



Art Santa Fe

The Liu Dao collective starts their summer off in fine American style. Art Santa Fe, held at the Santa Fe Community Convention Center from July 7-10th, brings together an eclectic, and wide-ranging group of galleries to present one of the most exciting exhibition experiences around. The fair is put on by Redwood Media Group, an art-focused promotional and event group whose mission is to help artists and galleries gain exposure "...through mentoring, fine art shows, publications, marketing and more". Redwood is responsible for numerous fine art shows including Artexpo New York, SPECTRUM Indian Wells, Art San Diego, Art Santa Fe, SPECTRUM Miami, [SOLO], and [FOTO SOLO]. They also have several publications including Art Business News magazine and DECOR Magazine. Since their inception, Redwood has hosted tens of thousands of people at their shows and launched the careers of countless artists.

If you've never seen artwork from the Liu Dao collective before you may have a flurry of questions. You've probably started with the standard *who, how, why* trio of artistic inquiry. You'll find plenty of that information as you read on, but just to give you the gist of things- Liu Dao (the Chinese translation for *island6*) is a collective comprised of about fifteen people (some occasionally come and go as artists so often do). Members of this group are mostly Chinese but there have also been plenty of western painters, curators, art directors and technicians as well.

The group was founded in 2006 and has spent the years since artistically contemplating the clashes between traditional and contemporary culture: the good, the bad and the outright hilarious. That last part is one of the aspects we believe has allowed us to stand out, garnering international recognition and critical acclaim. There's plenty of room in the world for dark, serious and stark artistic work, even some of our pieces could be considered a member of that family. Most of what we make however, is soft, light-hearted, and romantically optimistic about our world, our era and the people that surround us.

If you're one of *those* people though, and looking for some darker humor, look no further than most of the blurbs that accompany visual artworks. These are the short texts that compliment each piece, something akin to the artwork's *voice*. They are, *if you'll excuse a cliché analogy*, the yin to the artwork's yang (or maybe it's the other way around?). These texts are the often gritty, occasionally morose, side to the work's overall concept. If the visual artwork is your coddling mother, think of the blurb as your dad telling you to go get a real job. Maybe neither has the optimum advice but together they might offer a richer version of the world.

"The Spins" for example, is a playful laser artwork that shows a woman lazily dancing around in circles. What looks to be a light-hearted and simple animation though has a bit more to it when you read the blurb. It offers up some musings on the overly stimulus-rich modern world. What a dizzying affair it can be sometimes just to make it through a day bombarded by all the visual advertisements, promotions, billboards and images etc. "Pug Luck" is... well... *a pug* looking at the viewer. The humor of the piece lies mostly behind the fact that pugs always look funny. The blurb however, offers a something on the torrid true history of the pug breed, from their origins as the privileged pets of China's former empress (and once imperial concubine) Cixi.

This *dark blurb* thing isn't a rule though, sometimes the dynamic is turned on its head and an overtly pessimistic visual artwork is made lighter with the accompanying text. "Picture Perfect" and "Our Brave Discovery" are examples. The former shows a woman snapping photographs of a smoggy Shanghai skyline. The text focuses on the importance of setting goals and being relentless in their pursuit. "Our Brave Discovery" shows cleaning ladies wiping off the windows inside a skull. No doubt it looks sinister, but what the artists really wanted to convey was the sense that each person possesses their own reality unique to them, whether it be right, wrong, happy, sad or strange.

There are plenty of other Liu Dao artworks with a multitude of messages, themes, concepts and undertones. While this is meant to explain a bit about that, it is ultimately up to a viewer to ascribe what that piece means to them. If it is indeed true that every person has their own reality, then each artwork too must have endless versions of itself, all waiting to be discovered, adored, and given life... perhaps by you. Thanks for adding another version. The only way to know for sure is to have a look, and think it over (with a stiff drink of course).

Dates: July 7th - July 10th, 2016

Organization: Redwood Media Group

Booth: 410

Coordination: Yeung Sin Ching, Ryan Nimmo, Thomas Charvériat

Venue: Santa Fe Convention Center

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