

PearlLam Galleries

Singapore

Zhu Jinshi solo exhibition **'Simplicity'**



Work, 2014, Xuan paper and ink installation, dimensions variable

Exhibition Dates

28 May–13 July, 2014

Tuesday–Saturday, 11am–7pm; Sunday, 12–6pm
(Closed on Mondays and Public Holidays)

Press Preview: Wednesday, 28 May, 2014, 4–6pm

Opening reception: Wednesday, 28 May, 2014, 7–9pm

Pearl Lam Galleries, 9 Lock Road, #03-22, Gillman Barracks, Singapore 108937

Singapore—Pearl Lam Galleries is pleased to present the first solo exhibition of works by Chinese artist Zhu Jinshi in Singapore. Zhu Jinshi's wide-ranging and diverse oeuvre across media as varied as installation, objects, performance, video, photography and painting over the past 30 years is telling of an artist with an ongoing commitment to broadening and advancing his means of expression.

One of the renowned group of artists who left China in the 1980s, Zhu was marked by his move to Germany and his encounters with the work of artists including Beuys, and the Arte Povera and Fluxus movements, among others. Abandoning painting for a short time, he began to engage in more radical forms of expression, producing conceptual, installation and performance work and exploring possibilities for extending art into physical space. Zhu's practice was characterised by its use of contemporary Western art theory to uncover new possibilities in the cultural resources and materials of China. It is a mark of his quality as an artist that he continues to forge a fresh and profoundly distinctive idiom out of his two 'homes'.

The framework of the exhibition provides the opportunity to see works from two of the most iconic categories of Zhu Jinshi's oeuvre, installation and painting, in conversation. *Work*, an arresting site-specific Xuan paper installation conceived by the artist for the gallery space, stretches over 30 metres and is created from 8,000 sheets of rice paper, a medium which Zhu has returned to throughout his career and which he reinvents through monumental installations, individually crumpled and rolled by hand and partially dipped in black ink. Xuan paper has been used in China for millennia. It is the first paper ever invented for writing and has been traditionally used as a surface for calligraphy and scholarly ink and brush painting. It is steeped in inherited social and cultural associations. *Work* demonstrates Zhu's engagement with the installation work that he encountered in Germany in the 80s, yet contrasts the cool, intellectual, industrial nature of Minimalist sculpture with the delicacy of paper that bears traces of the hand, engaging emotion before intellect. This will be placed in dialogue with the sensuous, impassioned surfaces of Zhu's current repertoire of near-sculptural abstract oil paintings—a medium that Zhu has for over a decade renewed with his attempt to capture the encounter between his own subjectivity and his experience of the world in the form of paint.

In this exhibition, Zhu ruminates on how his engagements with both painting and installation can come together in a manner that conjures up possibilities for understanding the term "simplicity" in relation to the artistic philosophies of Minimalism, Arte Povera and Mono-ha. The terms "simplicity" and "Minimalism" are, in a way, interlinked; both emphasise an extreme idea of subtraction and the use of an utmost economy of expression. The distinction here is that for Zhu, "simplicity" does not focus on the act of singularising, but rather on bringing simple, uncomplicated objects into the scope of art, and allowing them to generate creativity.

Zhu states that, "In today's world, we are not lacking in concepts, but instead lack firsthand experience, sensory perception and emotional contact. In this exhibition, 'simplicity' is not conceived as a theoretical rationale, but rather a term that characterises an approach to art that is regrounded in encountering, experiencing and perceiving firsthand and on-site."

Pearl Lam, Founder of Pearl Lam Galleries, said, "Zhu's first solo exhibition in Singapore demonstrates not only how powerful but how adventurous an artist Zhu has been and continues to be. Working together for many years, taking his work to new and broader audiences worldwide, I have seen the constant development and innovation in his work which unites artistic and cultural theories from East and West, culminating in his important solo show in Singapore."

