

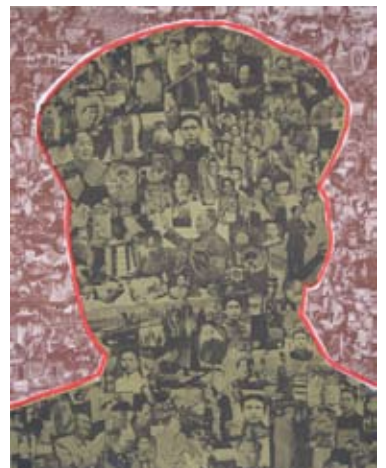
Xue Song

薛松



*Leaders of Three Generations – Mao,
1995*

*Model No. 3, 2005
Silkscreen print
96x77 cm*



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Proceeding from a cultural logic that transforms antinomies into collaborations Xue Song's art finds legibility in the negative space left behind: Soot and ash are crucial elements, and the outlines of some of the figures in his images look as if they have been burned out. For him, ash is a reminder of fate and a symbol of rebirth. Fire plays a central role in Xue Song's work. It is a form of mourning - the artist again and again elaborates on the fire that destroyed his studio in the early 90s, eliminating all his work to date, largely oil paintings and calligraphy. The charred leftovers of pictures rescued from the ashes are used as fragments in the new works as a kind of memorabilia of past events. The collages become a tactile site of remembrance and reflection with traces of the fire unavoidably present. He produces scenes that pick up on traditional painting and calligraphy, but combine them, for example, with outlines of contemporary politicians. Xue Song is known for his innovative commingling of clearly contemporary elements with others that seem manifested in the collective cultural memory. He continues to invent new forms and reinvent those left by tradition. The approaches and explorations are inspired by traditional calligraphy, but are transformed as not to create meaningful sentences, or legible characters for the audience. By randomly collecting the language of mass media, including the prior revolutionary language of Mao and that of contemporary consumer culture, Xue Song creates a kind of multi-sensed imagery. Scattered across the canvas, the visual juxtapositions are whimsical and inspired, proving that the artist possesses a fantastic eye for color and form.

Xue Song's distinctive collages represent the many different aspects of Chinese culture; he incorporates traditional Chinese paintings, ancient calligraphy, folk art, religious icons, legendary figures and historical photographs thereby erasing categorical imperatives. His methodology is one of appropriation, manipulation and undermining in order to create a subjective universe that manifests his personal memories and losses.

Xue Song was born in 1965 in the province of Anhui. He graduated from the Shanghai Drama Institute, Stage Design Department in 1988. Today he lives and works in Shanghai. Xue Song has exhibited widely since his first solo-exhibition in 1999.



Calligraphy, 2001



Power of Calligraphy 9, 2001