

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Xiao Kegang: Detour

398 West Street, New York, NY 10014

January 21, 2023 – March 25, 2023

Opening reception: Saturday, January 21, 2023 | 6-8 PM



Xiao Kegang, Still Life, 2021. Acrylic on canvas. 39 3/8 x 54 3/8 inches (100 x 138 cm).
Courtesy of the artist and Eli Klein Gallery © Xiao Kegang

New York, NY, January 21, 2023 - Eli Klein Gallery is pleased to present “Detour,” Xiao Kegang’s first solo exhibition in the US. In “Detour,” life’s most unanticipated occurrences have guided the artist’s painting and his incorporation of setbacks have created a visually distinct artistry. “Detour” consists of 19 paintings on a variety of scales, ranging from 16 inches to 10 feet, “detouring” through the totality of the artist’s recent experiments in painting.

Xiao Kegang’s practice has centered around the observation of the world from different perspectives and principles, or “cognitive alternatives.” A half-face of an owl could resemble an ionic column. A left foot could invoke a right-leaning shrub. These paintings are visually harmonic, but cognitively puzzling. Xiao Kegang expects viewers to tour through his canvas, identifying their own objects of interest.

The foregrounds and backgrounds are often interchangeable in Xiao Kegang’s works. In “Still Life,” for instance, the fruits and flowers consist of the objects in the foreground, in the fashion of a traditional still life painting. However, Kegang creates an airy white line which connects these items, flattening the entire surface, causing the color fields of white to become a foreground.

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In “Mixed Scenery V,” the form of the fish shares intimate relationships with a bone, a flower, and some blue clouds. In 1951, American essayist Clement Greenberg declared Jewish master painter Chaim Soutine’s treatment of fish and flesh “exotic,” thanks to its lack of “reassuring unity.” Xiao Kegang’s portrayal on animals offers a similar discomfort in its lack of “reassuring unity.” In opposition to Soutine’s desire to feature his fish and flesh, Xiao Kegang’s bold colors serve the intention for animals and non-animals to become unified.



Xiao Kegang, *Mixed Scenery V*, 2021. Acrylic on canvas.
38 1/4 x 47 1/4 inches (90 x 120 cm).
Courtesy of the artist and Eli Klein Gallery © Xiao Kegang

Three large-scale works command the gallery's back space. With features of both cave paintings and maps, these works are simultaneously flat and dimensional. They are mazes filled with color, content, order, distortion, proximity and distance. Viewers may find themselves trapped inside these paintings in a state of confusion and anxiety, while totally relaxed in the bliss of their abstract beauty.

About Xiao Kegang:

Born in 1968 in Sichuan Province, China, Xiao Kegang graduated from the Fine Arts Department of Southwestern Normal University in 1991 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree. His solo exhibitions include “Just Follow Your Heart,” He Duoling Art Museum, Chengdu, China (2022); “Anonymous,” A Thousand Plateaus Art Space, Chengdu, China (2019); “Darkness in the Light,” Surplus Space, Wuhan, China (2017); and “The Peach Garden of Travelling: Untimely Painting,” The Art Museum of Sichuan University, Chengdu, China (2011).

Xiao Kegang’s work has been featured in institutional group exhibitions, including “Art Gallery’s Eyes—Season Four,” Chengdu Art Museum, Chengdu, China (2022); “Portraits in Contemporary Art from Sichuan and Chongqing,” SEN-MUSEUM, Chengdu, China (2022); “Extreme Mix - Guangzhou Airport Biennale 2019,” Guangzhou Airport Resort, Guangzhou, China (2019); “The Spectres in the Double Shadow,” Alioth Art Center, Shanghai (2015); “Genealogy of Techniques: Form, Conception and Cognition—Painting Practices of He Duoling and Xiao Kegang,” Today Art Museum, Beijing (2014); and “New Power Chinese Contemporary Art Biennale,” Yuangong Art Museum, Shanghai (2006).

Inquiries:

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