

**Chinese Contemporary Abstract,
1980s Until Present: MINDMAP**

Curated by Gao Minglu

Featuring works by Yan Binghui, Li Huasheng, Zhang Jianjun, Zhu Jinshi, Su Xiaobai,
Li Xiaojing and Qiu Zhenzhong

Exhibition Dates

16th May-20th July, 2012

Monday-Saturday, 10am-7pm

Opening reception on Tuesday, 15th May, 6-8pm

Pearl Lam Galleries, 601-605, 6/F, Pedder Building, 12 Pedder Street, Central, HK

HONG KONG - Pearl Lam Galleries, Asia's most dynamic art gallery dedicated to Chinese and international contemporary art and design, announced today the inaugural exhibition for the opening of its major new space in Hong Kong, **Chinese Contemporary Abstract, 1980s Until Present: MINDMAP**, opening to the public on **Wednesday, 16 May, 2012**.

For the first time, Pearl Lam Galleries will reveal the rich diversity of abstract art in China since Mao's death. This show and what it suggests will add a new dimension to the way in which Chinese art is viewed and open up another dimension in the study of recent Chinese art history. It is a brave and exciting exhibition mixing contemporary art and art from China's recent past.

The exhibition is a revelation with its exposure that the few Chinese artists already known to the West do not exhaust what counts as 'Chinese contemporary art'. It is particularly timely given the recent rise of global interest in abstraction and new market interest in Chinese abstract artists. Gallery artist Zhu Jinshi, featured in this exhibition, will have a solo show at leading US gallery Blum and Poe in June.

Paul Moorhouse, an expert in abstract art, who was formerly a curator at Tate Britain and is now senior curator at the National Portrait Gallery, London said: "I was enormously impressed when I came to China for the first time to look at this body of work and the ground that has been covered in 30 years. I think that it is absolutely extraordinary. What we are looking at is a language in its early stage, which has developed out of a long tradition of Eastern philosophy; it's at a different point in its evolution from the Western tradition, and I find it inspiring to see the language of abstraction being re-invigorated in this way. It has that virility and freshness, which isn't always in evidence in the West. I think more dialogue between the two traditions would be of great mutual benefit."

Featuring artists Yan Binghui, Li Huasheng, Zhang Jianjun, Zhu Jinshi, Su Xiaobai, Li Xiaojing and Qiu Zhenzhong, **MINDMAP** offers a diverse visual feast of Chinese abstract styles.

Presenting seven leading Chinese abstract artists of different generations, the exhibition, curated by Professor Gao Minglu, takes a fresh look at Chinese contemporary abstract painting over the last 30 years. Gao Minglu is a distinguished scholar of Chinese contemporary art and, notably, the curator of China/Avant-Garde, National Art Museum of China, Beijing (1989), the first contemporary Chinese art exhibition to be mounted in China. He brought the first landmark exhibition of Chinese contemporary art to the US with Inside Out: New Chinese Art, which was first shown at the Asia Society Galleries and MoMA PS1 in New York (1999).

The accompanying catalogue provides a dialogue between Gao Minglu and British curator Paul Moorhouse on the differences between the Chinese and Western traditions of abstraction. The discussion evolved out of a road trip the two curators took across China to visit the artists' studios. The two curators start from the premise that the influences between the two traditions are more fluid than previously understood, citing the influence of Chinese calligraphy on Robert Motherwell's work. They explore whether 'meaning' is relevant to the artwork of both traditions, the diverse philosophies that have inspired abstraction, the relationship between landscape and abstract in the two traditions, and the significance of material and form.

Gao Minglu said: "Contrary to perception that it was solely inspired by the Western tradition, 'Yi Pai' (Chinese abstraction) is an aesthetic expression heavily rooted in Chinese heritage and Eastern philosophy: Taoism, Confucianism, Literati and ink brush painting. The title MINDMAP refers to the unique qualities of 'Yi Pai': an internal landscape where three elements, the 'Li' (principal), 'Shi' (concept and knowledge) and 'Xing' (likeness), merge together. Mindmap is the visual form that immediately conveys imagination, intuition, and technique to the viewer in a single moment, which is evident of an artwork's development over time and serves as a reflection of the artist and his daily life."

Pearl Lam added: "Chinese contemporary art is all about re-inventing tradition. I'm hoping that this show will make the Western world look at Chinese abstract art in a new way. We were pouring ink more than 2,000 years ago, way before Jackson Pollock."

