



女皇，1970，畫布油彩，218.5 x 182.8 公分

陳昭宏：瓦平松的浴女

*Hilo Chen : The Bather of Valpinçon*

January 15 – February 29, 2020

Opening reception: January 15, 6 – 8 PM

亞紀畫廊很榮幸將舉辦台灣旅美藝術家陳昭宏的個展「瓦平松的浴女」，展出藝術家自 1968 年輾轉渡美後從未發表的早期作品，及 70 年後期成就他於紐約藝術圈盛名的照相寫實作品。展名「瓦平松的浴女」為收藏於羅浮宮的安格爾（Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres）名作，陳昭宏 1968 年離開巴黎前深受此件作品感動，自此由抽象表現轉向具象繪畫。「瓦平松的浴女」緊扣著陳昭宏一生創作核心，安格爾的藝術史地位也反射陳昭宏的重要性：帶領古典主義與寫實主義走向新的表現力度，正如同藝評家謝里法所比喻－陳昭宏為紐約蘇活安格爾。除畫廊個展外，亞紀畫廊亦將於台北當代藝術博覽會展位上，展出陳昭宏 1970 年重要作品《女皇》等。

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「畫家關注細微描寫擴及全貌，是畫家個人心靈驅使，然而極端寫實作為一種縝密的載體，構成精確的形式語言，既得仰賴畫家與生俱來的描寫能力，也是內心精神的表達。」

—劉永仁，《見微知萌》展覽目錄，台北美術館

陳昭宏的作品可以在古根海姆美術館、台北美術館、聖何塞美術館、英國薩奇收藏、與許多其他著名的藝術機構收藏中找到。1942年生於宜蘭，陳昭宏是首個華人抽象藝術團體「東方畫會」最年輕成員，是李仲生的學生。1968年，陳昭宏前往巴黎，並在羅浮宮與《瓦平松的浴女》相遇，後轉往紐約定居至今。離開亞洲後，陳昭宏短暫地繼續東方畫會的抽象風格，後即轉向具象繪畫。

陳昭宏的初期具像作品以肖像為主，大而圓的眼睛出現在眾多作品中，望向畫布外的世界。此時期值得注意的作品包括《女人（1968）》、《自畫像（1969）》、《朋友（1969）》、《女皇（1970）》。《朋友》描寫一名男性從頸部而下淹沒於水中，軀體內部如同鐘表機構一樣可見—它悼念了一位友人的離世，也揭示了陳昭宏與身體、與生命之間的脆弱情感。《女皇》坐在一條等分線上，就像《朋友》中的水位，女王伊麗莎白二世雙腿交叉、具魯本斯風格（**Rubenesque**）的裸體佔據了極簡主義背景—陳昭宏對身體的迷戀，在後來的作品中回歸，他的女性裸體將成為眾所注目的焦點，超越他的畫布和視野，甚至延伸到大半生的繪畫自我討論。



自畫像，1969，畫布油彩，111.8 x 111.8 公分



談話，1972，畫布油彩，137 x 101.6 公分

搬遷紐約後兩年，陳昭宏的風格繼續變化，他的人物採用了一種新的寫實主義，通過對光的處理將主題置於更加空間化的構圖中，日常世界各個角落開始在陳昭宏的畫布上找到自己的存在：杯子、人行道、窗戶。與此同時，陳昭宏的畫中人物被分割，如快照般瞬間切割出框架，畫家的目光更集中、更細緻、似乎稍縱即逝。這段期間的發展標誌了陳昭宏與其他西方照相寫實主義者的不同，當然西方繪畫在五年內迅速對陳昭宏產生影響，但隨著深入閱讀它們，又可從這些非常西式的繪畫中看見中國傳統繪畫的元素。《談話（1972）》中兩個用手示意的人物被畫布邊緣割斷，除此之外僅剩純色表面，其中的空間透過顏色變得平坦。這種構圖特徵亦在《雙生 A（1972）》或《人行道》系列中發現。

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透過構圖，陳昭宏遠遠地在紐約編織了一條將他與東方聯繫起的線。它們讓人聯想起「邊角之景」的「馬一角夏半邊」，過去，「邊角之景」的南宋畫作通常聚焦於較小、視覺更貼近、更親密的場景，而失去描繪細節的背景呈現了一種空的境界。陳昭宏藉此反映了他對「匿名」主題的關注：關乎「是誰」的古典性議題被排除，探討的僅留下人的「生」與「在」—這同樣貫穿了他後來的《海灘》，人物無疑地存在於沙灘前景之上，但總又與某些邊緣相隔甚遠。

