

## Through the Maze: Navigating One Artist's Path

### *Lee Shang Hwa Solo Exhibition*



Maze 1, Mixed media on wood, 61 x 81cm, 2018

**Exhibition Duration:** 7<sup>th</sup> March – 14<sup>th</sup> April 2019

**Artist:** Lee Shang Hwa

#### **ABOUT THE EXHIBITION**

For many artists, the yearning to establish a distinctive style and identity as painters or sculptors dominates their creative career. Eager to push boundaries of what an artist can do, Lee Shang Hwa, a young Korean painter, scorns the notion of an artist's signature style and attempts to achieve a sense of complete freedom of expression, untouched by desires for recognition and devoid of fears of criticism. His diversified oeuvre thus includes works that incorporate actual household items next to their hyper-real renditions in oil, landscapes with surrealistically alienated scenarios, meticulous color dots arrangements on jigsaw puzzle-shaped canvases, and miniature watercolor drawings with misleading textual denominations - just to name a few.

Lee's first solo exhibition *Through the Maze: Navigating One Artist's Path*, held at Art+ Shanghai

Gallery, sets out to showcase a full spectrum of the artist's creative expressions at an early stage of his career. Unlike retrospectives that are typically contemplative of a single artist's work created in the past, this exhibition aspires to envision the future of one by revealing what, at first sight, may seem a disorienting variety of narratives that the artist juggles at present.

One way to approach Lee Shang Hwa's work is to imagine yourself traversing the maze. Unlike labyrinths, mazes are elaborate networks of pathways. With different entry and exit points, hidden loops, traps, and dead-ends, they are meant to confuse and bewilder. It is for this reason that the exhibition invites you to take a walk *'Through the Maze'* to navigate through Lee Shang Hwa's artistic universe that is intricately dissected by expansively branching pathways of thoughts and ideas. Embarking on such a journey exposes us to a variety of viewing experiences, ranging from puzzlement to revelation, unsettling entanglement to tranquilizing clarity.

The motif of a maze is so pervasive throughout Lee's practice, that almost every series of his work either literally or figuratively presents us with a puzzle. His works are intellectual and symbolic games that make you stop and think about the nature of reality and our tacit assumptions concerning it, as well as art and the process of perception in general. The ultimate question that drives Lee's tireless riddle-creation is one of freedom. The clue to resolving Lee's picture-puzzles lies in our ability to fathom its evasive nature.

Each new series of Lee's work reveals a quest towards understanding what freedom truly is, and how to live a life at liberty as a human and artist to fully realize one's potential. Lee's imagery and works' titles correspond with the profundity of his thinking and feeling - *Maze, YOLO, What Do You Live for? Attempt, Different Life, Creator's Standard and Your Standard*, and many others... His artistic practice acquires a bigger purpose of finding a path to an awareness of self and of man's position in the world.

## 关于展览

对许多艺术家而言，独特的艺术风格和具有辨识度的艺术家身份主导着他们的创作生涯。韩国年轻画家李相和则反其道而行之。他反对艺术家创立标志性风格的概念，渴望突破艺术家所能达到的极限，试图实现一种完全自由的、不卑不亢的表达。因而，他的作品形态各异——既有真实的家居用品与虚构的油画的结合，也有超现实主义异化场景的风景画；既有在拼图形状画布上精心排列的彩色圆点，也有带有误导性文字名称的微型水彩画等等。

李相和的首次个展《穿越迷宫:引航艺术家之路》在艺术+ 上海画廊如期举办，旨在全面展示这位年轻艺术家在职业生涯早期的创作表达。不同于一般的回顾展，本次展览不是对艺术家过去的创作进行沉思，而是希望通过揭示艺术家目前纠结的各种叙事，来展望未来。乍一看，这些叙事可能会让人迷失方向。一种走近李相和作品的方法是想象自己正在穿越迷宫。迷宫，是复杂的路径的交织，由于有不同的入口、出口、隐藏的循环、陷阱和死角，它们常常令人迷茫困惑。正是出于这个原因，本次展览邀请您“穿越迷宫”，在李相和错综复杂的艺术世界中穿行。踏上这一旅程，接触各种各样的观感和体验，从困惑到启示，从不安到平静，从纠缠到清晰。