In addition to **Chinese Contemporary Abstract, 1980s Until Present: MINDMAP**, Pearl Lam will be exhibiting the following artists at ART HK 12: Li Tianbing, Liang Juhui, Su Xiaobai, Tsang Kin-Wah, Zhang Huan, Zheng Chongbin, Zhu Jinshi, Jason Martin, and Jonathan Yeo.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

About Pearl Lam Galleries

Pearl Lam started exhibiting and promoting Chinese contemporary art and design in 1993 in Hong Kong. Currently with two gallery spaces in Shanghai: a Fine Art Gallery and special project space, Pearl Lam Galleries, has a strong network of new spaces opening across the region in the next 2 years, including the gallery space in Hong Kong in May 2012, a new Design Gallery in Shanghai, and the opening of a major space at the Gilman Barracks, Singapore in 2013.

Presenting an exhibition programme of the highest quality, Pearl Lam Galleries has championed the promotion and re-evaluation of the philosophy, perceptions and aesthetics of Chinese Art for almost 20 years. From an early stage, popular touring shows such as **Awakening: La France Mandarine, the French Influence on Chinese Art** (2004-2005) characterised the exhibition programme with their intercultural dialogue and dynamic work by international artists from established and emerging markets.

Exhibiting Chinese artists such as Lan Zhenghui, Li Tianbing, Shao Fan, Zhang Huan, Zheng Chongbin, Zhu Jinshi and Wang Dongling reinterpret traditions, fuse cross-cultural influences

and showcase China today. The exhibition programme also presents major solo exhibitions of international artists, stimulating cross-cultural dialogue and cultural exchange between China and the rest of the world.

Pearl Lam Galleries has tirelessly promoted design as an art form in China. Pearl Lam has funded an artist-in-residence programme for Western and Asian artists and designers. Pearl Lam Design shows works by established international designers including André Dubreuil, Maarten Baas, Mattia Bonetti, and Studio Makkink & Bey. They are invited to push the boundaries of traditional Chinese art and craft techniques to create new works that reflect their experiences in China.

Pearl Lam Galleries works with:

Artists: He Xiangyu, Lan Zhenghui, Lei Hong, Li Tianbing, Li Xiaojing, Qin Yufen, Qiu Zhenzhong, Shao Fan, Wang Dongling, Wei Ligang, Yi Zhou, Zheng Chongbin and Zhu Jinshi.

Designers: André Dubreuil, Danful Yang for XYZ Design, Maarten Baas, Martin Szekely, Mattia Bonetti, Patrice Butler, Peter Ting, Philip Michael Wolfson, Studio Makkink & Bey, WOKmedia, and XYZ Design.

About Gao Minglu

Prof. Gao Minglu, received his doctorate in History of Art from Harvard University and is currently a Professor in the Department of History of Art and Architecture at the University of Pittsburgh. He is a leading scholar, critic and curator of Chinese contemporary art, having organised major exhibitions at SFMOMA, Asia Society in New York, National Art Museum of China, and other institutions. His publications such as **Yi Pai: Dislocation of Modernity—Thirty Years of Chinese Abstraction** explore the relationship between global art movements and Chinese traditions. Apart from curating and teaching, Gao set up a Chinese Contemporary Art Archive Centre, which collects documents from the early years of the Chinese contemporary art movement during the 1970s-1980s. It is an invaluable resource for scholars of the Chinese modern art scene.

About Paul Moorhouse

Paul Moorhouse has been a curator of 20th Century at the National Portrait Gallery, London since 2005. He began his career as a curator at the Government Art Collection in London before joining Collections at Tate, and later Contemporary Art. He is a specialist in international 20th century art and has organised numerous exhibitions, including: **The Queen: Art and Image (2011-12)**, **Gerhard Richter Portraits (2009)** and **Pop Art Portraits (2007-8)** at the National Portrait Gallery. He has published extensively; recent publications include **Anthony Caro: Presence (2010)**, **Gerhard Richter—Painting Appearances (2009)**, **Pop Art Portraits (2007)**, **Interpreting Caro (2005)**, as well as numerous exhibition catalogues, among which recent titles include **Tony Bevan Self-Portraits (2011)**, **Bridget Riley—From Life (2010)**, and **Frank Auerbach: London Building Sites 1952-1962 (Courtauld Institute 2009)**. His monograph, **Cindy Sherman**, will be published in 2012. Moorhouse is currently organising a major exhibition, **Giacometti—Pure Presence**, to be held at the National Portrait Gallery, London in 2015.

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