

PearlLam Galleries

Shanghai

Words Tend to Be Inadequate

Featuring works by Daniel Gustav Cramer, Gonkar Gyatso, Jenny Holzer, Qin Yufen, Qiu Zhenzhong, Tsang Kin-Wah, Wang Qingsong, and Zhu Jinshi



Top: Wang Qingsong b. 1966, **One World, One Dream**, 2014

C-print, Diptych: 180 x 225 cm x 2 (70 9/10 x 88 3/5 in. x 2)

Bottom: Jenny Holzer b. 1950, **Pearl's Truisms and Survival**, 2013. LED sign, 23.6 x 173 cm (9 3/10 x 68 1/10 in.)

Exhibition Dates

14 November, 2014–10 January, 2015

Monday–Sunday, 10:30am–7pm

Opening reception: Friday, 14 November, 2014, 5–8pm

Pearl Lam Galleries, 181 Middle Jiangxi Road, G/F, Shanghai, China 200002

Shanghai—Pearl Lam Galleries is delighted to present *Words Tend to Be Inadequate*, a group exhibition that illuminates how the use of text in the visual arts can be as powerful as images in communicating ideas or expressing inner feelings, thus exposing a personal world or responding to the world that surrounds us. The show aims to stage a meaningful dialogue between eight contemporary artists from the East and West who use words visually in their work, which include painting, collage, photography, LED signs, installation, and film.

Works by Daniel Gustav Cramer, Gonkar Gyatso, Jenny Holzer, Qin Yufen, Qiu Zhenzhong, Tsang Kin-Wah, Wang Qingsong, and Zhu Jinshi will be shown alongside each other in an exploration of different uses of text in art. If “words tend to be inadequate” on their own, then these artists aim to go beyond a word’s surface through their work to delve into deeper meaning.

The exhibition title “Words Tend to be Inadequate” is an aphorism from Jenny Holzer’s text series *Truisms* (first conceived in the 1970s), which is ironic given that it consists of words displayed in all caps, printed and plastered around town, or found at the bottom of cups, or boldly projected on public billboards. These words are often witty, challenging, and thought-provoking. The reactions they elicit from passersby play into the power of the work. This show will feature pieces from Holzer’s *Pearl’s Truisms and Survival* (2013), which incorporate selected aphorisms from the artist’s previous works into swarming masses of texts pulsing from colourful LED signs. Originally created for her 2013 Hong Kong solo exhibition with Pearl Lam Galleries, the signs are also in Chinese, reminiscent of signage found on the busy streets of Hong Kong and Shanghai.

Tibetan artist Gonkar Gyatso and Chinese artist Wang Qingsong both address the effects of globalisation and rapid modernisation through their work. Gyatso creates text-based mixed media collages where the outlines of topical Chinese characters like *Wumai* (Smog) and *Chai* (Demolition) (both 2014) are covered with sparkly kitten, butterfly, and flower embellishments. Meanwhile, Wang’s 2014 photographic work *One World, One Dream*, a diptych named after the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympic Games slogan, features the colourful logos of Fortune 500 companies drawn on a giant blackboard on one panel, and the names of top universities from around the world on the other. Wang questions the actuality of ‘one world’ and ‘one dream’, which overlook individual desires in favour of global corporatisation.

Hong Kong artist Tsang Kin-Wah also uses words for both visual and emotional effect. This exhibition features his large-scale text installation *Jenny just turns her back on me when I’m lost in... Art Basel Hong Kong Kabul Nicosia Phnom Penh Ulan Bator??* (2013), where crude phrases like “LUXURY ART CREATE\$ BIG MONEY” and “ABU\$E OF ART COME\$ A\$ NO SURPRISE” are swirled across a floor area of 10 x 10 m. On the surface, Tsang creates visually dynamic patterns with the words, but the fundamental core of the work is in the words’ emotional impact.

Qin Yufen is known for her installations which combine traditional Chinese materials like silk with sound and text. She believes that the inner expression of an artwork is more important than its visual appearance. Qin began experimenting with text soon after her arrival in Berlin from Beijing in the mid-1980s. Since then, aphorisms have been constantly appearing in her sound installations. Qin has reworked her installation shown at the Sydney Biennale in 2006 on a smaller scale. The site-specific piece, *Untitled* (2014), consists of text, which questions the role of art in society, embroidered on 200 metres of silk draped across two drying racks. The installation process will be documented on video, as the performance will be a part of the final work.

Chinese artists Qiu Zhenzhong and Zhu Jinshi all make references to traditional Chinese uses of text in art. For them, writing is part of their artistic process, which is just as important as the end result.

