

# Black Silence Lu Chao



Lu Chao, Black Star No.4, 2017, oil on canvas, 150x120cm

## **Black Silence | Lu Chao**

4 October – 18 November 2017

Opening reception: Tuesday 3 October 2017, 6.30–8.30pm

rosenfeldporcini

37 Rathbone Street, London W1T 1NZ

rosenfeld porcini is pleased to announce the first ever UK solo exhibition by the Chinese artist Lu Chao (\*1988). Despite his young age, the artist's work has already been extensively presented internationally and 'Black Silence' signifies an important development in his practice, both from a narrative and a formal point of view.

Chao's earlier works concentrated on the passiveness of normal human beings, huddled together in tightly packed groups, when confronted with terrestrial power. Growing up in China, this was, at its inception, a comment on his homeland. However, having now lived in the U.K., he feels that this idea achieves a far wider relevance. In 'Black Silence', his attentions have turned to our relationship with extra-terrestrial power and what, if anything, is controlling our existence. Is the large black sphere hanging in the air, towering over the tiny humans below, a manifestation of a higher being or merely a natural phenomenon?

Human kind is portrayed as many miniature characters, 'Lilliputians-like', dwarfed by the immensity of the universe, whether suspended on strings manipulated by giant hands or amassed together in space, their reactions differ enormously. Either dominated by fear, dancing in circles or performing acrobatic handstands, there appears to be no universal response. The artist seems to be dissuading us from pursuing a definitive answer; in so doing emphasising the importance of our individual interpretation of the events. Lu Chao is suggesting that neither a God-like figure of Western religious tradition nor existential nothingness can ever represent an objective truth. Either is conceivable. However, whether negotiating emptiness, or a possible puppet master, we, as individuals, are inexorably alone in our journey through life.



Lu Chao, Black silence, 2017, watercolour on paper, 23×31cm



Lu Chao, Balance No.1, 2017, watercolour on paper, 23×31cm

Although solitude and collective unconsciousness are recurring themes, playfulness is a quality often found in Chao's compositions. For example, in works like 'Laboratory 5' the drama inherent to the subject is offset by the humour of the situations his human beings find themselves in.

The exhibition will also feature a large-scale, monumental 'Forest' painting, 'Black Light No 5' continuing the artist's fascination with an 'immersion in nature'. The natural world, with its enchanted light, takes on an almost religious significance, the magic augmented by the playfulness of the symphony of human heads and yet more tiny figures. In this work, the anguish has disappeared as the scene shines with peacefulness. From the dramatic conjecture of the previous works, there is a new found harmony in individuals' one to one relationship with nature and towards each other.

The focus on narrative should, in no way, overshadow the importance of 'language' for the artist. Inspired and influenced by the antique Chinese masters, Chao adopts the artistic heritage of his homeland and attunes it to our Contemporary world. His devotion to an exclusive use of black and white pays a remarkable tribute to the economy of means embodied by traditional Chinese black ink painting, yet through the calibrated tension between the two colours he manages to elicit an incredibly wide range of emotional nuances. Whereas his earlier paintings featured a predominantly white tonality, in this exhibition 'black' has become the prevalent tone although in the context of a constant seismic battle between the two. The pronounced dark tones give these works an intensified uneasiness and allows him to create a 'Gesamtwerk' where form and content go hand in hand. The drama in the narrative perfectly reflected in the drama of the form.

Lu Chao defines himself as a 'painter' and while renewing the traditions of his country he is also ensuring that the medium he has chosen to work in as an artist is no longer regarded as a near extinct byway in the ever greater plethora of art disciplines in our contemporary world.

**Lu Chao** (b. 1988 in Shenyang, China) currently lives and works between London and Beijing. He completed his Bachelor at the Central Academy of Fine Arts - Oil painting department - in Beijing, China and his Masters at the painting department of the Royal College of Art in London, UK. Lu Chao's paintings has had solo shows in ambitious international galleries such as Rosenfeld Porcini (London), Nathalie Obadia (Paris) and Hadrien de Montferrand (Beijing). Earlier this year an acclaimed duo exhibition featuring his work was held in Venice during the Venice Biennale. His work has been acquired by the Louis Vuitton Collection, DSL Collection, The Strock Collection along with several private collections.

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