

PearlLam Galleries

Hong Kong SOHO

MICROCOSM/MACROCOSM

Featuring works by Du Zhenjun, Sayaka Ishizuka, Hew Locke, Li Tianbing, and Ren Ri

Exhibition Dates 20 January–3 March, 2017
Monday–Saturday, noon–7pm; Sunday, noon–5pm

Venue Pearl Lam Galleries Hong Kong SOHO
No. 1, G/F & 1/F, SOHO 189, 189 Queen's Road West, Sheung Wan

Hong Kong—Pearl Lam Galleries is pleased to present *MICROCOSM/MACROCOSM*, a group exhibition featuring works by five leading contemporary artists: Du Zhenjun, Sayaka Ishizuka, Li Tianbing, Hew Locke, and Ren Ri. Defined by ancient Greek philosophers, microcosm and macrocosm are two aspects of a theory used to describe the similarity and relations between human beings and the universe. Each exhibiting artist encapsulates an imaginary universe from macroscopic and microscopic perspectives in their unique methodologies and mediums.

“Art is a re-creation of the universe from a personal perspective; it offers man, in effect, a new reality to contemplate.” —Leonard Peikoff, 1991

Du Zhenjun's *Babel World* series explores his imagination and visions of post-dystopian ruins, and is an artist's retort to what Du thinks the world is becoming. Du believes digital media is the most relevant way of making art in an era shaped by digital technologies. With the myth of Babel as a backdrop, Du reinterprets the Book of Genesis in the present day by creating a digitally assembled collage, spotlighting a different facet of modern conflict.

Ren Ri achieves his artistic goal with the unique medium of beeswax. By investigating the psychology of bees, Ren's mesmerising sculptures document his intimate experience with bees as both an artist and a beekeeper. He manipulates the movement of bees and the formation of honeycombs to create metaphysical and hybrid sculptures, revealing both the force of nature and consequences of human intervention.

Sayaka Ishizuka's artistic practice is greatly influenced by Japanese Shinto tradition, which incorporates the belief that nature and spirituality are intertwined. Ishizuka is especially sensitive to small, commonplace objects that are embedded with stories and histories of lived cultures.

Collage and assemblage are characteristics of **Hew Locke's** wide-ranging practice. Locke delves deeply into the history behind the objects he uses in his art. Unifying this knowledge with his creative vision, Locke creates pieces that stand at a crossroads of cultures, mediums, and historic references. By incorporating found objects such as toys and cheap jewellery, and combining them with certificates and photographs, Locke examines issues of power and identity, and the way that memory is connected with these constructed concepts.

Personal memories and socio-cultural context are significant elements in **Li Tianbing's** works. Li explores the thin line between fiction and reality and the lingering effects of painful childhood memories under political oppression. His oil paintings include many ideas related to personal identity.

About the Artists

DU ZHENJUN

Du Zhenjun was born in Shanghai in 1961. He graduated from the University of Shanghai's School of Fine Arts in 1986, and taught there until he left for Bordeaux, France in 1992. In 1998, Du received a Masters in Digital Space at the Regional School of Fine Arts in Rennes, France. He currently lives in Shanghai and Paris.

Du Zhenjun has a background in classical painting and sculpture, but now works primarily in digital media as he believes it is the most relevant way of making art. He regards it as "a way of working on the dimension of power inherent to a society of information and new technologies." Du's interactive new media installations and digitally manipulated photographs have made him one of China's most recognised digital artists, winning awards in the global art arena. In 2003, he broke new ground with his 2003 Paris exhibition *Too Heavy for Human Beings*, the first solo exhibition in French digital art history. His work deals with tragedy and what he considers as the universal human condition. He sources some of his images from mass media outlets, including television, magazines, newspapers, and the Internet.

HEW LOCKE

Hew Locke (b. 1959, Edinburgh, UK) spent his formative years (1966–80) in Guyana before returning to the UK for study. He completed his BA at Falmouth School of Art, UK in 1988, and he graduated with an MA in sculpture from the Royal College of Art, London in 1994. The artist is currently based in London.