Qiu Zhenzhong will exhibit *Status-V* from his *New Poetry Series* and *Feeling is a Fragile Container* (2005). Skilled in both traditional calligraphy and poetry, Qiu reinvents written Chinese characters by combining them with elements of modern art through a subtle control of space, time, and line. As the characters are largely indecipherable, the importance of the work lies in the created forms and the artist’s process, which is rooted in Taoist principles of connecting nature with humanity.

Since 2000, Zhu Jinshi has developed a custom of writing on the back of his paintings, which he says helps clear his mind. *Diary 1* and *Diary 2* (2012) display some of his thoughts, while *Turning into a Butterfly in a Dream* (2014) features text next to a painted image. Here, Zhu writes about his sleepless night before creating the work, which is similar to how poetry was written on ancient Chinese paintings to help viewers better understand their contents. Zhu will also exhibit *Formless*, a new work that consists of light boxes painted with Chinese characters. The piece is inspired by the Diamond Sutra, and demonstrates the artist's aim of reflecting Oriental philosophy in the simplest way possible.

Multi-discipline German artist Daniel Gustav Cramer will exhibit his 20-minute video *Orrery* (2012), which recounts an encounter between two men at night in a hut outside an Australian village. Using word, sound, and image, it records the time they shared, talking, being silent, and finally departing. Words are at the centre of this, as they take the form of written text on the screen, expressing the thoughts and feelings of the two men without attempting to interpret them. Cramer uses the rhythm of the text to draw viewers in, while also keeping them at a distance. The sound records the night outside the hut, while the images only portray the setting of the encounter, never revealing the two men. The film reflects on solitude, friendship, trust, and the fleetingness of time.

About Daniel Gustav Cramer

Berlin-based artist Daniel Gustav Cramer was born in Düsseldorf, Germany in 1975. He received his MA at the Royal College of Art in London in 2003. Cramer works in a variety of media, including photography, works on paper, text, and sculpture. His works are often conceptual, going beyond narration into experience to investigate his subject's many layers. 2014 solo exhibitions include *The Retraction of Things*, 3 1/2, Kunstwerke, Berlin; *Tales*, Vera Cortes, Lisbon; *Fifteen Works*, Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf; and *01 – 72*, SALTS, Basel. Recent group shows include *Library Vaccine* at Artists Space in New York, *Uma Conversa Infinita* at Museo Coleção Berardo in Lisbon, *Dreams That Money Can't Buy* at MAXXI–Museo delle Arti del XXI secolo in Rome, and *Everything is About to Happen* at Corvi Mora in London.

About Gonkar Gyatso

Gonkar Gyatso is a Tibetan born British artist. Born in 1961 in Lhasa, Gonkar moved to London in late 1996 on a scholarship to the Central St. Martin's College of Art and Design, where he attained his MA in Fine Art. Gyatso has a BFA in Chinese Brush Painting from the Chinese Institute of Nationalities, Beijing, and studied Thangka (traditional Tibetan scroll painting) in Dharamsla. His work has been exhibited in galleries and museums around the world, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art (NYC) in 2014, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (Boston, MA) in 2013, and the Tel Aviv Museum of Art (Israel) in 2010. Gyatso has participated in the 53rd Venice Biennial in 2009, the 6th Asia Pacific Triennial in Brisbane in 2010, and the 17th Sydney Biennale in 2010. His works have been collected by the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, the Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art in Australia, the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento, California, and Wereld Museum in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, among other institutions.

About Jenny Holzer

Jenny Holzer was born in Gallipolis, Ohio, USA in 1950. She lives and works in Hoosick, New York. She is a Neo-Conceptualist artist, who utilises the homogeneous rhetoric of modern public information systems in order to address the politics of discourse through the medium of writing. Her solo exhibitions include *Jenny Holzer: Dust Paintings* (2014) at Cheim & Read in New York, *Jenny Holzer: Light Stream* (2013) at Pearl Lam Galleries in Hong Kong, *ENDGAME* (2012) at Skarstedt Gallery in New York and Sprüth Magers in Berlin, *Sophisticated Devices* (2012) at Sprüth Magers in London, as well as *Protect Protect* (2009) at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago. She has also widely exhibited in prestigious museums and galleries in New York, Paris, Basel, Miami, Berlin, Oslo, and Rome. Holzer received the Leone d'Oro at the Venice Biennale in 1990 and the Public Art Network Award in 2004. Selected public collections include the Guggenheim Bilbao, Guggenheim New York, Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, Tate Collection in London, Museum of Modern Art in New York, and Whitney Museum of American Art in New York.

