

# ARTOMITY

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術指南

Aaina Bhargava on

## *Household Gods*

「駐家寧神」 at Hart Hall

Bouie Choi Yuk Kuen 蔡鈺娟,  
Chan Sai-lok 阿三, Virginia Overton,  
弗吉尼亞·奧弗頓, ektor garcia,  
Ocean Leung 梁灝東, Jiang Zhi 蔣志,  
Szelit Cheung 張施烈 and more...

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## Jiang Zhi

*Can I Become Better?*

Blindspot Gallery

Hong Kong

Sept 8 - Oct 24, 2020

Christina Ko

The prevailing sentiment at the opening of Jiang Zhi's latest Hong Kong show, *Can I Become Better?*, was that it was "not very Blindspot". Indeed, throughout its history, and in particular since its prescient move to Wong Chuk Hang a little under a decade ago, the gallery showcasing this exhibition has become known for avant-garde photography, video and installations, with a good mix of sophisticated local and mainland Chinese names on its roster. And these – semi-abstract, semi-figurative canvasses incorporating all the colours of the rainbow, executed in the rather western tradition of oil painting – are decidedly not in that vein, so that even fans of Jiang's work might struggle to identify them as his, although they deal with his ongoing fascination with the human condition.

The pieces were created both before and after the onset of the pandemic in China and, within a tightly curated exhibition, showcase a variety of experimentations with techniques and themes, each thread a response to a different stimulus, whether it's the rise of youth-led political movements or



*Mr. Beard No 1 & 2* by Jiang Zhi, Oil on linen, 72 x 55 cm each, 2019.  
Courtesy the artist and Blindspot Gallery.

the various issues raised by a virus that has crossed borders and kicked off a global blame game.

The earlier series on display, *Youth* (2019) and *Mr Beard* (2019), have been executed more passively, with watered-down paint subject to the will of paper and gravity. In the former, the artist ties the escaping droplets to a sense of fluidity he considers part of adolescence; in the latter, he creates a diptych of a skull-like face by imprinting it on two sheets and separating them when dry, forcing viewers to confront these versions of a death mask, which are as formless as they are mired in concrete associations with mortality.

The brushwork becomes more solid, more purposeful, more aggressive with the onset of this year, and perhaps with the artist's growing fear, anger and grief in

response to the year's events. It's hard not to feel discombobulated staring at canvasses that show body parts in various contortions, headless torsos vibrantly peacocking, executed in strokes simultaneously painterly and painful.

At the entrance of the show, *Seven Blind People* (2020) is a jarring, visceral journey that involved the artist painting as if he lacked sight, relying on instinct and touch, with results that vary. A particular hue of pink that seems to connote the insides of the body dominates some, while two show crude, childlike representations of faces, and another is just a mass of black texture. Jiang considered it a liberating concept to be sightless, with no visual frames of reference to fall back on, likening this to a pure kind of creativity – although blindness imagined is very different from the actual condition.

In fact, it's Jiang's technical training that makes these canvasses so enjoyable to behold and dissect. In *Flower Stem No 2* (2020), the reddish paint that coats a bony skeleton seems haphazardly executed, but sings with precision of execution, and the suggestion of musculature is distinct, just as the subject's simply rendered eyes peer out mournfully. The ability to emote via a single, casual dab of oil paint can't be born out of boundlessness and intuition, but from years of calligraphy and fine-art training. That said, Jiang's new work is indeed a liberation from expectations – for himself, and possibly for his gallery as well.

## 蔣志

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這個我能變好嗎？

刺點畫廊

香港

2020年9月8日至10月24日

Christina Ko

外間對蔣志最新於香港舉行的個人展覽「這個我能變好嗎？」開幕的反應，是展覽「與刺點畫廊一貫風格大相逕庭」。畫廊一直以展出前衛攝影、錄像和裝置藝術而聞名，尤其是約十年前明智地移至黃竹坑之後，其展出卓越的本地及中國藝術家作品。是次展覽半抽象、半具象的畫作，依循西方傳統油畫技法來糅合彩虹的各種色彩，的確與畫廊過往的風格不同，即使作品探究

蔣志經常深思的人類狀態題材，但連他的畫迷亦難以辨認出那些是他的作品。

是次展覽經過周密的策展思考，展品在中國爆發疫情之前和之後製作，表露藝術家對技法和題材的多種實驗，無論是由青年人發起的政治運動、或是新冠肺炎病毒在不同地域所帶來的問題，及引起全球國家之間的互相指控，作品每一處都是對不同的刺激作回應。

是展品中較早期的系列《年輕人》（2019年）及《鬍子先生》（2019年），均以被動的手法製作，已稀釋的油彩隨着紙質和地心吸力融入畫布。藝術家在《年輕人》裡，把滑動的色彩塑造成一股液態的流動，他認為這是青春的一部份。在《鬍子先生》中，他壓印骸骨般的臉容在兩張紙上，油彩乾透後再把紙分開，從而製作一幅雙連畫；觀者不得不面對不同版本的遺容模塑，既模糊亦具體地意味着生死。

是隨着藝術家對今年的事件抱有越來越深的恐懼、憤怒和悲傷，可見他的筆觸變得更厚實、有目的和激烈。畫布中扭曲成不同形態的身體、炫耀自己的無頭身軀，都具有畫家的特質，及流露一份悲痛，讓觀者感到困惑。

是展覽以《七個盲人》（2020年）開始，作品是一個兀突而震撼的旅程，藝術家繪畫時如同失去了視覺，需依賴本能和觸覺創作，而得到不同的結果。一片好像比喻人體內部的粉紅色彩，佔據了畫的一部份，旁邊是兩副粗糙、充滿稚氣的臉容，及一塊充滿質感的黑色色彩。蔣氏認為沒有視覺是一種解放的概念，因為視覺上的無形可造就

一種純粹的創作力，雖然想像出來的失明與實際的情況是完全不同。

是事實上，這些畫作如此賞心悅目歸功於蔣氏的技法。在《花莖之二》（2020年）中，藝術家以偏紅的色彩包裹着骸骨，看似雜亂，但其實運用了非常精準的筆法，且清楚描繪了肌肉，就如畫中的雙眼所流露的哀痛。單靠隨意滴落的油彩就能流露如此深厚的情感，當然不是因為豐富的色彩和直覺，而是透過多年的書法和美術技法的訓練。可是，蔣氏的新作的確從期望解放出來，無論是對他或是是次展覽的畫廊來說亦然。