

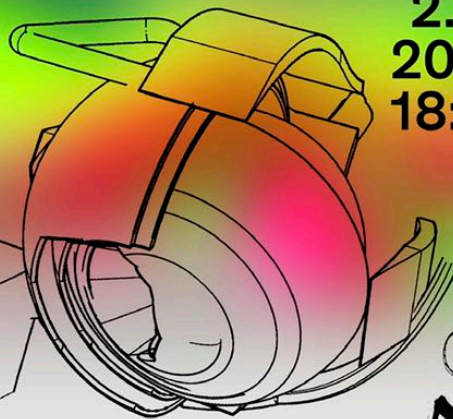
Ernst
Ludwig
Kirchner

im

Linhan
Yu

3.3.
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2.5.
2023

Eröffnung
2.3.
2023
18:00



Meraner Straße 7, 30G
10825 Berlin

NADAN
Ideas. Design. Art

Design by Siyu Mao

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and Linhan Yu

Text: Mark Gisbourne

15 February 2023

For our goal was not only the East, or rather the East was not only a country and something geographical, but it was the home and youth of the soul, it was everywhere and nowhere, it was the union of all times.

Hermann Hesse 'Die Morgenlandfahrt / Journey to the East' (1932)

In the multiplying conditions of this transitive moment, revived parameters or feelings as to making, embody a new and freshly applied sense of materials and their contemporary use. While contentious ambiguities within post-modernism as to the boundaries of drawing and painting persist, there is nonetheless one residual discontinuous constant that remains—the making of the mark.¹ The expressive use of mark making with pen, pencil or paint has always been at the traditional centre of creative artistic practices. But when speaking of the practices of two distinct and separate artists a century apart in age, that is to say, active and no longer active practitioners from antipodal continents and cultural histories, what is shared follows necessarily from the expressive use of graphism and the making of a mark. For it is through line and the conceptual and artificial use of colour (that is to say colours of the mind's eye) that connects the works of Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (1880-1938) and the contemporary Chinese artist Linhan Yu (b. 1990). In fact Kirchner saw that colour even preceded the power of line in his work, for he referred to himself as a **Farbenmensch** and colour permeated almost every aspect of his practice including his printed works.² This said as Kirchner himself observed “there is no better place to get to know an artist than in his graphic work.”³ Hence line and colour are the two essential aspects that drive forward Kirchner's art.⁴ In the current shared exhibition space the line-based graphism of the German master, his streetwalker figures, cabaret dancers, nudes, and figurative images of urban life represent the investigatory processes through drawing that served for the subsequent development for his paintings and/or the variables of print and later woodcut reproduction.. As a result they show all the freshness of Kirchner's immediate and stark staccato drawing technique where lines syncopate the Expressionist rhythm of a Nietzschean cognate.⁵ And it is the immediate use of line that is indicative in the drawings thence expanded upon through paintings that forms the works of Linhan Yu. For where the latter differs is in the use of line to mediate the space between the figurative and the abstract, rather than the compressed issues of urban space and the linear and pseudo-gothic verticality seen in Kirchner's drawings. Linhan Yu often incorporates chosen desideratum prosthetics and medically derived extraneous objects in his drawing processes, where they function as abstract denotative (less connotative) references to the body.⁶ Yet his interest is less that of the anatomical depiction but rather that of an associative bodily identity through pictorial artifice. It points to a distinction between the modernist approaches to the contoured figure, as distinct from postmodernist emphasis placed on the body as material object. For Linhan Yu emphasises the object-like aspect of the body, as against a form conventionally represented by mere

contour or figural shape.⁷ A comprehensive reevaluation of shape and form saw radical changes in the contemporary understanding of perception in the latter twentieth century.⁸ Linhan Yu also incorporates and adapts other new technologies, using multiple computer screen shots, collaged by transfer printing onto his canvases. This offers a further dimension of image-expanded graphism that is distinct from that of hand crafted and the more traditional wood block print techniques of Kirchner.

