

Thomas Erben Gallery

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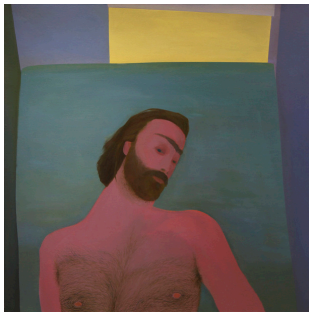
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Xinyi Cheng - Nabuqi – Ali Van

July 7 – August 5, 2016

Opening reception: Thursday, July 7, 6-8:30 pm

Thomas Erben Gallery is pleased to present *Soft Haze*, an exhibition curated by **Yuan Fuca**, which includes works by **Xinyi Cheng**, **Nabuqi**, and **Ali Van**. The show features sculptures, paintings, audio, and works on paper in which the conventions of each medium are infused with softness and intimacy. *Soft Haze*, as a title, references the serenity of warm summer nights, the dusk in which the air turns velvety. The works in the show feature a playful and personal sensibility, an approach that encourages slight details, articulated textures, and atmospheric moods.



In **Xinyi Cheng's** paintings, the artist depicts nude figures reclining and relaxing within sparsely rendered spaces. In *Tension*, a lone man lies on his side, staring straight out of the picture. The domestic architecture surrounding him is created through an assemblage of flat planes, whose light pastels are in sharp contrast to the dark lines of the figure's leg hair. Similarly, in *Goodnight, Thomas*, the subject is seen from above, his body laid back in bed. Within the smooth, geometric rendering of his surroundings, his finely rendered chest hair hints at a certain eroticism, reflected in the way his bearded face looks playfully at the viewer.

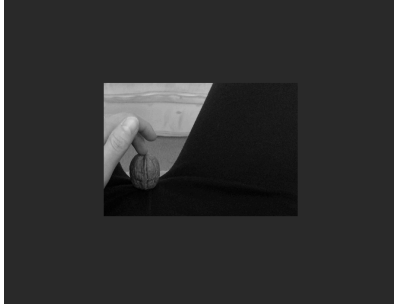


Nabuqi's works, on the other hand, are deeply invested in the history of sculpture. *A View Beyond Space No. 7-12* comprises six freestanding pieces, narrow yellow steles on which small growths spring out of their tops. These finely crafted metal sculptures adopt a hard-edge vocabulary, but are softened, seemingly organic. As such, they reference and remix iconic sculptural practices – from Louise Bourgeois and Constantin Brancusi, to Sol LeWitt and John McCracken. The rambunctiousness of their forms becomes apparent in the context of *Object No. 4*, a sculpture made of two stacked wooden stools, the top inverted such that the two seats are in contact. The entire sculpture is covered with fabric, with the spaces between the legs selectively bound with cloth, implying a potential series of permutations. A white thread crossing the interior space of the lower stool ending in a white stain introduces a vague impression of bodily fluids.

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As an interdisciplinary artist, **Ali Van**'s work can be understood through a language of poetry and time as medium. On paper, poetic text is distributed across the surface of sheets stained with pigments and liquid. With photography she captures whimsical details of her surroundings, presenting them as defined forms that emphasize both their ephemerality and their elliptical nature as a whole. Van describes her practice as "living inscriptions of breath [...] in gifted time." As with writing and image making, her still lives are a choreography of objects in operational time. Installed with a sound component within the gallery, these works point towards her interest in atmospheric matter, in the way small units of life may collectively produce something of inexplicable beauty.

Xinyi Cheng (b. 1989, Wuhan, China) attended the Tsinghua University in Beijing (BA, 2012), Maryland Institute College of Art (MFA, 2014), and the Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture (2014). Her work has been included in numerous group shows while studying in Baltimore and in New York after moving to the city. She has participated in the AIM program at the Bronx Museum, received a fellowship to the Vermont Studio Center and was a recent artist-in-residence at the Lower East Side Printshop in New York. She is currently a resident artist at the Rijksakademie, Amsterdam.

Nabuqi (b. 1984, Inner Mongolia, China) graduated from the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, in 2013. A recent solo exhibition was held in 2015 at C-Space in Beijing. Group exhibitions include Star Gallery, Beijing and Songzhuang Museum, Beijing (both 2014). She will participate in the forthcoming 2016 *Gwangju Biennale* in South Korea. She lives and works in Beijing.

Ali Van (b. 1986, New York) received her M.F.A. from Columbia University in 2013 and her B.A. from Yale University in 2008. She is the recipient of numerous grants and awards with organizations based in Austria, China, Japan, France, Thailand and the US; including residencies at Yaji Garden, Suzhou, China; Practice, New York (both 2016); SoART Millstättersee, Austria (2013-15); and CCA Kitakyushu, Japan (2014-15) to name a few. Her work is currently included in *Beyond the Globe: 8th Triennial of Contemporary Art* in Slovenia curated by Boris Groys, and she is working toward an exhibition at the Watson Library in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Van lives and works between New York and Hong Kong.

Yuan Fuca (b. 1988) is a writer and curator based in Beijing. She obtained her MFA in Art Criticism and Writing from School of Visual Arts, New York. Her writings frequently appear in ARTnews, Artforum, Flash Art, LEAP, Art Asia Pacific, The New York Times Style Magazine, among others. Yuan co-founded Salt Projects, a research-based curatorial platform in Beijing.

Thomas Erben Gallery is located at 526 West 26th Street, 4th floor.
Gallery summer hours are Monday – Friday, 11am – 6pm
For more information, please contact us at 212-645-8701 or info@thomaserben.com.

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