

Chinese Contemporary Art: Group Show June-August 2011

Zhang Huan

(1965, An Yang City, He Nan Province, China)
lives and Works in Shanghai and New York

First famous for his performance art where his body was the focus of his controversial work, Zhang Huan now mixes tradition with more contemporary disciplines.

Pearl Lam Fine Art presents several works, including his ash paintings 'Raid' and 'Professor Li' and sculpture 'Ash Thinker No.5'. Recently converted to Buddhism, Zhang Huan collects ashes from incense left by pilgrims at various temples and then integrates these elements into sculptures and paintings. He uses ash as a medium expanding the artistic power of the works themselves, embodying the hopes and dreams of Chinese people.

Zhang Huan also uses cow skin as a medium for his 'Spiritual Leader No.8'. He refers to an old Chinese technique where craftsmen made a mould of a Buddha face, before placing a cowhide on its surface and weighing it down with heavy bags to press it into shape.

Zhang Huan address trauma: the aftermath of shock, suffering and pain and is expressed both as a personal comment concerning his own and his family's histories and as a collective response, articulating, for example, China's emergence from the Cultural Revolution and oppression.

Zhu Jinshi

(1954, Beijing)
lives and works in Beijing

His work is a parallel between Western abstraction and traditional Chinese art theory and practice.

Zhu Jinshi's creations invite the viewers to participate and immerse into his initially inaccessible works. His artworks undoubtedly express a very emotionally-charged message on the human predicament and its endless layers of tension. Although boldly applied and thickly textured paint stands as the viewer's initial experience of the work, closer observation reveals a represented subject, for example a figure or plant briefly inscribed as a line scraped through the layered paint. Explicit imagery is gone and we are left with pure material, color and gest.

Zhan Wang

(1962, Beijing)

lives and works in Beijing

Zhan is considered by some to be one of the first artists to use stone and rock elements of traditional Chinese garden design in contemporary art. Zhan Wang plays on this idea of the ancient complementary and divergent contemporary elements.

For centuries, traditional Chinese scholar rocks were placed in private gardens to serve as miniature representations of mountains, which in turn signified the whole of nature, or 'Tao'. Rocks were selected for contemplation based on their complexity and inherent beauty.

Zhan Wang uses highly polished stainless steel to update this scholar rock tradition. His first inspiration came from Beijing's changing urban environment, in the middle of the 90's.

These works are reflective, industrial, and powerful—mirroring China in the twenty-first century; they also intend the notion that the art can play a part in the public place.

Shao Fan

(1964, Beijing)

lives and works in Beijing

His approach is a hybrid between a contemporary aesthetic and ancient Chinese principles and techniques where he expresses his interest in the preservation of China's history as the country speeds towards the future.

With his paintings, Shao Fan re-contextualizes ancient Chinese philosophy, creating balance and unity between Man and Nature (Taoist philosophy). Taking inspiration from the ancestors painting style (for example where the form takes precedence over detail), he represents animals to show the spirit that exists in every living creature and that every living thing in the universe, man and nature alike, are one.

Wang Dongling

(1945, Jiangsu province)

lives and works in Hangzhou

Wang Dongling has a unique importance in the history of Chinese calligraphy, maintaining his integrity while struggling for its modern identity. Using *wuwei* (action without effort), Wang's abstraction involve dramatic gestural forms inhabiting a plane. He creates a compelling experience for the viewer to discover the essence of life and art in his monumental works. The notion of *you*, *gu*, *xing* and *ming* are at the heart of his life and artistic creation.

Zheng Chongbin

(1961, Shanghai)

lives and works between Shanghai and San Francisco

His work can be described as a synthesis between Chinese and northern Californian modes of abstract painting. His ink-on-paper paintings reveal how the techniques of traditional Asian ink painting can have a contemporary relevance.

Zheng applies black ink of various consistencies to sheets of Xuan paper (made from sandalwood fiber), which for over 1,000 years has been the preferred medium for calligraphic ink painting. Like master painters of the Sung and Yuan dynasties, Zheng changes the tempo of his brushwork to create an elegant choreography of shapes that bespeak what ancient scholars referred to as "landscapes of the mind". The flowing forms clearly allude to distant landscapes shrouded in evanescent atmospherics, and they invite the viewer's imagination to wander into and through them.

Yuan Shun

(1961, Shanghai)

lives and works in Beijing and Berlin

Yuan's work encompasses photography, installation, video and painting where he uses elements of Chinese traditional landscape painting and Western abstract geometric images freely.

Yuan Shun's landscapes are metaphysical or symbolic representations of the cosmos. Surreal, quasi-scientific pictures and mist-shrouded dioramas, the process of making them is a daily ritual of meditation, spiritual enlightenment and mental invention (those visions are influenced by Hindu thought, by contemporary city planning and by Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*).

They are intended to evoke sci-fi movie sets and futuristic military bases, they also hark back to Chinese landscape paintings, which reflect the Taoist view of the natural world and man's insignificant place in it.

Chen Ping

(1960, Beijing)

works in Beijing and in Australia

The relationship between Eastern and Western art remains strong in his painting: he integrates Western figurative and pictorial structures with the spirit of Eastern space and mark making—empty space in composition is derived from Chinese Taoist philosophy and traditional ink painting.

His paintings are neither purely abstract nor purely expressive whilst being both conceptual and realistic. Chen Ping finds his inspiration in newspapers and magazines: the people and situations upon which he draws for his narratives are real. And, if on the surface Chen's narrative is a simple one, it is internally a complex one expressed through

an abstract figuration that is deeply human, filled as it is with the voice of post-modern anguish.

Qin Fengling

(1957, Beijing)

works and lives with Wang Luyan in Beijing

Qin's painting carries an element of dualism, which neither seems to be painting or sculpture.

Self-taught artist, Qin doesn't use traditional pictorial techniques, her method doesn't need a brush—she squeezes the colors directly from the bottles to the canvas, skillfully forming the three-dimensional figures she wants. Then she begins to paint the details.

Although Qin Fengling focuses on painting language, her paintings shows a living style of her own as well as a special feeling and understanding towards reality, life and history. Her subjects are social matters, city life, people, animals and natural scenes and once they come into her paintings, they immediately turn to be easy, vivid, live and humorous images.