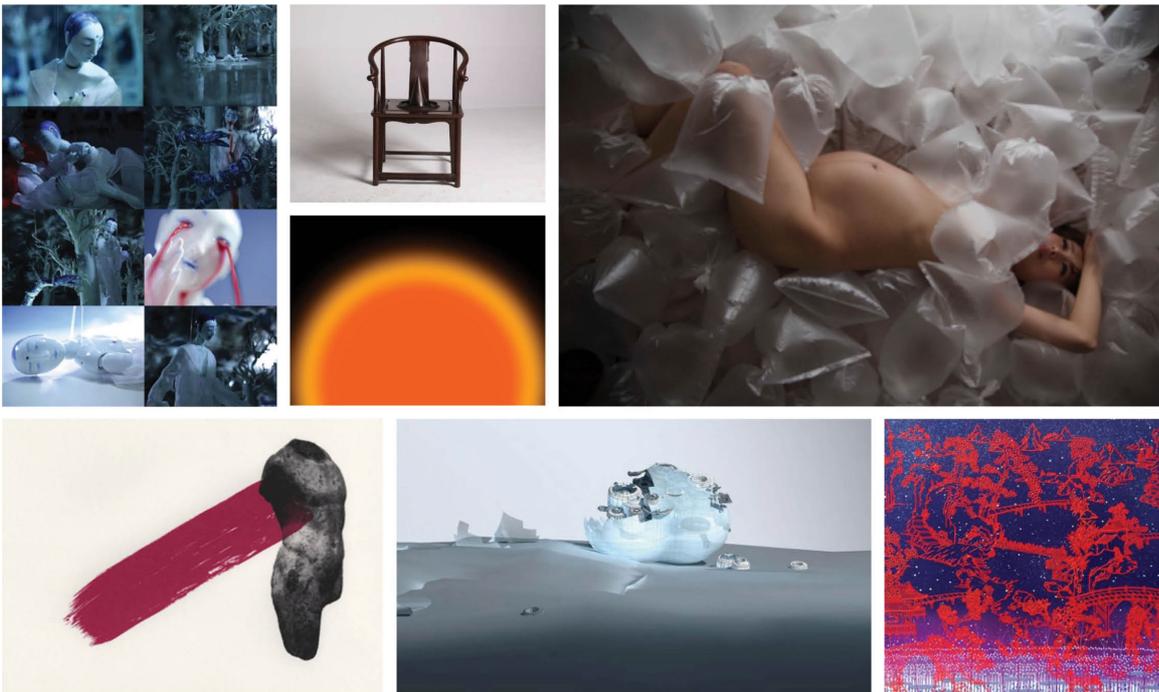


# PearlLam Galleries

Shanghai

## 'Neo-Perception' China's New Generation of Women Artists



Top row (left–right): Geng Xue b. 1983, **Mr. Sea**, 2014, Video, 13'15"

Zhou Qinshan b. 1977, **Master's Chair**, 2012, Ebony, 78 x 63 x 46 cm (30 3/4 x 25 x 18 in.)

Wu Chao b. 1977, **Audio-Video Project to Awaken Patients in Vegetative State—Energy**, 2015, Video, 4'30"

Liu Qianyi b. 1987, **Touch of Life 5**, 2015, Photograph, 225 x 150 cm (88 5/8 x 59 in.), Ed. of 20

Bottom row (left–right): Yu Feifei b. 1989, **A Man with Strokes**, 2014, Screen print, 25 x 35 cm (9 7/8 x 13 3/4 in.) Ed. of 20

Lin Xin b. 1979, **Grass Growing No. 3**, 2013, Oil on canvas, 58 x 100 cm (22 7/8 x 39 3/8 in.)

Gao Sihua b. 1983, **Red Bridge After the Rain**, 2015, Acrylic on canvas, 145 x 145 cm (57 x 57 in.)

### Exhibition Dates

31 August–15 November, 2015

Monday–Sunday, 10:30am–7pm

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

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**Shanghai**—Pearl Lam Galleries is pleased to present *Neo-Perception*, a group exhibition that gathers the works of 24 young female Chinese contemporary artists. The exhibition, curated by Dr. Wang Chunchen, will show a prime selection of works from the artists' oeuvres. Participating artists are Gao Shan, Gao Sihua, Geng Xue, He Xiaochun, Ju Ting, Li Na, Li Zi, Lin Ran, Lin Xin, Liu Qianyi, Liu Ren, Liu Yujie, Luo Wei, Mi Yuming, Pei Li, Wu Chao, Wu Mengshi, Wu Silin, Yu Feifei, Zhang Yanning, Zheng Qi, Zhou Hongbin, Zhou Qiaoyun, and Zhou Qingshan.

