

Capsule Shanghai | Artissima 2023 Voice Over | Textual Materials**Artist's quote/statement**

Hai-Hsin Huang draws the amusing and awkward moments and focuses on all kinds of intriguing plots or the theatrical atmosphere from daily life.

**Artissima 2023 | Disegni Section | DS2
Press Release*****Huang Hai-Hsin: I've Been to Italy***

Capsule Shanghai is delighted to present Taiwanese artist Huang Hai-Hsin's first solo project in Italy on the occasion of Artissima 2023. Featuring a brand-new body of works on paper specifically conceived for the Disegni section and inspired by the artist's recent journey through Italy, this series of drawings pays homage to Italy's architectural, artistic, and human landscapes.

In the summer of 2023, Huang Hai-Hsin embarked on a contemporary Grand Tour that took her to Milan, Venice, Padua, Florence, Rome, and Turin, among others. The result is a visual diary featuring drawings of various sizes, at times realized *en plein air*, that unfold the peculiarities of these cities and their inhabitants. First noted by her well-trained eye and then transferred onto the paper in vibrant pen or pencil, these scenes come to life through a mixture of focused contemplation and delightful spontaneity. Significant patience and time are required to find the right situation that triggers or resonates with Huang's imagination, but her sincere curiosity about and openness to the incessant flow of life allow her to be constantly surprised, inspired, and challenged, and thus to grasp the subtle textures of a city or a figure that most people would hardly notice.

Huang's scenes are vital, endowed with a highly performative, almost cinematographic nature, as if they were stills in a single film – independent yet interconnected – that continue beyond the limits of the paper and link all the drawings in an unbroken chain of musings. Bound by a plot in which nothing is static, fact and fiction blur and overlap, thereby prompting the real to disclose its surreal side.

The new drawings on view at Artissima — no matter whether they are playfully arranged on the walls, or displayed chronologically in the artist's leporello book — are grouped by theme. Some works portray places, whether iconic or anonymous, that are activated by the artist's gaze or other people's actions. Others feature objects selected from among the wide variety of visual and conceptual inputs accumulated during Huang's Italian trip, from cultural relics and souvenir statues to religious clothing and replicas of masterpieces. Most eye-catching are the works that depict a colorful panoply of humanity, outsiders turned into the unaware - although aspiring and pleased – protagonists, or at least a significant part, of the drawings.

Tanned men with flashy gold necklaces, extravagant ladies dressed to impress, clumsy tourists with their selfie-sticks up in the air posing in front of landmarks, crowds diligently queuing, and muscled, statuesque Venetian gondoliers are set against the backdrop of almost anthropomorphized fragments of architecture, whose monumental scale is often tamed by a dash of cuteness. The buildings match the mood of the people who inhabit them; these tragicomic subjects are an open book to Huang.

Huang Hai-Hsin has the striking ability to grasp the peculiar expressiveness of every individual, turning a general type into an individual character and vice versa without openly and absolutely revealing which we are seeing. The essential geometries she uses to portray an individual are enough to draw the contours of a personality or the characteristics of a social group without completely resolving and thus ossifying the mysteries of the human psyche. Perhaps it is no accident that one of the artists Huang admires most is Giotto, the first master to succeed in representing the human figure through the expressiveness of gestures, feelings, and moods. In Huang's work, figures have a precise physical characterization that corresponds to a precise emotional condition.

Huang's gaze is another crucial component in her artistic process, because it links her starting point and ongoing creative process with the final appearance of an artwork. Completely devoid of any sort of prejudgment or sense of mockery or derision about the subjects portrayed, Huang is both entertainer and entertained, both behind the scenes and on stage. No matter which role she plays, her practice is a celebration of life with all its unexpected twists and turns, exaggerations and paradoxes that make the plain memorable. She overturns social paradigms and canons of good behavior and respectability, while establishing new personal "standards."

The strength of Huang Hai-Hsin's work lies in her in-between role: she doesn't judge her characters for their flaws, their larger-than-life aspirations, and their irrational confidence or awkwardness. She is not afraid of revealing their embarrassing poses or their unconscious need to be whatever they want to be. She empathizes with them, recognizing that they may be the most human – sometimes perhaps too human – part of the temporary collection of things that inhabit our world.

Text by Manuela Lietti

Gallery Contacts

Website: www.capsuleshanghai.com

E-mail: info@capsuleshanghai.com

Tel: +86 021 64170700



The materials should be supplied to Artissima free of copyright restrictions and accompanied by the release.