Ding Shilun Paints Life's Absurdities at Bernheim Gallery

8 FEBRUARY 2024 | EXHIBITIONS

Ding Shilun, *Medals of Merit* (2024). Oil on linen. 110 x 90 cm. Courtesy Bernheim Gallery.

Ding Shilun, *The Intimate* (2024). Oil on linen. 230 x 190 cm. Courtesy Ding Shilun.

Ding Shilun, *The Intimate* (2024) (detail). Oil on linen. 230 x 190 cm. Courtesy Ding Shilun.

Ding Shilun, *Annunciation* (2024) (detail). Oil on linen. 230 x 190 cm. Courtesy Bernheim Gallery.

Ding Shilun, *Medals of Merit* (2024). Oil on linen. 110 x 90 cm. Courtesy Bernheim Gallery.

The young painter Ding Shilun opens his solo exhibition *MIRAGE* (7 February–22 March 2024), inaugurating Maria Bernheim's debut gallery space in London.

There are moments of lightning drama around this exhibition where figures appear tormented, their bodies writhing and hurling electrified across the canvas. Spirals fill their eyes in lieu of pupils, appearing in a state of hypnosis. Others are more meditative, caught in moments of reflection or euphoria.

In *Medals of Merit* (2024), medals are fastened into the bare skin of a cargo pant-wearing character who wields a gun. A female figure guides his hand toward an unknown target. On the right-hand side, a character sits slumped, arms crossed, looking down while four birds place a gauzy veil over his head.

This exhibition brims with artistic mastery—swathes of white wash and sharp bursts of colour compliment more refined details of a chess board, music scores, and hairstyles throughout.

While all the canvases in the exhibition are oil on linen, there are several small framed watercolour-on-paper works that we loved—some of which seemed almost Roald Dahl-esque in their style and absurdity.

Ding's works have been included in permanent collections at Hirshhorn Museum, Washington DC; Zabludowicz Collection, London; ICA Miami; and Yan Du Collection.

OCULA ADVISOR
Simon Fisher
CONTACT