If “an artist is not a man who describes, but a man who feels”, as claimed by the poet and painter E.E. Cummings, then it can be understood that the intricacies unique to female identity and perception give rise to an immense field of art deserving of the utmost earnest attention. *Neo-Perception* embraces and confronts the imagery and language unique to art that reflects the diversity in women’s experiences and approaches to their identity, apart from exploring other themes on humanity. Art at any time period sees artists seeking their own voice as a fundamental pursuit; as a contemporary art exhibition, we witness the range of mediums that allow artists to express a variety of themes, including identity, sexuality, gender, mortality, relationships, and social dynamics.

Wu Chao’s *Audio-Video Project to Awaken Patients in Vegetative State—Energy* is a brilliant demonstration of art’s cooperation with psychology, medicine, and Buddhism, and the profound spiritual experience it ignites in humans. The work, which uses colourful visuals and stimulating sounds to illuminate and thereby awaken the unconscious layers of the patient’s mind, has proven its effectiveness as a medical treatment in 2015 when the first patient was awoken from her vegetative state.

In contemporary art today, the medium is more than a channel of expression; it is also in itself a vital part of the work. A clever example of this is the video work by Geng Xue, whose preference for porcelain traces back to her passion for Chinese traditional arts. In *Mr. Sea*, her retelling of *Strange Tales of Liaozhai*, Geng crafts a new language based on the traditional medium of porcelain by using animated film to bring the material to life, not only through motion but also by interactions that bring out the force of life inherent in the art form. Another artist who places extensive focus on the medium of her artwork is Gao Shan, whose *Spherical Forms in Space* mixes silica with sponges to form an imposing, bewildering visual that suggests human body parts. Her work relates to an imagined world of strange new organisms, remarking on human nature’s tendency to control and systemise. In highly conceptual works *Windy Space* and *Grass Growing No. 3*, artist Lin Xin reveals the interdependent relationship between electronics and humankind by presenting a fragmented yet polished, almost mystical, perfection of the virtual sphere. The series reflects Lin’s focus on recapturing the ‘bug’ state in electronic virtual technology, an error in software programming. The use of multi-disciplinary platforms to construct an alternative reality is also taken advantage of by Luo Wei, whose *Crystal Planet* project portrays a virtual world that unites every being to share and inspire one another.

Zhou Qinshan takes the subject of human nature even further. Her sculpture *Master’s Chair* is a discourse on person-to-person dynamics, particularly through the relationship between the chair and the viewer. Zhou introduces the state of conflict created in the distance between the viewer and the empty chair, which in its function is an invitation to be sat on. However, its form makes it impossible for the viewer to do so. Zhou’s discourse goes beyond the relationship between the viewer and the subject, extending to humankind’s innate essence and judgment of actions.

Yu Feifei is an artist who engages in philosophical and anthropological topics with sophistication. *Refinement of Folly (Self-Portrait)* and wax sculpture *Randy Randy* dwell on confusions of identity arising from mankind’s quest for wisdom, while her other works showcased in this exhibition take on female sexuality. Yu’s *Man with Strokes* was born out of the artist’s interest in conveying femininity in a ubiquitously masculine torso. Mi Yuming satirises the human gaze that society has conditioned people to cast upon the female body with her series *In the Corner*, while Lin Ran’s *Lesbos Island* centres on the intimacy of lesbian relationships, surveying the role of sexuality in a woman’s identity. Wu Silin boldly confronts gender constructs in her installation *Lin’s World*, set in a fictional world revolving around a character, Suck, and Wu herself, as they turn the tables on patriarchy and male dominance in the domestic, political, and sexual realms.

Zhou Hongbin’s multimedia techniques give her *Aquarium* series a mystical, poetic quality in its portrayal of pregnancy. Beyond the profound experience and state of pregnancy, other facets of womanhood in a woman’s life cycle are highlighted in Liu Ren’s *A Tribute to All the Lost Ova* which reflects the anxieties and pressures a woman faces as she grows and ages in stunning structures composed of menstrual blood.

Other artists who bring fresh approaches to traditional mediums, particularly that of painting, include Gao Sihua and Ju Ting. Gao Sihua's *Red Bridge After the Rain* features acrylic paintings of familiar landscapes common in ancient Chinese paintings and scrolls. While the use of outlines to create a visual impact is a fresh, unique approach by Gao, the paintings' contents and use of colours and space remind one of traditional Chinese landscape paintings. Ju Ting, with her background in print-making, felt compelled to expose the layers of colours formed in layering one acrylic colour over another by artfully slicing through the thickness with a knife. The resulting abstract work is visual evidence of her tendency towards engraving combined with her creative eye for colours.

