

## *Guanyin Series*

Niu An, 2016

If you look carefully at the portraits in the history of Chinese painting, you will find that the figures are usually placed against a flat, empty background. However, this is not the case for the portraits of Buddha Guanyin, especially the Guanyin portraits in the Dunhuang murals. In these portraits, behind Guanyin is often a vast landscape, for Guanyin is a deity. Similarly, during the Italian Renaissance, the Virgin Mary is often portrayed as an ordinary woman. But to distinguish between the divine and the mundane, the artists surround the Madonna with earthly grounds and mountains. With this aesthetic (that connects the Chinese and the Western) in mind, I think it is rather an interesting endeavor to depict the amiable deity Guanyin with ink. Moreover, the landscapes depicted in the Dunhuang murals are less disciplined but more liberated and modest than those of the Tang and Song paintings. Colors have been applied with a great sense of naiveté and boldness, but are no less elegant or refined. I like this naiveté, a naiveté that evokes sincerity, kindness, and beauty. To paint the Guanyin in my heart in Niu An style is the reason why I started this ink painting series.

Selected Image:



Niu An (b.1968), *Grace of Guanyin-Mid-Fall*, 2016, Ink and color on paper, 17 x 16 inches (43 x 40 cm)

## 《观自在》系列

牛安，2016

如仔細觀看歷來中國畫中的人物畫，不難發現其人物的身後往往是平面的留白。然而在古代繪畫中，觀音的畫像卻不然，特別是在敦煌壁畫中，觀音的身後往往是與大山大水有著緊密的關聯，這是因為觀音是神。正如在意大利文藝復興時，藝術家描繪聖母像那樣，雖然聖母猶如人世間的女子，但在她背景中畫的是自然界的山川大地，以此來區別神和人的不同地位。我覺得將這種中西合並的審美意識，用水墨來表達可以親近你我的觀音像，會是一種很有趣的嘗試。另外，背景中的山水，我覺得敦煌壁畫中的山水風景不像正統唐宋山水那麼規範工整，它們是隨意的，樸素的，用色天真而大膽，同時又不失儒雅穩重，我喜歡這種“真善美”的率真感。用“牛安法”畫出“我的觀自在”就是這組水墨觀音的初衷吧。

作品節選：



牛安 (b.1968) ，觀自在-中秋，2016，設色紙本，17 x 16 英尺 (43 x 40 釐米)