The Chinese artist's use of the line to form a stabilising pictorial grid, a modernist trope, creates an equivocal underpinning structure that in reality becomes an optical palimpsest. For the grid has superimposed layered drawn and painted contents, crosses, patterns and imaginary globular florescence(s) of various sorts. While some of the applied accretions mask the grid below, others retain a thinned use of paint transparency that appear as if to float freely on the surface of the support. The line and over painted forms operate in terms of a continuous if intermittent relationship, or, as the artist puts it, in regard his painting *Tracking* "...in fact arrangements of figurative objects, as I need a medium to carry my points and lines, rather than points and lines to carry the images, which is an essential reversal." Therefore the use of line in this respect instigates that which is polemical and disputable throughout Linhan Yu artistic production. On the contrary his synthetic use of colour is that of personal intuitive consciousness, since colour becomes artifice to the extent that it is taken from the eye of the artist's mind, rather than as copied perceptions and transcriptions of the natural world. This aligns Linhan Yu's use of synthetic colour choice to Kirchner's psychical observation in 1910 "...art is made by man. His own figure is the center of all art...Therefore one must begin with the man himself."⁹ As a reader we might take this to mean that the sentient consciousness of our mind shapes the world as it is presented to us, appearance and colour sensations must be assimilated and thereafter reintegrated into a newly formed pictorial expression. As the linear relates to planar concerns of configured space, to those inferences of directed forms of inflection, colour relates to the nature of light—as line creates tension colour generates tone. To Linhan Yu colour is therefore abstractive and fluid and not obliged to conform to the contours or fixed considerations of local colour. His use of colour operates through visualised examples of mark making expressed as extended gesture in terms of material non-confinement. In considering these two artists born a century apart, with different historical paradigms, we cannot expect to create total a realistic synthesis. Kirchner and Linhan Yu work in different material scales and frames of intellect, but what may be said is that they share in the universal language of mark making. It may seem a rather banal and neutral observation for what first begins in childhood, namely the making of a mark. Yet as per the epigraph the journey is everywhere as nowhere, and in the journeying that by perchance one finds the synthesis that is union of all times.

ENDNOTES

¹ The term discontinuous in this context refers to Michel Foucault's usage "things are no longer perceived, described, expressed, characterized, classified, and known in the same way" See *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (*L'archéologie du savoir*, 1969), Eng. Trans., A M Sheridan Smith. London and New York, Routledge, 2002. Deleuze argues that Foucault begins the debate on the modern theory-practice of 'multiplicities', Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, Paris, 1986, (p. 14)

² Jill Lloyd 'Colors that shine, even in the Darkest Corner', *Ernst Ludwig Kirchner*, New Museum, New York, Prestel Verlag, 2019, pp.14-31

³ See Louis de Marsalle, 'Über Kirchners Graphik Genius, [Ernst Ludwig Kirchner]. Zeitschrift für werdende und alte Kunst,, Vol 3, Issue 2, 1921, pp. 250–263. Drawing as seen in the work of Kirchner precedes and is part of his development of prints and woodcuts,. See Günther Gercken, 'The Role of Printmaking in Ernst Luwig Kirchner's Oeuvre. Kunsthandel Jörg Mass, Berlin, 2014, not paginated.

⁴ See the analyses of Bruce Davis, Stephanie Barron, *German Expressionist Prints and Drawings: Essays*, Vol. 1, The Robert Gore Rifkind Center for German Expressionist Studies, Los Angeles Contemporary Museum of Art, Los Angeles and Munich, Prestel, 1989.

⁵ Kirchner as leader of the 1905 Expressionist art movement took the name of the group **Die Brücke** from *Also Sprach Zarathustra: Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen* (Thus Spake Zarathustra; A Book for All and None, 1883-92), and Nietzsche has remained the philosopher most associated with the Expressionists and the movement of Expressionism across, literature, art and film.

⁶ See *Illusion of Doubles: Linhan Yu*, catalogue, Hive Center of Contemporary Art, Beijing, 2019-

⁷ The idea of the 'embodied line' rather than contours of linear inflection was part of the extended perception in post-war phenomenology, Maurice Merleau Ponty's *The Phenomenology of Perception* (1946) and another famous short text 'The Eye and the Mind' in his book of essays *The Primacy of Perception*, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1964,

⁸ See Rudolf Arnheim, 'Shape' and 'Form', *Art and Visual Perception: The Psychology of the Creative Eye*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London (1954, updated 1974), 2004, pp. 42-95, 96-161. This publication has been in continuous print for the last half century and is among most influential in determining modern understandings as to the distinction between shape and form in the post-war period.

⁹ Norbert Nobis, *Der Blick auf Fränzi und Marcella: Zwei Modelle der Brücke-Künstler Heckel, Kirchner und Pechstein*, Sprengel Museum Hannover und Kunstmuseum and Stiftung Moritzburg, Halle, 2010, p 17







Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (DE)

* 1880 † 1938

The painter Ernst Ludwig Kirchner was born on May 6, 1880 in Aschaffenburg and was one of the most important representatives of Expressionism.

Born the son of a paper chemist, he studied architecture in Dresden but chose not to pursue this profession instead joining the Dresden artists' group Brücke in 1905. Heckel Schmidt-Rottluff and Max Pechstein were also members of this group.

Kirchner developed from Impressionism to Expressionism during this period. His favorite subjects were portraits, nudes, landscapes, cityscapes and vaudeville. Since he had not much success with his paintings in Dresden, he moved to Berlin in 1911. But even there his situation did not improve significantly. However, his style of painting changed progressively. The round shapes became jagged and the colors lost their luminosity. In addition, street scenes were added, which today belong to the most important works of this artist.