In her ink on paper series *36.9 Degrees* Zhou Qiaoyun reflects at the same time her understanding and her disillusionment and collision with reality that come with being middle-aged. Li Na's somber paint series *Wanderer* features chameleons as metaphors for humans in a society acting for their own survival. She details the chameleon's adaptability and quiet alertness, which are characteristics she sees as similar to humans. He Xiaochun pays tribute to her father by painting symbols of wisdom and uprightness in *Fang*, using the Chinese character for 'square' as a base, while Liu Yujie illustrates the divide between form and reality in her work *Waterfall* that is reminiscent of Marcel Duchamp's *The Green Box*. Zheng Qi's *Explosion* is the artist's outcry at the noise and chaos that we generate to make up for the lack of understanding between people.

Lily Yu's work *Torso* is a nightmarish, surreal painting that evokes a certain mystery and depth, prompting the viewer to imagine and contemplate themes such as the nature of humankind and mortality. In *Death's Head Moth*, Pei Li also dwells on the mortality and vulnerability of relationships with her depiction of a moth, the ubiquitous symbol of death, constructed with 18k gold, gemstones, and skin shed from her own tattoo recovery.

The generation born in the 1980s saw a great deal of change in ideologies, culture, and way of life. This in turn pushed artists to experiment with art that portrayed, or that could help them better understand, the conflicts that arose within themselves. Among them is multi-disciplinary artist Liu Qianyi. Her piece *Revolution* is part of a comic series, whereby she explicates her sentiments of liberty and fate. A sensitivity and awareness of the physical body resonates in Liu's work in the photographic series *Touch of Life*. By picturing the unique sensibilities of maternity next to the imagery of plastic bags, Liu expresses her concerns for future generations, as well as her own conflict and unsettlement as a young woman in Tokyo, a city in a state of transition.

Also conscious of the sensitivity of the body and how it relates to one's inner self is Wu Mengshi, whose sculptural installation *Worm* captures the textural feeling of skin touching a fuzzy sweater. Wu uses her awareness of the physical body, even the subtlest of sensations, to find and perhaps realise the inarticulate struggles within her, some of which may be cyclic and never-ending, altogether depicting the conflict between a restlessly consuming society and the innate desires of the soul.

Lastly, Zhang Yaning uses sculptural portrayals of characters to depict the perplexities of youth. In *Empty Sorrow* and *What's Yours is Mine*, she deplores the role of relationships in defining a person's identity.

The psychological, philosophical, existential messiness of women's lives and identities remains a legitimate and compelling domain of art. *Neo-Perception* seeks to open a discussion on today's generation of women and how they are reflected in art, without assuming the label of 'female art'. Rather, the exhibition seeks to unveil a new consciousness and perception of the world as it is today—without doubt a feat that owes itself to feminism, the movement that has evidently shaped much of societal values and structure—and, at the same time, transcend gender differences to tap into the human nature we all share. Altogether, *Neo-Perception* strives for a more in-depth discussion on women and their societal roles.

## About Wang Chunchen

Wang Chunchen is the Head of the Department of Curatorial Research of CAFA Art Museum at the China Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, as well as an Adjunct Curator of The Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum of Michigan State University, and is known for his contributions to the arts via his own body of works, publications, and curatorial experiences. His critical essays are collected in *The Democracy of Art and The Political Images*. In 2009, he was honored with the coveted Chinese Contemporary Art Award, which is echoed by the numerous awards he has received for his input in art criticism. The result of this award is the writing and publication of *Art Intervenes in Society*.

Apart from being the curator of the Chinese Pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013 and co-curator of *Inside China*, a Chinese art exhibition at the Palais de Tokyo in 2014, some of Wang's most notable shows as a curator include *Conceptual Renewal: A Brief History of Chinese Contemporary Photography*, 2012, Beijing; *The First Shenzhen Independent Animation Biennale*, 2012, Shenzhen; *Sub-Phenomena: A Report of the State of Young Chinese Artists*, Beijing, 2012; *CAFAM Biennale 2011: Super-Organism*, Beijing; *Infinity*, 2009, Galerie Iris Schuhmacher, Berlin, Germany; *Mixed Maze*, 2008, Red Mansion Foundation, London; *Supernatural—China's Photography in the New Century*, 2008, ArtGate Gallery, New York; and *Dynamics of Images*, 2008, 798 Photo Gallery, Beijing. Wang Chunchen has also greatly influenced Chinese contemporary art criticism by his translations of over ten books of art history and theory, such as *After the End of Art* (Arthur C. Danto), *The Abuse of Beauty* (Arthur C. Danto), *Art Since 1940*, *The Language of Art History*, *Theory in Contemporary Art Since 1985*, *The Phenomenology of Painting*, *The Interpretation of Art*, and *Postmodernism, Post-socialism and Beyond*, etc.

## 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, Pearl Lam 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 work which engages specifically with the region, collaborating to produce thought-provoking, culturally relevant work.

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## Press Enquiries

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