



International Face

2004

Oil on canvas

280 x180 cm

INTERNATIONAL FACES

Since 2001, Meng Huang has been painting a series of human landscapes titled International Face. In these works, once again, the artist topples the concept of the common aesthetical and perceptual sense. In most of his ca. 280 x 180 cm canvasses, Meng portrays the ever-transforming facial expressions of his favourite model, Jiang Zhenyu, thus revealing the emotional and psychological complexity of his old friend and neighbour who is afflicted by Down's Syndrome. Based on a Chinese popular saying, people suffering from

this disease are called „international faces“ (guoji lian), and this in relation to the similarity of their features independent of their nationality or ethnic group. In the current historical phase in which China is coursing at a hectic speed toward globalization, Meng Huang's International Face becomes an emblematic warning against the increasingly superficial standardisation of knowledge and the loss of cultural identity. Questioning the idea of so-called „normality“...

Nataline Colonello



FROAZEN STREAM

2013

Oil von canvas

180 x 280 cm



CROSSING BEIJING NO.1

SHANG ZHUANG

2009

oil on canvas

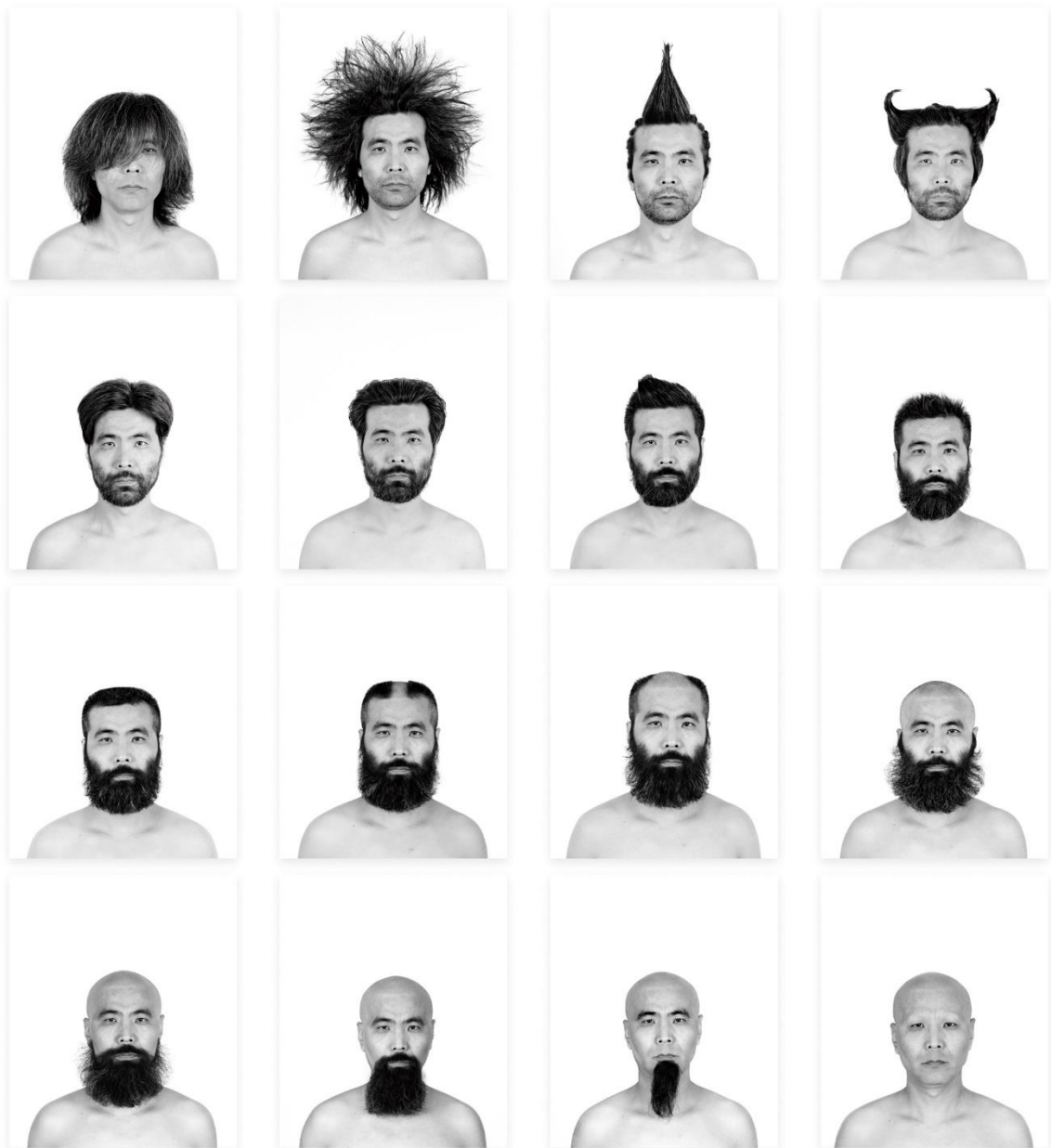
400 x 220 cm

„AND WHAT DO YOU THINK? LANDSCAPES“

A tiny, doubtful starting point onto the large, white canvas; then a restless pattering of small, anxious, incessantly adjusted brushstrokes follow one after another, covering one another, slowly coating the support in something that, from afar, might look like an oil slick inexorably expanding on clear water. Little by little, a chaotic forest of muddy signs outlines a tree, a wave, a bulrush. One by one, concealed elements of the artist's memory gradually come into sight and grow in visual and psychological impact, eventually turning into an extremely powerful and at the same time poetic landscape saturated with personal, social and cultural references.

Meng Huang is an enchanting storyteller enamoured with richly detailed subplots that he incessantly questions during the pictorial narration. Each of Meng Huang's works recounts a fragment of an enthralling and conflictual tragedy wrapped in mystery.

Nataline Colonello | 2008



GO

2009–2012

edition of 7

series of 16 b/w photographs

16x75 x 62.5 cm

Life is right, in any case (R. M. Rilke)

(...) Because Meng Huang is a great talker, he is capable of attracting people's attention with odd, often grotesque tales, which are sometimes hilarious and autobiographical. His life seems so rich in unpredictable, amusing events as to build up a supply of endless stories.

The Chinese language becomes sparkling and flowery, often with inserts of the Henan dialect, full-bodied and well-grounded and it is a pity foreigners cannot enjoy it.

(...) The experience of landscapes, rain, sun, loneliness and encounters, of hardships and prolonged interruptions, would build up an authentic story of life, in Meng Huang's case of 'art'.

The vicissitudes of his life may either prevent him from fulfilling this dream, or delay it, or he may take a farther step already suggested through his statements: that "art too is just a way of living ... and in any real thing we are closer to it than in the true semi-artistic professions, which while pretending to be close to art, practically deny it and prove its existence wrong." (R. M. Rilke). Rilke too, though proclaiming the sovereignty of life, devoted himself body and soul to literature, a practice that risks being far away from art only when not supported by the need to create, by the deep knowledge of oneself and the acceptance of one's solitude.

Monica Dematté | Anguillara Sabazia | March 23, 2006 |

Translated by Silvana Dematté