Locke works in a variety of media, including painting, drawing, photography, sculpture, and installation. He explores the subject of power, particularly through the representation of royal portraiture, coats-of-arms, public statuary, trophies, company share certificates, weaponry and costume. In his early works, Locke began to see the Royal Family, specifically the Queen's official portrait, as a vehicle through which he confronted and evaluated his experiences of growing up. With this subject, his work began to engage with the embodiment of power, building amalgamations between different cultures and colonial histories.

Successfully merging influences from both Guyanese and British cultures, Locke delves deeply into the history behind the subject matters and objects involved in his works. Unifying this knowledge with his creative vision, he creates pieces that stand at a crossroads of cultures, mediums, and historic references.

LI TIANBING

Born in 1974, in the southern province of Guilin, China, Li Tianbing moved to Paris at the age of 22 to study at the École des Beaux-Arts. Here, he came in contact with a wealth of visual and cultural resources and formal histories. Surrounded by such diversity, Li quickly developed a distinctive visual language with which to express his own cultural origins, drawing on both traditional Chinese techniques and contemporary Western references. His work was soon commanding a similar level of international attention afforded to elder contemporaries such as Zhang Huan and Yan Pei Ming.

When Li Tianbing arrived in Paris he had with him a tiny album of just five small, black-and-white photographs of himself as a young boy. To have childhood photographs of oneself was a privilege in 1970s China. A family-owned camera was a rare and expensive commodity, so children's formative years went largely unrecorded. Li Tianbing's father worked as a soldier in the army's propaganda unit and was able to intermittently borrow a camera to record his son's infancy at the ages of three, four and five years old. These images have come to play an integral role in Li Tianbing's work. Being an only child in China was a condition shared by many children of his generation, and one the artist has described as a deeply lonely experience with profound psychological effects. Consequently, the artist often sought refuge in his own imagination, inventing games inhabited by fictitious characters.

REN RI

Ren Ri was born in 1984 in Harbin, China. He studied Fine Art at Tsinghua University and then received his Master's degree at Saint-Petersburg Herzen State University, Russia. He has a PhD in Fine Art from

Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing. Ren Ri has won and been nominated for several international awards and contests in the arts.

Ren's art is signified by the very special medium he uses: beeswax. Considered an unusual and difficult material to work with, Ren Ri's understanding of the psychology of bees and nature assist him in his creative process. He works in collaboration with insects to create his mesmerising sculptures. To manipulate natural processes, the artist must find a balance as he cooperates with nature to accomplish his artistic goals. The artist's most famous series—*Yuansu I, II* and *III*—are all related to his intimate experiences with bees. Ren Ri started to learn the craft of beekeeping in 2006; after several years, he felt knowledgeable enough to begin using beeswax as his primary medium.

SAYAKA ISHIZUKA

Born in Shizuoka, Japan, in 1980, Sayaka Ishizuka is an artist whose quietly arresting installation works are matched by the attentiveness to the lived histories, cultural associations and evocative potential of the commonplace, found objects that are frequently her chosen medium.

The idea that the universal can be accessed and expressed in art by way of the personal is one that is realised with striking clarity and a humbling lack of self-consciousness in the artist's works. Taking as her medium objects unremarkable in their ready availability or often-overlooked presence in daily life—rice, thread, used articles of clothing, utensils and household items—and paying heed to the social and cultural associations they carry, Ishizuka's installations subtly transform these items into leitmotifs for interconnectedness in the broader sphere of human existence.

Significant in this process is that each of Ishizuka's installations is resolutely grounded in the lives "lived" by the objects from which it is composed and the lives of the people that these objects inhabited. Taking her cues from the dialogue and interaction that occur between these "objects with a past" and the installation space, the artist weaves them into spatial configurations—often suspending items from the ceiling—of the messages relayed to her by the space and the medium. Beginning her creative process on the level of the real, the lived, and the experienced, rather than the grandiose and abstract, Sayaka selects personal histories, memories, daily rituals and processes—all of which are tied to site and place—as the point of departure in fleshing out her simple yet profound spatial diagrams of the ties that bind us.

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.

The four branches of Pearl Lam Galleries in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Singapore represent an increasingly influential roster of contemporary artists. 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, Leonardo Drew, Carlos Rolón/Dzine and Yinka Shonibare MBE, 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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