Max Pechstein, with whom he later founded a painting school, directed a Brücke exhibition in 1911, in which Kirchner also participated. The painting school had limited impact, and when he also wrote a chronicle of the Brücke artists' group in 1913, highlighting himself very prominently, there was a break with the other members, which in turn led to the dissolution of the entire group.

Kirchner spent his summer vacations on the island of Fehmarn, where a large number of his works were created. When World War I broke out, he volunteered for service in 1915, but a short time later had to take leave for psychological reasons and became dependent on medication. Despite his war experience and his illness, he created large-scale works of art in a sanatorium. His partner Erna Schilling sold his works in Berlin in 1917, while he was living in Switzerland himself and suffering from paralysis. She thus created the basis of his commercial success and financial independence. Through a Swiss physician, he managed to withdraw from his drug addiction. He was becoming increasingly known as a difficult person.

In 1937, the National Socialists degenerated his works. Over 600 were subsequently sold or destroyed. A year later, on June 15, 1938, in a heavy depression, he took his own life with a gun.



E. L. Kirchner: Tanzende nackte Mädchen 1910, 460 x 523 mm, Deckfarben und Feder, zweimal signiert und datiert „1902“, Rückseitig Baseler Nachlaßstempel



E. L. Kirchner: Amerikanische Tanzpaare 1910/11, 320 x 430mm, Tuschfeder, laviert, Rückseitig Baseler Nachlaßstempel



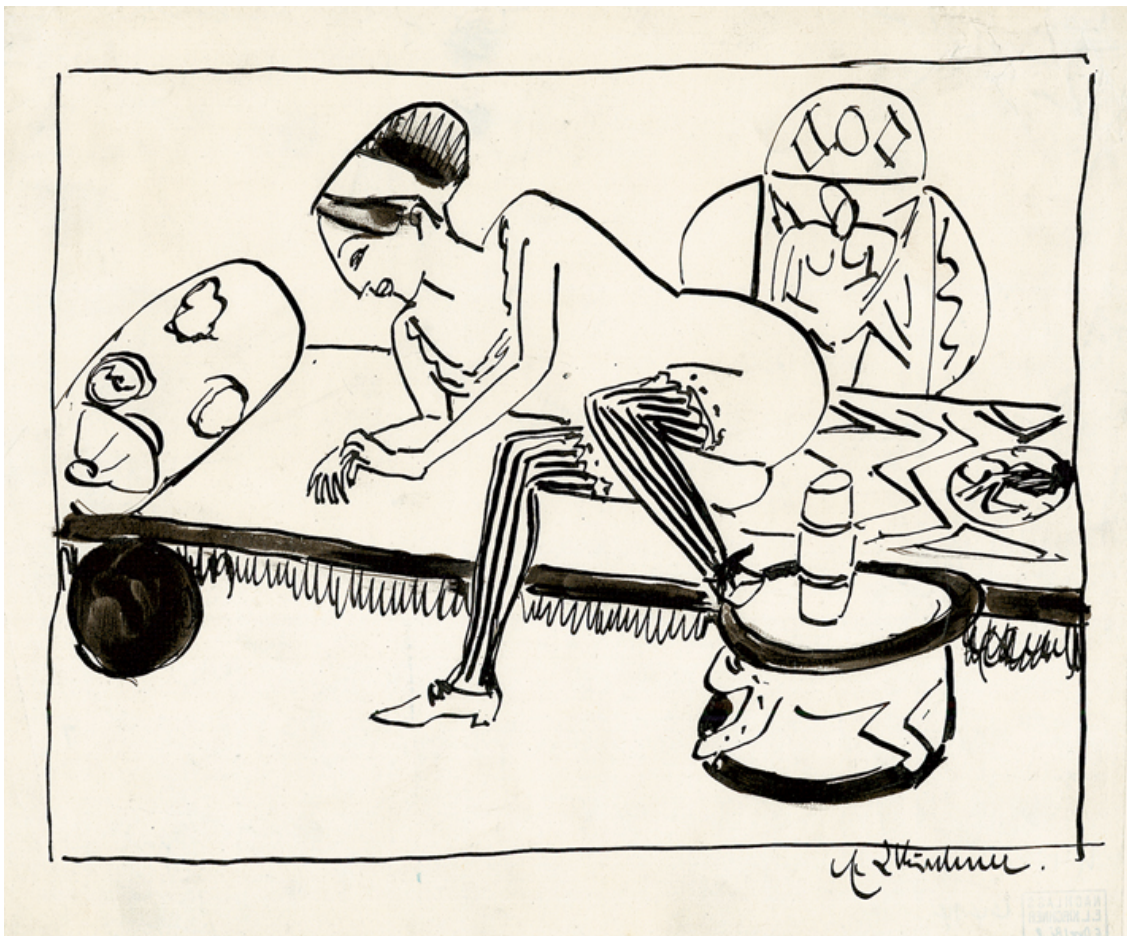
E. L. Kirchner: Akt auf dem Sofa 1912, 460 x 523 mm, 340 x 265, Rohrfeder, rückseitig Baseler Nachlaßstempel, rückseitig: sitzender Mädchenakt, Bleistift



