

Rao Fu: Dresden

Fergus McCaffrey, New York
September 8 – October 22, 2022

Rao Fu is a Dresden-based painter whose work reconsiders Chinese and Western painting traditions. The exhibition *Rao Fu: Dresden* will mark the artist's first solo show in the United States presenting almost twenty years of his technically rigorous and conceptually complex works.



Born in Beijing in 1978 Fu's family quickly moved to Tsingtao in Shandong Province where his grandfather initially nurtured his creative instincts in the otherwise barren post-Cultural Revolution environment. Fu would first study graphic design at Tsinghua University before ultimately moving to Germany in 2001 to enroll in the renowned Dresden

Academy of Fine Arts whose Alumni include George Grosz, Elfriede Lohse-Wächtler and Gerhard Richter.

Further, Fu secured a job as an art handler at the city's Gemäldegalerie to gain first hand access to the museum's extraordinary collection of Baroque and Romantic period masterpieces. The importance of this hands-on engagement with the techniques and materials of the masters cannot be overstated, particularly given the widespread criticism of Chinese contemporary artists' cursory engagement with history of art and light-hearted adoption of visual traditions.

In hindsight it almost appears as if Fu's move to Dresden was preordained. From 1898 to 1914, Tsingtao was a part of the German Concession in China and much of the layout and architecture of the city has a strong German character. Furthermore, during the existence of the German Democratic Republic, Dresden had a cultural exchange program with the Peoples Republic of China, sharing and promoting the common visual vocabulary of Socialist Realism. Fu's move from East to West, his shift from a Communist to a Capitalist system has an affinity with artists such as Gerhard Richter, Georg Baselitz, and Sigmar Polke, who like mindedly moved West in the early 1960s in search of creative freedom.



On paper and on canvas, Fu's alignment of the atmospheric subtlety, milky-transparency, and spirit of Chinese landscape painting with the propagandistic theatricality and drama of the darkness-into-light of the Baroque and Romantic traditions is played-out in a vast array of variously diluted pigment and washes of color that electrify his compositions. The monumental triptych paintings, employ the grandeur and scale of the Baroque alongside the more personal and intimate nature of the Chinese and Romantic traditions in the pervasive details and multiple perspectives he creates. Chinese classical mythology and Baroque style both relate fantastic flying beings on the one hand and angels & putti on the other.



A palpable shift from more prosaic subject matter toward the allegorical is evident in Fu's work, yet it is consistently compelling, being emotive grounded in enduring human experiences and aspirations; the origins and continuing relevance of which unite us across generations and cultures.

Rao Fu: Dresden opens at Fergus McCaffrey, New York on Thursday, September 8th between 6.00 and 8.00 PM. The artist will be present. For further details and images please contact: info@fergusmccaffrey.com.

About Fergus McCaffrey

Founded in 2006, Fergus McCaffrey is internationally recognized for its groundbreaking role in promoting the work of postwar Japanese artists such as Sadamasa Motonaga, Kazuo Shiraga and Jiro Takamatsu. The gallery also exhibits the work of emerging and seminal Western artists including Anna Conway, Marcia Hafif, Birgit Jürgenssen, Richard Nonas, Sigmar Polke and Carol Rama. In keeping with the gallery's commitment to Japanese art and culture, McCaffrey opened its Tokyo outpost in March 2018. Fergus McCaffrey has locations in New York, St. Barth, and Tokyo.

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Images: 1. Rao Fu, *Abyss II*, 2021-2022, Oil on canvas, 86 3/5 x 165 2/5 inches, (220 x 420 cm), © Rao Fu, Dresden; 2. Rao Fu, *Am Strand*, 2013, Mix media (bitumen, oil) on paper, 17 3/10 x 19 7/10 inches (44 x 50 cm), © Rao Fu, Dresden; 3. Rao Fu, *Run Run Run*, 2005, Mix media (bitumen, oil, soy sauce on paper), 17 3/10 x 9 4/5 inches (44 x 25 cm), © Rao Fu, Dresden.