

Baronian Xippas

Press release

Wang Du

L'image au temps du négatif / positif

2 rue Isidore Verheyden

29.04 - 5.06.2021

Opening

Thursday 29.04.2021
from 6 - 9 pm

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L'image au temps du négatif / positif

Baronian Xippas Gallery is delighted to be hosting Wang Du's fifth solo show in Brussels.

For this exhibition, Wang Du drew inspiration from the novelist Gabriel Garcia Marquez and his masterpiece *100 Years of Solitude*, which was a pioneering work of magic realism. Covid-19 has left the world ravaged and in the grip of ambivalence. Anticipation and despair, freedom and lockdown, romance and distance and now vaccines and viral mutations. The uncertain outcome of this positive/negative roller-coaster is the current factor defining the variables in our lives. *L'image au temps du négatif/positif* highlights the dualistic magic realism that reigns in our world today.

True to his philosophy, Wang Du continues to take the line that media images represent our everyday reality. This exhibition features four new resin sculptures, all of which are easily recognisable: Pope Francis, a masked Emmanuel Macron, a celebrity couple in the sea and a photo of a woman in an erotic position from Instagram.

His blatantly provocative work is an obvious criticism of the influence of the mass media behind both social and economic manipulation and political mobilisation. These media images are the driving force at the heart of Wang Du's sculptures.

He began working in the medium of sculpture around 1994, collecting images of trivial personalities and events from newspapers or magazines and creating statues of them, some serious, some less so and some of them monumental in size. He transformed the extraordinary events played out in the media into ironic and absurd sculptures. "I approach my projects in the same way that the media approaches reality" says Wang Du.

This concept of turning the most commonly accepted social values on their heads and compromising the manipulative strategy of the mass media often elicits waves of laughter from the public. However, there is no doubt in anyone's mind that the most significant aspect of this work is its scathing criticism of the media and the influence it wields over contemporary society.

In an era when we are invaded each and every day by media images, Wang Du showcases the new religion invented by the cultural industry. Where each of us has become a self-media, a little autonomous medium producing and broadcasting information via our "smart" phones, we are all in fact complicit and willing agents of this generalised propaganda.

This uncomfortable contrast between amusement and provocation reveals a clear distrust of the artificial relationship between media images and real meaning as disseminated by the media in order for them to exercise their influence.

By bringing the world of representation face to face with reality, Wang Du creates a powerful snapshot of the world we live in and joins the ranks of contemporary artists offering the sharpest readings of this world.

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Wang Du (b. 1956, Wuhan, People's Republic of China) studied at the Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts in Guangdong. In 1990, he settled permanently in Paris. Recent exhibitions of his work have taken place at the Dublin Biennial (2011), the Tri Postal in Lille, Tang Contemporary Art in Beijing (2016 and 2008), Mori Art Museum in Tokyo (2011), Städtische Galerie im Park Viersen (2010) and the BPS22 in Charleroi (2008). He has participated in group exhibitions in the Cuban Pavilion at the Venice Biennial (2013), the Jardins du Palais Royal, Paris (2010), and at the Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2006). His work features in collections at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, M HKA in Antwerp, and UCCA in Beijing, among others.