

PearlLam Galleries

Shanghai

Du Zhenjun solo exhibition 'Babel World'



Du Zhenjun b. 1961

Left: **The Tower of Babel—Destruction**, 2012, Silver print, 240 x 180 cm (94 1/2 x 70 7/8 in.), Edition of 6

Right: **The Tower of Babel—Pollution**, 2011, Silver print, 180 x 240 cm (70 7/8 x 94 1/2 in.), Edition of 6

Exhibition Dates

26 July–30 August 2015

Monday–Sunday, 10:30am–7pm

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

Shanghai—Pearl Lam Galleries is pleased to present *Babel World*, Paris-based, Shanghai-born artist Du Zhenjun's solo exhibition. The exhibition will feature a selection from the artist's recent series of photography works, together with an early multimedia video work, and a new media installation created specifically for this show.

Du Zhenjun works primarily in digital media, which the artist believes is the most relevant way of making art in an era largely dominated and shaped by digital technologies. Du's interactive new media installations and digitally manipulated photographs have made him one of China's most recognised digital artists.

The exhibition title, *Babel World*, comes from the artist's series of photographs of the same name, which emanate his imagination and visions of post-dystopian ruins, as an artist's delineation and retort to what the world is becoming.

For Du, *Babel World* symbolises globalisation that is built on the base of a universal digital language. The underlying theme that weaves through this series of photographs is globalisation and the brutal changes brought upon our social condition by digital technologies that inevitably reshape our reality. This series of work is inspired by the Tower of Babel story in the Book of Genesis, in which mankind, who spoke one common language, tried to build a city and tower to reach heaven. God intervened by disorientating them through the creation of multiple languages as a punishment for their betrayal, dispersing people all over the world.

With the myth of Babel as a backdrop, Du's use of computer technologies allows him to reinterpret the Genesis story in the present day, using digitally assembled Internet-sourced images to create a collage in order to spotlight a different facet of modern conflict, ranging from consumption, climate change, and environmental catastrophe to individualism and geopolitical conflicts. In this exhibition, a section of the gallery space is dedicated to revealing to the audience both raw and original Internet-sourced images from which these large photographs are composed, and sketches that echo the making of these controversial works.

The epic, majestic towers of Babel are Du's contemporary rendition of the apocalypse, whereby the world's ecology and its self-destruction are not only comprised of environmental and physical surroundings, but also the mental structure and values of humankind and society to which it correlates. At first glance, the photographs of Babel, a fictional republic, appear to be images of colossal ruins in the foreground of a chaotic urban-scape. Upon closer examination, the more human details of the characters symbolise human relations and indiscriminate concerns, such as love, conflict, and struggle.

The exhibition also features a multimedia video work, *It Hurts Me Every Minute (1998)*, from Du's earlier years of exploration with digital tools. The video work is one of eleven multimedia pieces that Du exhibited in his 2003 Paris solo show, *Too Heavy for Human Beings*. This video installation is composed of a selection of twenty animations played in automatic sequence that play with the qualities of light to portray pain and suffering.

About Du Zhenjun

Du Zhenjun was born in 1961 in Shanghai, China, where he graduated from the Institute of Art and Design. Following that, he graduated from the School of Fine Arts of the University of Shanghai in 1986, and taught there until 1991.

In 1992, Du left for Bordeaux, France, where he began working on multimedia installations and went on to pursue a Masters in Digital Space at the Regional School of Fine Arts in Rennes, France. Of digital media, Du believes he has finally found a contemporary language and tool with which to evoke actual reality, the contemporary world. His 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*, which is recognised as the first solo exhibition in French digital art history.

Du's solo exhibitions include *Babel Empire (2014)*, Château de Chambord, Château de Lunéville, France; *Babel-world/Du Zhenjun (2013)*, ZKM | Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, Germany; *La Tour de Babel (2012)*, Maison de la Culture de Metz, Metz, France; and *Interactivités (2010)*, L'institut franco-japonais de Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan; *Virtual Politics (2009)*, Tang Contemporary Art, Beijing, China. His works are in collections around the world including Kadist Art Foundation (Paris, San Francisco), Société Générale (France); DSL Collection (France), ZKM Karlsruhe (Germany), and Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (China).

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.

Press Enquiries

Moxian Sun / Pearl Lam Galleries
moxian@pearllamfineart.com / +8621 6323 1989

Li Yan / Pearl Lam Galleries
yan@pearllamfineart.com / +8621 6323 1989