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TECHNOLOGY AND SOUL

FROM THE ARCHIVES

GUAN XIAO

Text by Renate Wiehager

The MERCEDES-BENZ ART COLLECTION is one of the most important corporate art collections in the world. The director, Renate Wiehager, regularly presents highlights from the archive. This time: the Chinese artist GUAN XIAO, who creates multimedia works that reveal profound truths about our digitalised world

A simulated sunset in a light box on the wall; in front of that, car rims decorated with plastic flowers: "The Sunset" installation by Guan Xiao is a surprise, only gradually revealing itself. It is an invitation to reflect and linger.

Two polyurethane-covered wood sculptures stand in front of the light area; the rims are adorned with Google lettering and artificial floral decorations. Guan Xiao stages the surface of the light box as an interface where the tangible and intangible, the online and offline, the East and West, meet. The other objects in the installation are hybrid entities that do not belong to any sphere we are familiar with. Fossils that no longer bear witness to past life. Wheels that no longer drive anything. Artificial nature that knows no seasons. You could even say it is an apocalyptic romanticism that draws you in.

The Chinese artist combines personal history, cultural background, media animations and found artefacts from the consumer world in her space-related constellations. Her multimedia works embody the immediacy of our time: "You can find almost anything that interests you online. Everything spreads out before your eyes – within a second. Things meet each other and things meet you," says Guan Xiao about the starting point of her sculptures and video works. Her work was already awarded a prize at the abc Berlin art fair in 2014. Since then, Guan Xiao has taken part in numerous international exhibitions spanning Antwerp, New York and Vienna.

The Mercedes-Benz Art Collection has spent over a decade intensively researching the recent history of Chinese art. The rapidly growing number of artists' studios, academies, museums, galleries and private collections in China have been visited in the course of this research. Around 50 works by around 20 Chinese artists, including Guan Xiao, many of which are multi-part, now enhance the international profile of the collection.

Find out more about the MERCEDES-BENZ ART COLLECTION and current exhibitions at mercedes-benz.art

Guan Xiao, “The Sunset”, 2012. LED light box, artificial flowers, coloured metal, car rims, wax.
Courtesy of Guan Xiao; Antenna Space, Shanghai; Kraupa-Tuskany Zeidler, Berlin.

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