

## Jin Haofan Artforum Exhibition Review

Jin Haofan

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Vanguard Gallery

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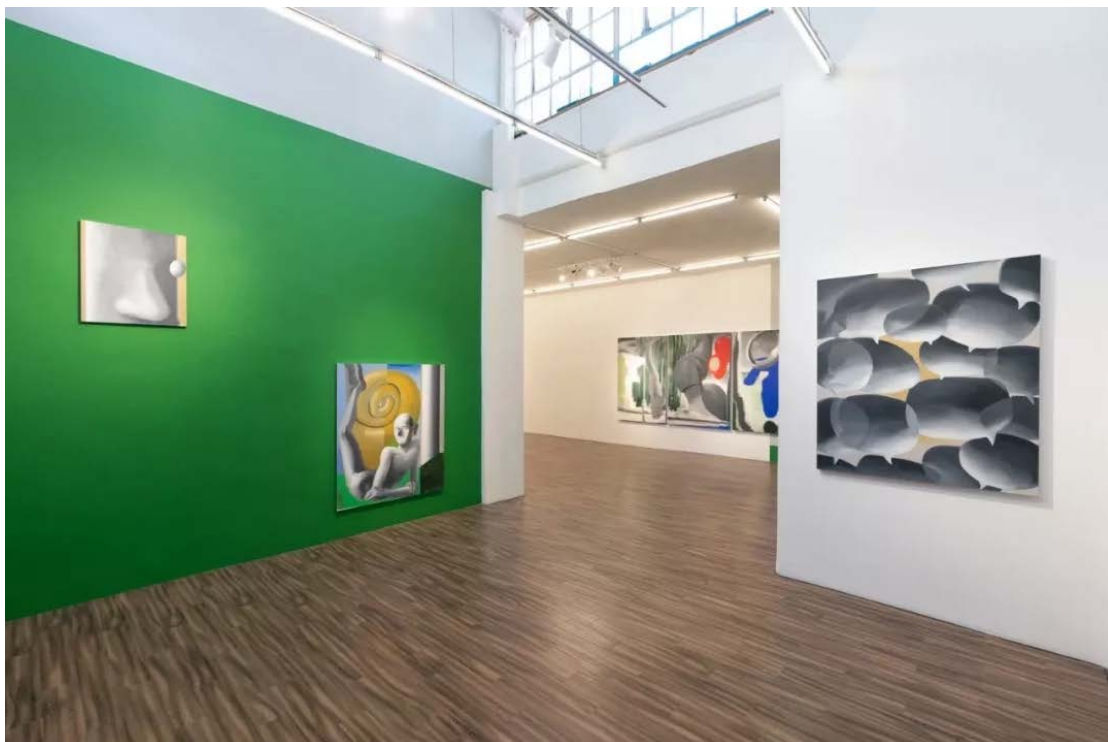
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*Jin Haofan: Normal Temperature* exhibition photos, 2019

The painter Jin Haofan is a member of the Shenzhen contemporary art group Jiu Society. The Jiu Society, based in Shenzhen, a special economic zone in China, enjoys unique geographical conditions for investigating urban life. The creative consciousness of the group focuses on the nothingness behind the madness. As the experimental product of China's reform and opening up, this city has developed rapidly in the past 40 years. Jiu Society is amplifying the eager emotion of the city or the epitome of China's modernization to a disturbing level. In Art Basel Hongkong 2019, they brought a new work *Bullshit Blind Bull*. A glass fibre reinforced plastics sculpture carved a cow heading forward. As if to urge or force, the red firecracker was stuffed into its anus, and its eyes had been squeezed out of the sockets. This comic-style artwork is inspired by the sculpture *Ruzi Cow* in the Shenzhen Party Municipal Committee. It was made by Guangzhou sculptor Pan He, symboling the Shenzhen's dual character of expeditionary and down to earth.

It is rare to see Jin Haofan's paintings, which have only appeared few times in art fairs in recent years. It is difficult for critics to sum up a clear clue from his accumulated painting over the years in his studio. The artist seems to be tirelessly adjusting his painting style to find a precise entry point, so that his works will not lose their sensitivity to the pulse of the times, but can also gain a foothold in the territory of painting. However, his recent solo exhibition "Normal Temperature" in the gallery is surprisingly complete. The walls of the exhibition hall are painted in military green, light grey, and ultramarine colours close to the blue screen of a computer, which is similar to the colours in the painting. The objects that he paints include not only common boring things at home, but also similar to digital images on the screen. In *Snail* (2018), a grey-skinned character with his belly on the floor, forearms crossed, and head slightly turned to the right. His lower body stretched straight to the sky very unnaturally, as if to break him. The space behind him is divided into three pieces, the left and the middle two pieces, which cut the yellow snail shell. The colour deviation seems to be caused by monitors with different colour configurations. At the right end of the painting, the painter seems to be depicting the corner of the room. Extending to the depths of the painting, the heavy tones constitute a balance with the green and blue on the left — the two bright colours often appear in the screensavers that came with the early windows system. In the painting, the squares on the ground suggest the direction of laying, which makes the audience's perception oscillate between the blank layers in Photoshop or the pungent gluey smell of floor leather.



*Jin Haofan: Normal Temperature* exhibition photos, 2019

Jiu Society makes vision experiences such as *Ruzi Cow* closer to one's own experience. In

other words, let reality be closer to reality and stimulate the viewer's sense of strangeness visually in this process. The three young artists are not giving opinions towards reality from naturalism aspect, also not based on the scientific data analysis. Their creation is a field for expressing opinions, exposing deliberate stimulation. Contract with the radical approach in collective creation, for Jin Haofan, when he takes up a brush, he needs a quiet and slack studio as a buffer zone between him and the "reality", allowing all kinds of fierce emotions to slack off and save them for later use. He does not believe in "art for art's sake", nor does he care about the expressional and effective painting methods. In the exhibition *Normal Temperature*, Jin Haofan always applies various brushstrokes to build up the paintings into layers, creating a sense of separation. In *Perception-2* (2018), the volume of the fingers in the foreground is distinct from the flat painted background. In larger-scale paintings, such as *Pause* (2018), *Blow Away* (2018), and *Continue* (2018), this type of conflict is clearer and more complicated. These incongruous sounds reveal the unmeasurable ups and downs in the artist's heart. Through buffering and precipitation, his paintings have an abstract connection with real-life situations in form.

In the exhibition "Normal Temperature", the paintings continue to reveal a sense of instability. From the round face along with a wry smile in *Concretion -1* (2018) to the crooked, nearly collapsed Chinese characters in *An* (2018), the overall structural distortion creates an irrational atmosphere. In the four paintings of the "Not Far Away" series, pillars appear repeatedly, which obstruct the view of audiences. The four pillars are depicted significantly clearly, which are different from the blurred scenery within the paintings. This kind of display seems to highlight the blind spots that cannot be avoided in the field of vision—annoying but inevitable barriers. In the *Container-1* (2019) and *Container-2* (2019), the implied meaning is subtracted, and the painter seems to be groping in the form and language to complete a still life. Through the adjustment of lines, layers, sizes and multi-dimensional space, the picture is finally in a surprisedly stable state, digesting the hidden turmoil in a single painting element. This processing method penetrates the structure of other works in the exhibition "Normal Temperature", declaring the information that no matter how the artist's mind and surroundings change, this is still a calm painting display.



*Jin Haofan, The Snail, acrylic on canvas, 140 x 120 cm, 2018*