

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***Jiang Zhi: Can I Become Better?*****8 Sep 2020 – 24 Oct 2020****Opening Reception: 5 Sep 2020, Saturday, 4 – 6:30 pm**Venue: Blindspot Gallery (15/F, Po Chai Industrial Building, 28 Wong Chuk Hang Road, Wong Chuk Hang, Hong Kong)
Opening Hours: Tuesday to Saturday, 10.30am to 6.30pm; closed on Sunday, Monday and public holidays

Blindspot Gallery is pleased to present the solo exhibition of *Jiang Zhi: Can I Become Better?*. The exhibition features newly made figurative portraits executed in 2019 and 2020, a time of social upheaval and global pandemic, a moment when the anthropocentric world is under threat, when systems of health, economy, and mutual trust are in serious collapse. During this time, the artist made an important pivot from the depiction of objects and nature, to the manifestation of human beings and their inner condition. This ensemble includes works selected from multiple series, such as *Youth*, *Mr. Beard*, *Human Body*, and *Seven Blind People*. The exhibition title “Can I become better?” comes from the artist’s self-reflection and personal response to the question “Can the world become better?”. Despite a certain pessimism from apathy and worry, the artist expresses his passion and optimism based on personal belief and human reality.

Skeletons and skulls emerge as key motifs in the paintings. Building on the Christian tradition of *memento mori*, Jiang allows these visceral bodies to convey the inner state of being alive, an interiority turned external. The tempest of events and experiences from the past year overwhelms and hollows one’s mind, melting faces and dissolving brains, leaving behind the cranium. As the status quo of existing order and systems is destroyed and annihilated, a “new world” must rise from the dead. What would this new world look like? The artist thoughtfully asks about the new “self”, for the new world is made up of the connection of the “many”.



Jiang’s exploration of corporeality materializes in the *Human Body* series. These are sanguine bodies that are full of life force and vitality, as oil pigments become blood, and brush strokes show veins and musculature out of a chaotic background. The series ends with a Gericault-like composition in *Human Body No.6*, where a pale body, no less erotic, lies lifeless on an abstract ground. Life and death entwine in the now and disappear into each other.

Thinking about those who are alive and face a future in front of them, Jiang painted the *Youth* series in the latter half of 2019. The artist elicits the feeling of being young by recreating beings that are malleable and undefinable, constantly mutating and never settling. Colorful

swatches merge into the canvas, as the smudged blurry lines allow osmosis, liquidity, drippage and slippages. The youthful figures take many contradictory hybrid forms, at once angelic and devilish, mature and naive, impulsive and over-thinking, sensitive and cynical, beautiful and abject, man and beast.

Seven Blind People is a series of seven paintings that form a visual parable, negating the centrality of sight and thereby challenges the chasm between optical visibility and sensual imagination. Jiang believes that only by embracing Formlessness and liberating the Form from its representation, can the artist become one with chance encounters, polymorphous relationality, and sensual confrontations. How would a blind person (those who are in an unconventional system) paint? There shall be no limit, but unfettered and pure creation.



About the Artists

Jiang Zhi (b. 1971, Hunan, China) works with a wide range of media, including photography, painting, video, and installation. Fiction and poetry have also been an important part of his artistic output. Consistently engaging with contemporary social and cultural issues, Jiang consciously positions himself at the intersection of poetics and sociology, while weaving mundane social and personal experiences into his works.

Jiang Zhi has had two major solo retrospectives at OCAT Shenzhen (2016) and Times Museum in Guangzhou (2012). His work was also shown in international institutions and biennials, including “Art and China after 1989: Theater of the World” (Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA, 2017); “Canton Express: Art of the Pearl River Delta” (M+ Museum, Hong Kong, 2017); the 9th Shanghai Biennale (Power Station of Art, Shanghai, China, 2012); the 4th Guangzhou Triennial (Guangdong Art Museum, Guangzhou, China, 2012); “Between Past and Future: New Photography and Video from China” (ICP and Asia Society, New York, USA, 2004); “Zone of Urgency”, the 50th Biennale di Venezia (Venice, Italy, 2003); and “P_A_U_S_E”, the 4th Gwangju Biennale (Gwangju, South Korea, 2002). Jiang was awarded the Chinese Contemporary Art Award (CCAA) in 2000; the Academic Award of Reshaping History (Chinart from 2000 to 2009) in 2010; and the Credit Suisse Today Art Award in 2012.

About Blindspot Gallery

Set up in 2010, Blindspot Gallery is a Hong Kong-based contemporary art gallery. The gallery began with a primary focus on contemporary photography and image-based art, and has evolved to include diverse media in contemporary art. The gallery represents both emerging and established artists, mainly from Hong Kong and the region but also beyond.

For enquiries and media interviews, please contact Ms. May Wong at 2517 6238 or by email info@blindspotgallery.com

Image Captions:

Jiang Zhi, *Flower Stem No. 1*, 2020, Acrylic and plant fibres on linen, 46.5 x 36.3 x 7.1 cm

Jiang Zhi, *Human Body No. 6*, 2019, Oil on linen, 74.3 x 57.3 x 5.5 cm

Jiang Zhi, *Youth No. 6*, 2020, Oil on linen, 60.3 x 47.3 x 5.5 cm

Jiang Zhi, *Seven Blind People No. 5*, 2020, Acrylic on linen, 40.5 x 30.6 x 4 cm

(Image courtesy of artist and Blindspot Gallery)