

contrasts

MIND SPACE**MAXIMALISM IN CONTRASTS**

Curated by Professor Gao Minglu

Featuring artists Zhu Jinshi, Zhang Yu, Lei Hong and He Xiangyu

Exhibition on show from **30th April to 16th June, 2010**with a celebration party on **22nd May, 2010, 5–8pm****Contrasts Gallery, No. 181 Middle Jiangxi Road, Shanghai, China
200002**

SHANGHAI—Contrasts Gallery will present **MIND SPACE**, an exhibition curated by Gao Minglu that will feature the work of artists Zhu Jinshi, Zhang Yu, Lei Hong and He Xiangyu. The exhibition will explore **MAXIMALISM**—the philosophical core of Chinese abstract art and a concept that places emphasis on the spiritual experience of the artist in the process of creation. Maximalism's primary objective is to question and overthrow assumptions about the meaning of art.

In Maximalist theory, the meaning of a painting is not expressed by its surface or subject matter and a painting is not considered a unique and privileged product of human culture containing commonly held values of virtue and creativity. According to Maximalists, the meaning of art goes beyond language (*yan bu jin yi*) and comes from a dialogue between the artist and the material object and is a response to the rapidly changing material world.

While the work in the exhibition is similar in appearance to modern or conceptual art, it has a different theoretical foundation. Most Maximalist artists consider their work to be incomplete and fragmented records of daily meditation. They do not adhere to compositional principles or ideas and their art is natural, repetitious

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and fragmentary. The work functions as what is often called a *liushui zhang* in Chinese, literally, “an account book of streaming water,” which means an everyday record of something that is extremely unimportant, micro-trivial and fragmented from daily life.

The artists included in *MIND SPACE*:

Zhu Jinshi

Zhu Jinshi has devoted himself to abstract painting for three decades. His installation work often involves Chinese rice paper (xuan zhi) and ink. His installation in this exhibition is a metal container filled with ink and xuan paper. The paper is half-submerged in ink. The top part of the paper will gradually turn dark, giving the audience a chance to observe the process of painting without human involvement. In addition, there are also a few of Zhu’s abstract paintings in the exhibition, which feature his diary and notes on the back.

Zhang Yu

For more than two decades, Zhang Yu has used random fingerprints, universal marks of identification, to make “ink paintings” on scrolls. By turning a symbol of human identification into a repetitious “abstract” mark, Zhang Yu’s fingerprints lose their traditional symbolic meaning and are transformed into universal symbols of beauty and infinity. Every touch is a dialogue with nature.

Lei Hong

Lei Hong makes pencil drawings composed of dots, lines and squares that have certain characteristics of Western abstract paintings but not the rational structural elements. Instead, Lei Hong’s drawings reveal a spirit of humanism. The dots and lines are not conceptual, but marks that relate to traditional Chinese ink painting. One can be reminded of a “line of flying wild geese,” “chanting on a returning fishing boat at dusk,” and the “lonely smoke in the great desert” from his drawings. His marks suggest a narrative about his imagination and his feelings at a given moment.

He Xiangyu

He Xiangyu uses crystallized Coco Cola as ink for painting and calligraphy. This process transforms an industrial, commercial

product into spontaneous literati expressionism. Xiangyu's art also imbues the process of mass reproduction with the spiritual quality of self-meditation.

About Contrasts Gallery

Contrasts Gallery is dedicated to presenting creative excellence in art and design from East and West to the international art community. Founded by Pearl Lam in 1992 in Hong Kong, the Gallery nurtures and promotes creative talents where art, architecture, and design intersect. Contrasts Gallery has evolved from a philosophy rooted in Chinese "Literati" art, which promotes art for the sake self-cultivation and embraces creativity without hierarchies. The gallery's exhibition program is designed to create new cultural exchanges by representing artists from all parts of the world working in divergent traditions and across disciplines. The gallery's 2010 schedule includes exhibitions by many leading Chinese contemporary figures: Zhang Hao, Yi Zhou, Wei Ligang, Lan Zhenghui, Li Tianbing, Shao Fan and Hans Hartung. Contrasts Gallery is based in Shanghai.

For additional images or information, please contact:

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