

TRANSITIONS: XI LIU & FILIP LAV

Duo Show

30 January - 22 March 2025

Transitions brings together the works of Filip Lav and Xi Liu, two artists exploring the concept of transition through different visual languages and approaches. For both, it becomes a central theme: for Filip Lav, it represents a cultural passage from Viennese heritage, while for Xi Liu, it is connected to the memory of a moment and the frames that compose it, capturing the fleeting nature of an instant.

Transitions highlights both the similarities and differences between the two artists: while both explore the theme of change and movement, Filip Lav does so through a collective and cultural lens, while Xi Liu focuses on the private and individual dimension. The exhibition invites reflection on how memory can transform and interact with the present, offering new spaces for interpretation.

Filip Lav, born in Vienna in 1991, creates a pictorial universe filled with performative and conceptual contrasts. His Viennese roots are deeply reflected in his aesthetic. Architecture plays a central role in his personal research, as both of his parents are architects. Lav develops a desire to conquer spatial dimensions in his work, exploring the relationship between surface and structure.

Filip Lav's artistic practice intertwines evocative elements of 19th-century romanticism with the fragmented geometry of modernist abstraction. His paintings juxtapose the symbolic legacy of romanticism with the cubist language of minimal abstraction. His works, characterized by an aesthetic that blends the spirituality of Orthodox engravings with the artisanal vitality of the Arts&Crafts movement, feature textures that evoke fabrics or tiles. However, his painting reflects on the spatiality and structure of the compositions, transforming them into portals suspended between tradition and contemporary art. Each composition comprises multiple combined rectangular canvases: initially sourced from different works or painted apart from one another, these parts come together in unexpected combinations, where fragments of diverse identities intersect, creating a charged quality.

A key reference for Filip Lav is to Gustav Klimt. As leader of the Vienna Secession movement, Klimt unreservedly broke down the traditional boundaries between the arts and founded a new style (*Stilkunst*), shaping every aspect of artistic creation in the pursuit of a unitary and universal harmony of abstract lines and decorations. This search for a unified artistic space is also reflected in Filip Lav's work, where painting engages with materials and non-pictorial languages, evoking the decorative quality and elegance of the whole, without losing sight of its conceptual depth. His work explores the tension between surface and structure, uniting symbols and writings from different traditions, from the ancient to the contemporary.

Lav explores the boundary between the spirituality of forgotten myths and the secularization of modernity, intertwining symbols and worldviews, addressing the shift from religious spheres to scientific thinking. This cultural and temporal stratification becomes a means to explore the connection between cultures and beliefs, merging aesthetics and meaning.

The artistic practice of **Xi Liu** (b. 1998) moves between the representation of everyday objects and a more abstract reflection on the physical, emotional, and psychic dynamics that permeate human relationships.

"I experience and narrate complex states of forces between a single individual and a collective, trying to discuss the relationship between the individual, the group, and the boundary."

Xi Liu explores the concept of "compression" (*squeeze*), an omnipresent force that manifests in interpersonal and social relationships through tensions, imbalances, and fluctuations. In her canvases, this sensation is visually narrated through distorted, tilted, and oscillating forms: a dance of visibility and obscurity, connection and separation.

Her works are characterized by a strong dynamism, an idea of movement that permeates each composition and amplifies the perception of tension and transformation. The recurring use of fireworks in her work evokes explosions of energy and fragility—moments of great intensity that dissolve quickly.

Some of the works for the exhibition are inspired by bands playing music, where the dynamism is captured and brought into a single moment, condensing the temporal energy of an instant. This visual process also includes the overlaying of many time's frames, as if Xi Liu is able to layer and freeze rhythm and movement in a single pictorial space.

Her work invites reflection on the complexity of the forces that shape individuals, collectives, and the boundaries between them, creating an immersive dimension full of conflicts and openings. A temporal and spatial *transition* - condensed in a single image.