About the Artist

Born in Beijing in 1954, Zhu Jinshi studied painting at the Central Academy of Fine Arts from 1973 to 1977. Zhu moved to Germany in the mid-1980s and worked as a lecturer in the Architecture Department at Berlin Institute of Technology (TU Berlin) in 1994. At present, he lives and works in Beijing.

Zhu began painting abstract works in the late 1970s, and participated in the Stars group exhibition, the first avant-garde art show held after the Cultural Revolution. The core of Zhu's artistic practice is best represented by traditional Chinese aesthetics, which emphasises the harmony between human beings and the natural world.

Zhu also uses traditional images that reference reality in his works; eventually, the depicted reality is in the form of abstract art with completely free brushstrokes. Rather than a logical analysis, summarisation or expression of individual emotions, the artist characterises his paintings as "mind images" produced by the complete comprehension of a given phenomenon. He believes that his perception and understanding of the world can be fittingly

expressed only through sustained contact and dialogue with materials; it is through this process that these materials act as vehicles for his inner spirituality.

Zhu Jinshi's recent solo exhibitions include *Zhu Jinshi: The Reality of Paint* (2013) at Pearl Lam Galleries, Hong Kong, and Blum & Poe at ADAA: The Art Show 2013, New York, USA. He has shown widely in major international and national exhibitions, including *China Avant-Garde Art* (1993) in Berlin; *Yi Pai: 30 years of Abstract Art in China* (2008), La Caixa Forum in Palma, Barcelona and Madrid, Spain; *Yi Pai—Century Thinking* (2009) at Today Art Museum, Beijing, China; *Wu Ming, Form is Formless—Chinese Contemporary Abstract Art* (2011) at Contrasts Gallery (now Pearl Lam Fine Art), Shanghai, China; *Mind Space—Maximalism in Contrasts* (2010) at Contrasts Gallery (now Pearl Lam Fine Art), Shanghai, China; *Mind Space—Maximalism in Contrasts* (2011) at the University of Pittsburgh, USA; and *Mind Space: Maximalism in Contrasts* (2012), Hillwood Art Museum, Long Island University, New York, USA. Zhu's works are currently on show in *28 Chinese* at the Rubell Family Collection in Miami.

About Pearl Lam Galleries

Founded by Pearl Lam, Pearl Lam Galleries is a driving force within Asia's contemporary art scene. With over 20 years of experience exhibiting Asian and Western art and design, it is one of the leading and most established contemporary art galleries to be launched out of China. Playing a vital role in stimulating international dialogue on Chinese and Asian contemporary art, the Galleries is dedicated to championing artists who re-evaluate and challenge perceptions of cultural practice from the region. The Galleries in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Singapore collaborate with renowned curators, each presenting distinct programming from major solo exhibitions, special projects and installations to conceptually rigorous group shows. Based on the philosophy of Chinese Literati where art forms have no hierarchy, the Galleries is dedicated to breaking down boundaries between different disciplines with a unique gallery model committed to encouraging cross-cultural exchange.

Contemporary Chinese abstract art is heavily represented in the Galleries roster. Influential Chinese artists Zhu Jinshi and Su Xiaobai, who synthesise Chinese sensibilities with an international visual language, are presented internationally with work now included in major private and public collections worldwide. The Galleries has also introduced leading international artists such as Jenny Holzer, Jim Lambie and Yinka Shonibare MBE (RA) to markets in the region, providing opportunities for new audiences in Asia to encounter their work. Pearl Lam Galleries encourages international artists to create new works, which engage specifically with the region—collaborating to produce thought-provoking and culturally relevant work.

Pearl Lam Design shows works by established and emerging international designers, including Maarten Baas, Mattia Bonetti, André Dubreuil, and Studio Makkink & Bey, in exhibitions and design fairs around the world. They are invited to push the boundaries of traditional Chinese art and craft techniques and create new works that reflect their experiences in China. A fourth gallery and concept store devoted solely to design will open shortly in Shanghai.

Press Enquiries

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