1973年《人行道》系列，到1974年的《海灘》系列，陳昭宏在紐約奠定藝術地位，與照相寫實大師克洛斯（Chuck Close）等平起平坐，展覽每每售罄，連英國知名藏家薩奇（Charles Saatchi）都赴紐約收藏。但陳昭宏並未因此改變他對創作的真誠與堅持，直至今日，他依舊每天畫畫—即便需要戴著氧氣罩。雖然陳昭宏的作品仍難避免情色與當代繪畫之間的緊張關係，但由對生命、性感的熱情，以大膽色彩、構圖作為人類真正欲望的載體，這種堅定的藝術家特性，要在年輕世代中也難以尋覓。也因此，陳昭宏的作品不但是紐約80年代的一種標記，他的視覺更受新世代歡迎：他的《海灘》作品被影集《慾望城市》使用，而近期《海灘》也被收錄在潮牌文化雜誌《Juxtapoz》裡。同時，陳昭宏對人體的描寫質感，亦可讓我們聯想不少當下火紅的西方新具象藝術家。



海灘 153，2005，畫布油彩 123 x 91.5 公分

今日，我們應拋除「主義」束縛，由畫作重新閱讀藝術家與時代。《海灘》由《人行道》游走而來，傳達一名異鄉人對社會主流文化的格格不入。同時，《海灘》的視覺語言緊扣普普藝術、廣告、彩色電影、攝影中的拍立得照片、Kodachrome 膠片的特殊、鮮艷、飽和—它們在70年代擴散，這些色調都可以在陳昭宏《海灘》中清晰閱讀。除了開創特殊的繪畫風格，陳昭宏的眼與手、畫與心，對兩個時代—20世紀70年代中期、與我們身處的當下一都強烈傳達了特殊的文化隱喻：女性運動已由60年代的反文化運動擴展到普通的美國中產階級，城市社會空間也因此改變，這種新的解放結果就是比基尼的新社會意義，《海灘》所以展現的是更開放、更穩定、更放鬆的社會轉變，也反應陳昭宏離開戒嚴台灣的唯一願望—自由。而在今日，照相手機的普及也改變了我們的社會對話，「寫真」這件事情不再需要由藝術背書，卻又更深刻地介入我們的生活。在如此語境下，陳昭宏的作品雖然是裸體（或幾乎裸體），但肯定不是赤裸裸的。他的選取、構圖、視角，在陽光下締造了一個似假又真的時刻，這幾乎開放讓所有觀者自由解讀：是歌頌亦是諷刺，是享受也是禁慾。這個矛盾，根基於旅外華人藝術家出身、文化、生活等種種的衝突，也深刻在陳昭宏本身的藝術家個性裡。

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海灘 126，1996，畫布油彩，81.6 x 122 公分

丁雄泉曾如此描述陳昭宏：「他是生在台灣的人，可是他太大了，不屬於台灣，不過沒有問題，他是全世界的大畫家。」丁雄泉說對了一半，陳昭宏不只是大，更是超前了 50 年—他早在 50 年前，穿著我們當代時代的語言，為我們裝飾了我們渴望看到的東西。

（此篇新聞稿改寫自 Sean Gaffney, "Hilo Chen: Seeing Desire"）



*Mannequin*, 1970, oil on canvas 182.5 x 218.5 cm

## ***Hilo Chen : The Bather of Valpinçon***

**January 15 – February 29, 2020**

**Opening reception: January 15, 6 – 8 PM**

Each Modern is pleased to present “The Bather of Valpinçon”, a solo exhibition by New York-based Taiwanese artist Hilo Chen. The show includes his early works which have never been shown since his immigration to the U.S. in 1968, as well as his well-known photorealistic paintings from the late 70s. During a brief stay in Paris in 1968, he was deeply moved by a masterpiece by Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres in the Louvre - “The Bather of Valpinçon”, which was the catalyst that moved Chen from abstract expression towards realism. “The Bather of Valpinçon” is at the core of Hilo Chen’s art. Ingres’s place in history reflects the importance of Hilo Chen: leading classicalism and realism to a new level of expression; just as the art critic Hsieh LiFa dubbed Chen “the Ingres of Soho”. In addition to the gallery’s exhibition, Each Modern will also be exhibiting Hilo Chen’s crucial works from 1970, such as *Queen*, at Taipei Dangdai.

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“Focusing on details to create a comprehensive view suggests the spiritual realm of the individual artist, yet extreme realism also implies a formal language that embodies precise rendering.”

- excerpt from “Telling Details” exhibition catalog, exhibition at Taipei Fine Arts Museum

Hilo Chen’s works can be found in the collections of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Taipei Fine Arts Museum, San Jose Museum of Art, and many other renowned contemporary art institutions. Born in Yilan, 1942, Hilo Chen was the youngest member of Ton Fan Painting Group, the first Chinese art group in abstraction, and studied under Li ChungSheng. In 1968, he traveled to Paris where he saw “The Bather of Valpinçon” in the Louvre. Later that same year he would move to New York, where he has lived ever since. After leaving Asia, Hilo Chen continued making Ton Fan Group abstraction for a short period before moving towards figurative painting.

