. The long exposure of the photograph to the laser lighting, generates vivid beams of artificial red lights, evoking the azalea bloom typical of the southeastern valleys of China. The inspiration of the red flowers comes from the popular song *Azaleas*, composed during China's Cultural Revolution that describes the typical color of the mountains during the blooming season.

**Yu ChengChen** (b. 1991, HuBei, China)

lives and works in Milan, where she moved in 2018 to study Painting at the Brera Academy of Fine Arts, graduating in March 2023. Her previous projects include "The Last Supreme," a performance made at Wuhan University (2018).

**Rui Wu** (b. 1991, HeBei, China)

lives and works in Milan as a professional photographer. After graduating in Photography from the Brera Academy of Fine Arts in 2018 he co-founded t-space, an independent project for self-sustainable promotion of contemporary art. Among the various group shows he has participated in we present "San Fedele Prize final show" (Milan, 2018) and the "Valentino Re-signify II" (Beijing, 2021).