迷宫的主题在李相和的艺术实践中无处不在，几乎他的每一个系列的作品，无论是字面上还是比喻上，都呈现给观众一个谜题。他的作品是智力和象征性的游戏，让你停下来思考现实的本质和我们对现实的默认假设，以及艺术和普遍认知的过程。推动李相和孜孜不倦地创作的终极主题，是自由，而解开他的图画谜题的线索就在于我们洞悉其表象背后的本质。

李相和的每个系列新作品都揭示了对“真正的自由”的探求——作为一个自由的人（艺术家），如何充分发挥自己内在潜能，凭借自主意识活在这个世界上。他所描绘的意向和作品名称对应着他的思考和感受，例如：《迷宫》、《你只活一次》、《活着是为了什么？》《试图》、《不同的生》、《创作者的标准和你的标准》等等。他的艺术创作有着更宏大的目标，即找到一条认识自我和认识人类在这个世界上所处位置的道路。

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Born in Seoul, South Korea in 1988, Lee Shang Hwa began to pursue his artistic career in 2004 in the School of Performing Arts in Seoul, South Korea. The artist relocated to Beijing in 2008 to develop his practice studying Oil Painting in the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) in Beijing, China under Professor Ma Xiaoteng at Studio 2. Lee Shang Hwa has also obtained his Master's degree from the CAFA in 2018.

Lee Shang Hwa's works have been exhibited in China and Korea. Notable exhibitions include group shows "Private Talent" (Des Art Gallery, Beijing), "Graduation Song" (Fangyuan Art Museum, 798, Beijing), and "Korea-China Young Artists Group Exhibition" (Jeju Art Exhibition Hall, South Korea). His upcoming exhibition "Through the Maze: Navigating One Artist's Path" at Art+ Shanghai Gallery in March 2019 marks the first solo show in his artistic career.

1988 年生于韩国首尔，李相和于 2004 年开始在首尔艺术高等学校接触学习艺术。艺术家在 2008 搬至北京并进入中央美术学院油画系第二工作室学习，师从马晓腾教授。李相和于 2018 年硕士毕业并获取硕士学位。相和的作品在中国和韩国的各大展览中展出。如北京 Des Art 画廊群展“Private Talent”，毕业歌（方圆美术馆，北京 798），以及“韩中青年画家 11 人展”（济州文艺会馆第一展览室，济州，韩国）。即将在艺术+ 上海画廊开幕的《穿越迷宫：引航艺术家之路》是其艺术生涯的第一个个展。

## ABOUT ART+ SHANGHAI GALLERY

Founded in October 2007 and located along the Suzhou River within walking distance to Shanghai's famous Bund area, Art+ Shanghai Gallery is a dynamic art space dedicated to the exhibition, promotion, and development of Chinese contemporary art. Art+ Shanghai Gallery showcases a range of established and emerging contemporary artists from within China and abroad, stimulating and celebrating the diversity of the sprawling contemporary art scene. In addition to holding group and solo exhibitions, Art+ Shanghai Gallery offers art consultation services, hosts cultural events, and participates in international art fairs.

## 艺术+上海画廊简介

创办于 2007 年 10 月，坐落于上海外滩名胜之地的苏州河畔，艺术+上海画廊致力于宣传与推动中国当代艺术，是一处充满活力的艺术场馆。艺术+上海画廊不仅展示来自中外的知名艺术家，也同时支持有潜力的新兴艺术家，旨在能够不断催促和激励当代艺术舞台的多样性不断延伸扩大。除了举办艺术家群展和个展，艺术+上海画廊也同时提供艺术品咨询服务，文化活动策划服务以及参加各大国际展会等。

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