Hilo Chen’s early figurative period often featured various types of portraiture. Large, round eyes appear in numerous works to meet the viewers gaze. Notable paintings from this period include *A Woman*, 1968, *Self-portrait and Mirrors*, 1969, *A Friend*, 1969, and *Queen*, 1970. *A Friend*, 1969, depicts a human form, submerged underwater from the neck down. The torso’s inner workings and systems are made visible like clockworks, running horizontally through the work, revealing Chen’s relation with the body and the unseen systems governing an otherwise placid form. *Queen*, 1970, also comes from this period. Seated on a bisecting line, like the water level in *A Friend*, with legs crossed, a Rubenesque nude portrait of Queen Elizabeth II dominates an open background. Chen’s fascination with the body would return in later works, and his female nudes would grow in focus to overtake his canvas and vision; extending throughout his lifelong dialogue with painting.



*A Friend*, 1969, oil on canvas, 127 x 111.8 cm

Two years after relocating to New York, Chen’s figures adopted a new realism and were placed in more spatially grounded compositions through his treatment of light. Bits and pieces of the world began to find their way onto Chen’s canvas; cups, sidewalks, windows. At the same time, his bodies were fragmented, cut out of the frame in snapshot-like moments. This period set Hilo apart from other Western photorealists. The influence of the West on Chen’s practice at

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once seems obvious. But with a deeper reading, there emerge elements of traditional Chinese painting which can be read in these very western-looking compositions. *Talking*, 1972 depicts two figures cut off by the edges of the canvas engaged in conversation and gesturing with their hands. Save for these two partially visible figures on the edges, the work is an open surface where space is made flat through color. This kind of composition can be seen in other works, like *Twins A*, 1972 and throughout the *Side Walk* series.



*Twins A*, 1972, oil on canvas, 101.6 x 137 cm

Through composition, Hilo Chen composes a line between himself and the East. These works remind us of “one- corner compositions”. In the past, the “one- corner composition” paintings of the Nan Song Dynasty often focused on smaller, visually closer, and more intimate scenes, while the background was often depicted as bereft of detail, as a realm without substance or concern for the artist or viewer. Chen’s backgrounds of infinite flat color reflect his focus on his anonymous human subjects: the classical issue of “who” is now removed, it is now about “life” and “existence” – this idea was evolved into Chen’s more recent beach series paintings. Figures are confidently grounded in the foreground of these beach works, but always cut off from some edge.

From the *Side Walk* series, 1973, to the *Beach Series*, 1974, Hilo Chen’s place in history is adjacent the photorealism master Chuck Close. During this period, many of Chen’s exhibitions were sold out. Famous British Collector Carles Saatchi traveled to New York to collect his work. Despite these achievements, Chen has not changed his sincerity and insistence in art. He paints every day despite needing to wear an oxygen mask to breath. Although in Chen’s work there is inevitably a tension between eroticism and contemporary painting, he still insists on a passion towards life and sex, using color and composition to carry the real desires of the human. It is hard to find such a character in younger generations of artists. As such, Chen’s art is not only a mark of 80s New York, it has also a made a lasting visual impact for a new generation: the Beach series appears in “Sex in the City” and was featured in a book released by Juxtapoz magazine recently.

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Just as context played a key role in presenting the subject of photorealism, we too should consider the works context. Our visual language associated with Chen's specific Beach leisure is mediated through inherited popular color film stocks, like Instant Polaroids and Kodachrome which proliferated throughout the 70s. These tones can be clearly read in Chen's beach series. As Chen developed this specific style of painting, cultural precedents can also be read. By the mid 1970s the sexual revolution had spread from a countercultural movement where it began in the 60s, to the average middle class American. Urban social spaces were thus transformed. This new liberation might be seen in Hilo's fixation on the bikini. Chen's paintings from this period, though readable as expressions of sexual fantasy, also show a cultural shift towards a more open, more stable, more relaxed society. Taken in contrast with his native Taiwan's ongoing martial law, Chen's desires may be read as more about social liberation than libido. The prevalence of camera phones has also shifted the conversation as well. No longer in direct parallel with pop art, photorealism seems to speak now more to the question of where snap-shot photography lies today, how photography mediates our lives, and the modes of seeing these images. In this context, Hilo Chen's work, though nude or almost, are certainly not naked. His subject, composition, and perspective create an illusory yet realistic moment which allows viewers to interpret freely: it is a praise yet irony; it is joy yet abstinence. The contradictions of origin, culture, and life, rooted in every Chinese artist abroad can be found in the artistic personality of Hilo Chen as well.



*Beach 136*, 1997, acrylics on canvas, 76.2 x 101.6 cm

Walasse Ting once said of Chen, "He was born in Taiwan, but he is too big for Taiwan. It's okay, he is a great painter for the whole world." Ting was half right. Hilo Chen is not just big, he was 50 years ahead 50 years ago. His work wears the language of our contemporary times and is adorned with the desires to see.

(This press release is adapted form "Hilo Chen: Seeing Desire" by Sean Gaffney.)