

exhibition // page 060-065

30 June  
2014  
Oil on paper on Dibond  
220 x 200 cm



Words by Sandy Wan / Translation by Patrick Ho / Images courtesy of the artist and Hong Kong Arts Centre

exhibition  
004

## XENIA HAUSNER

LOOK LEFT - LOOK RIGHT

侯絲娜

重構一個社會舞台

The Vienna-born visual artist, Xenia Hausner, has centred her creations on painting and graphic design as well as mixed media since the 1990s, when she moved to Germany. Hausner's depictions of women explore a diverse range of nationalities, backgrounds and relationships. While it is difficult to pinpoint the precise relationship between her subjects in her depiction of their behaviour and expressions, some critics have commented that her art is "more expressive than expressionist" in that the complex emotions of each subject are profoundly illustrated with powerful brushstrokes and a heightened sense of colour. In doing so, her brushwork tells a story and projects her views on humanity.

A lover of travelling, Hausner has recently been touring across cities and countries in Asia, whose kaleidoscopic mixture has thoroughly charmed her. In India, the vitality of colour led her to observe the distinct lives that lay beneath, and Hong Kong is just the same. "Asia is a land of contradictions. Here in Hong Kong, [there are] so many opposite social phenomenon in one small place." To her, Hong Kong - this little room in the world - exemplifies the problems that are occurring everywhere.

The title of the exhibition - *Look Left - Look Right* - is also the name of one of the works on show, which was inspired by road signs. Hausner explains, "I'm like an artistic person. I cannot walk on the street and cross the street without looking at the signage. These are just the street signs, but in a symbolic way, the signs say the world has the East and the West and you look on both sides. It's like a dialogue - a dialogue between East and West."

The camera serves as a beginning point, and media by which she studies a place. After recording the sights and sounds along the way, she recombines the scene by embellishing it with her own thoughts and perspectives. "I do not paint real life because in painting, life is strangely changed. But still, the starting point is what I see. The painting is not identical with the photo."

*Cape People*, a work that is overwhelming in its sense of déjà vu, was a product of such a process. The idea behind the piece was derived from the living spaces inhabited by the economically and socially disadvantaged in Hong Kong, parti-

DATA  
Look Left - Look Right  
Xenia Hausner  
11 June 10 - 8 pm  
28 Jun 10 - 3 pm  
For Gallery  
4/F - 5/F Hong Kong Arts Centre  
2 Harbour Road  
Wanchai

Cape People  
2014  
Oil on Dibond



One Cabin  
2014  
Oil on paper on Dibond  
200 x 250 cm



tioned flats and cage homes. Hausner was driven to reconstruct a small flat in her studio in Europe and invited models from the Asian community to sit for the painting. She then stood in an elevated position in order to view the models. Such an approach is reminiscent of the artist's background before becoming an artist: the studied Stage Design at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London. "I have a few helpers," she said. "There's quite a lot of preparation before you start with the painting brush. A lot of organisation and thinking and doing and arranging, you could say."

Hausner is particularly concerned with the intricacies of interpersonal relationships and interactions in various situations. She regards herself as a scientist, curious to look into social problems and to seek answers. "I am not the judge of the world but it is still a strong contrast. In Europe, you have a little less contact, more of a social system, but that's doesn't work either very well anymore," she states. "Because of globalisation... the whole European achievement is breaking down. After a few years it's one world - the East and the West... all together. Life is getting harder from a European point of view because there was always another safe world there, but it will not stay." She explained that her paintings served as fragments that show such possibilities. "Life is not black and white, but in-between. I don't give a clear solution, but a question mark."

Look Left - Look Right, 2014, Oil on paper on Dibond

