

Hardly anyone nowadays would think to deny it: since the late 70s China has undergone a transition, that is both titillating and without precedent in modern history. Starting out as a self-contained, socialist society it formed itself into one of the world's leading economies, financier of global demand for consumer goods. The average wealth of China's population has centupled and its society has evolved accordingly. However, it has maintained a delicate balancing act between established values and progress. Facing today's global challenges is no longer imaginable without its contribution.

For many years, Ekaterina Zacharova has been studying the role of the modern human in today's interconnected society. To that effect, she has undertaken numerous journeys to metropolis all over the world and absorbed the local energies and attitudes she found into her work. Visiting Shanghai and Hong Kong, two of China's largest urban centers, she put out a cycle of paintings, that aims to capture a vibrant, yet natural symbiosis of clashing influences.

For the first time she has incorporated a playful approach towards depicting angles and perspective. One painting, depicting Shanghai's imposing skyline, appears to morph and change shape to a staggering effect. Another scene portrays a young woman in front of a tangle of escalators : direction and gravity are impossible to discern, the girl remains the only one, who could be certain of her destination. This vertiginous composition could be a metaphor for China's own evolution: turbulent, dizzying, yet self-determined. It's an evolution, that is hard to grasp in its entirety and one, that can not be followed by anyone. Another overarching theme of Zacharova's series is one of modern society's universal dilemmas: while advancements in digital technology has granted us access to a wide repository of information, that can be accessed by anyone indiscriminately, it has simultaneously narrowed our field of vision to our digital devices. A smartphone screen has become a window to reality, that has come to feel more genuine, than the reality happening outside our actual windows. A nocturnal scene, set at a bar, poignantly illustrates this: the patrons with their smartphones in hand, their tables positioned in front of a high glass wall. Only their own reflections in the glass are visible, whatever lies beyond that wall remains unknown - what does it matter anyway, when information gathered through our senses is no longer the first resort. There is one stand-out painting in the series, that provides a calm anchor, contrasting with the overall dynamic quality of the other canvases. Depicting a hazy ferry ride in Hong Kong, it appears to be frozen in time. Frozen in some space between departure and destination.

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