

Shafei Xia

## Passando davanti alla mia finestra

23 June – 23 July 2022

Opening Thursday 23 June,  
3–11 pm

“I like staying home. With my parents, I moved many times from one home to the next, and as I grew up I continued to change my lodgings. As a child I would spend time inside the home by myself, and the cardboard boxes became my refuge. I used them to build beautiful dollhouses, with which I played for hours and hours.”

P420 is pleased to present *Passando davanti alla mia finestra*, (Walking by my window), the first solo show in the gallery by Shafei Xia (ShaoXing, China, 1989) after the experience in the P420 project room in December 2020, titled *Welcome to my show*.

The exhibition offers an opportunity to discover the recent research of Shafei Xia, who alongside the paintings on mounted sandal paper also presents many ceramic works for the first time, developed and produced during the artist's residency at Museo Carlo Zauli in Faenza.

As Sabrina Bernardi, author of the essay that accompanies the show points out, for the occasion, the large windows of the gallery take on the role of physical and ideal boundaries of Shafei's world. As unwitting voyeurs, the viewers can glimpse portions of domestic life from the outside. Crossing the threshold, they then plunge into her universe made of comfortable beds on which to stretch out and dream, refined dressing tables in which to see one's reflection and fix one's makeup, richly decorated chairs on which to sit while enjoying cakes and hot tea. The imaginary and real worlds mingle, the dollhouses become a stage of the artist's daydreams, as she organizes the ranks of the characters that have been part of her production for some time.

The pig, the tiger, the fish – Shafei's favorite animals, allegories of human feelings – though they have already been utilized for some time, now mutate and follow the evolution of the artist. The fierce tiger, in fact, has been tamed and becomes a faithful, playful companion. It turns in the action of the game and roams the gallery, spying on us. “Over the years I have found resemblances between animals and human beings, we are tigers to get to know, misunderstood pigs, turtles that crawl around,” Shafei explains.

In the exhibition time seems to stand still. The delicate faces, the small, whimsical details, the dreamy and allegorical explorations and amorous games remind us of certain youthful paintings by Francisco Goya, an artist who was able to explore very different themes, in relation to particular events in his life. Like the *Maja desnuda*, the female figures of Shafei, far from mythological Venuses offer themselves without shame to the viewer. The omnipresent love in the works becomes carnal at times, symbolic at others, gradually revealed to us as we walk through the exhibition.

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Shafei Xia was born in ShaoXing, China, in 1989. After graduating in set design from ChongQing University, in 2013 she turned down a steady job in her native city to move to Shanghai, where after various experiences her first sale of a work enabled her to “catch the scent of freedom in the air,” as she writes. She moved to Bologna and earned a degree at the Fine Arts Academy in 2020. In 2019 she won the Talent Prize of Fondazione Zucchelli per l'Arte.

Among her recent exhibitions:  
Tabula Rasa Gallery, London, UK

(July 2022); *quel jour sommes-nous?*, Tokonoma, Kassel, DE (2022); *Il giardino dell'arte. Opere, collezioni*, Centro Pecci per l'Arte Contemporanea, Prato, IT (2022); *Fiaba d'autunno*, Museo Carlo Zauli, Faenza, IT (solo, 2021); *Shafei Xia – Assolo #1*, Francesca Antonini arte contemporanea, Roma, IT (solo, 2021); *Principessa Shafei*, Palazzo Borromeo, Milano, IT (solo, 2021); *DANAE REVISITED*, Fondazione Francesco Fabbri, Pieve di Soligo (TV), IT (2021); *Welcome to my show*, P4202 – Project room (solo, 2020); *Abitiamo il mondo*,

Lunetta11, Mombarcaro (CN), IT (2020); *Decadent gaming*, Linseed, Shanghai, CH (2020); *Rifugio*, Nelumbo Open Project, Bologna, IT (2020); *Sedimenti #2*, Sala del torrione, Castelnuovo Rangone (MO), IT (2020); *L'oro d'Oriente. Fusioni, migrazioni, contaminazioni*, Crete piece unique, Bologna, IT (2020); *Arte fiera*, Fondazione Zucchelli stand, Bologna, IT (2020); *Habitat. Dialoghi tra arte e natura a Palazzo Magnani*, Palazzo Magnani, Bologna, IT (2019); *La natura delle cose*, Mtn\Museo Temporaneo Navile, Bologna, IT (2019).

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