E. L. Kirchner: Folkloretänzerin mit Tamburin 1913/14, 203 x 155mm, Bleistift



E. L. Kirchner: Drei Tänzerinnen, 1912, 200 x 278 mm, Holzschnitt, signiert, beschriftet "Handdruck"



E. L. Kirchner: Dodo mit gestreiften Strümpfen, 1910, 260 x 320 mm, Tuschfeder, laviert

Linhan Yu (CHN)

1990 born in Beijing China

2009-2013 China Central Academy Of Fine Arts, Beijing, China (BA)

2014-2017 Hochschule für Künste Bremen, Deutschland (Diplom)

2017-2018 Meisterschüler at Stephan Baumkötter, Hochschule für Künste Bremen

Solo exhibitions (Selected)

2021 „Perspective“, Hive center for contemporary art, Beijing, China

„Krempel deinen Körper um, Migrant bird Space, Berlin, Germany

2020 „madness shared by two“ Galerie Herold, Bremen, Germany

2019 „9 Tage Schöpfung, Bella Martha Kunsthaus, Grafrath, Germany

„Illusion of Doubles“, Hive center for contemporary art, Beijing, China

2018 „Kausalkette“, Künstlerhaus Sootbörn, Hamburg, Germany

2017 Beiläufig, c/o Schocke, Hamburg, Germany

Hive-Becoming XXV Faint Murmur: Linhan Yu Solo exhibition, Hive Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China

Group exhibitions (Selected)

2022 Appeal to the Infinite Within, Hive center for contemporary art, Beijing, China The 45th Bremen Art Prize, Bremen, Germany

Self-dismiss, Gallery Vacancy, Shanghai, China

2021 A Couple, Hive center for contemporary art, Beijing, China

Whitebox choice selection, Whitebox Art Center, 798, Beijing, China

Zhi Xu, Nali patio, sanlitun, Beijing, China

2020 Stubenhocker: Post, Galerie Roy, Zülpich, Germany

Optimism over Despair, Sinartsgallery, The Hague, Holland

Loading....., Art Power 100, Beijing, China

2019 „STORY“, Beijing Contemporary Art Expo, Agricultural Exhibition Center, Beijing, China

Lüneburg award, Albert König Museum, Unterlüß, Germany

2018 Resonanz, Kunstraum Villa Friede, Bonn, Germany

paper/work, POP UP Raum, Hamburg, Germany

MESH, Karin Hollweg award, Weserburg museum, Bremen, Germany

EVIDENCE, san't elmo, Naples, Italy

Gopea 2018, Villa De Bank, Enschede, Netherlands

2017 unfolding exit, DA+Space, Shanghai, China

Jahresgaben, Ratingen museum, Ratingen, Germany

Ottersberg award, Kunstverein Ottersberg, Ottersberg, Germany

2016 One Month:After the Materialization of the Art Object, Cologne

Across Ocean-Color Co-occurrence, Panama's center for contemporary art, The national gallery of the republic of panama, Panama city, Ciudad de Panama and Nationale Gallery, San Jose, Republik Costa Rica

Awards

2019 Art Power 100, Youth Power 2019, China

2019 Residency Bella Martha Kunsthaus, Grafrath, Deutschland

2018 OPEA Award, GOPEA Foundation

2017 Wallart Award, Today Art Museum

2010-2012 Scholarship, China Central Academic of Fine Arts



Linhan Yu: Tracking 2 2022, 500 x 200cm, Acrylic on canvas, screen print, marker



Linhan Yu: Reagent 5 2023, 50 x 80cm, Acrylic on canvas, screen print, marker, collage



Linhan Yu: Reagent 1 2023, 200 x 200cm, Acrylic on canvas, screen print, marker
Linhan Yu: Reagent 2 2023, 200 x 200cm, Acrylic on canvas, screen print, marker

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Linhan Yu: New body 3 2022, 150 x 230cm, Acrylic on canvas, screen print, airbrush

Über uns

NADAN ist eine unabhängige Kulturplattform mit Sitz in Berlin. Wir fördern zeitgenössische junge Kunst, Design, Kreativität und Ideen. Wir glauben an den Dialog. Unsere Generation ist aufgerufen, Altes neu zu denken, Vergangenheit in neuer Weise zu entdecken und der Welt mittels Schönheit und Würde den Mut zu neuen Gedanken zu geben.

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