About Qin Yufen

Qin Yufen was born in Shandong Province, China in 1954. She began to create abstract art in the late 1970s, and in the mid-1980s moved to Germany. Her works from this period synthesised both Western and traditional Chinese ink painting techniques, while evoking the Oriental aesthetics of tranquility and ethereality embodied in Zen meditation. Since the mid-1980s, Qin has mainly engaged in the creation of installation and land art. Her works often integrate visuals, audio, and symbols of Chinese traditions, as well as modern elements, to express the introspective processes of self-examination and contemplation.

Qin Yufen has held solo exhibitions in Beijing, Tokyo, and Berlin, among other international cities. Collections include Deutsche Bank, Hamburger Bahnhof-Museum für Gegenwart, IFA Art Foundation, Montblanc Art Collection, and ALTANA Art Collection (all in Germany), and Washington World Bank (USA).

About Qiu Zhenzhong

Qiu Zhenzhong was born in Nanchang, China in 1947. He graduated from the China Academy of Fine Arts in 1981. He now lives and works in Beijing and holds a teaching position at Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA). He is the Director of the Center for Comparative Studies of Calligraphy and Painting, CAFA, Dean of the School of Calligraphy at Shaoxing Liberal Arts College, member of the academic committee of the National Art Museum of China and Associate Director of the Academic Committee of the China Association of Calligraphers. Qiu has exhibited widely in museums and galleries in Hong Kong, Singapore, Brussels, Barcelona, Madrid, Sydney, Berlin, and Tokyo. Selected collections include Central Academy of Fine Arts, China Academy of Art, Nara State University in Japan, Chongqing Museum in China, Qingdao Museum in China, and James Cahill in the UK.

About Tsang Kin-Wah

Tsang Kin-Wah was born in Shantou, China in 1976, and now lives and works in Hong Kong. He graduated from the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Camberwell College of Arts, the London Institute. Tsang's solo exhibitions include *WE KNOW: NOTHING* at Ark Galerie in Yogyakarta (2013), *Ecce Homo Trilogy I* at Pearl Lam Galleries Hong Kong (2012), *MAM Project 015: Tsang Kin-Wah* at Mori Art Museum (2011), and *Tsang Kin-Wah* at Yvon Lambert Gallery in Paris (2008) and New York (2007). He has also exhibited widely in group exhibitions around the world, including in Greece, Germany, the USA, UAE, Italy, Switzerland, and Taiwan. Selected collections include the Kadist Art Foundation in the US, Burger Collection in Switzerland, Deutsche Bank Collection in Hong Kong, Mori Art Museum in Tokyo, Hong Kong Museum of Art, and The Sigg Collection in Switzerland.

About Wang Qingsong

Wang Qingsong was born in Daqing, Heilongjiang Province, China in 1966. He graduated from the Oil Painting Department of Sichuan Academy of Fine Arts in 1993 and has since been living and working in Beijing. Wang is known for his elaborate large-scale photographic works, which he often stages in warehouses featuring dozens—sometimes hundreds—of models and even more props. His pieces comment on the political, social, and cultural landscape of a rapidly growing China. He has had 2014 solo exhibitions at the Koege Museum in Denmark, White Box Art Center in Beijing, Daegu Art Museum in Korea, and Frost Art Museum in Florida, USA. His work has also been featured in group exhibitions at the Beijing Millennium Art Museum, Today Art Museum in Beijing, the 2013 Venice Biennale, the 2013 Istanbul Biennial, and the Swiss National Museum in Zurich, among other fine institutions. Selected collections include Asia Society in New York, San Francisco Museum of Art, Guangdong Art Museum, Gallery of Modern Art in Queensland, Australia, J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, Mori Art Museum in Tokyo, the National Art Museum of Brazil, and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

About Zhu Jinshi

After completing an artist-in-residency in Germany, Zhu Jinshi (b. 1954, Beijing) returned to Beijing, where he currently lives and works. He began painting abstract works in the late 1970s, and participated in the Stars group exhibition, the first avant-garde art exhibition after the Cultural Revolution. Zhu has exhibited in numerous solo and group exhibitions, including *Zhu*

Jinshi: Simplicity (2014) at Pearl Lam Galleries Singapore, 28 *Chinese* (2013–14) at The Rubell Family Collection in Miami; *Zhu Jinshi: The Reality of Paint* (2013) at Pearl Lam Galleries Hong Kong; *Zhu Jinshi* (2012) at Blum and Poe in Los Angeles; and *Chinese Contemporary Abstract, 1980s until Present: MINDMAP* (2012), which was Pearl Lam Galleries' inaugural show in Hong Kong. Selected collections include the Rubell Family Collection in Miami, East West Bank in the USA, White Rabbit Collection in Australia, Minsheng Art Museum in Shanghai, Today Art Museum in Beijing, Deutsche Bank in Germany, the Vancouver Art Gallery in Canada, and the National Museum of Contemporary Art in South Korea.

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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