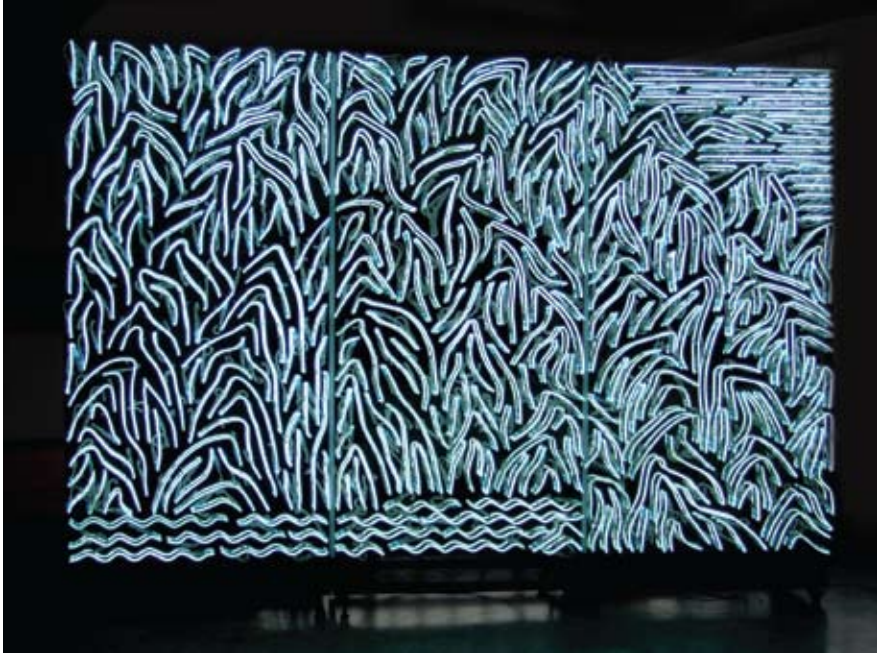


ShanghART Gallery at Art 39 Basel, June 4-8 2008



Shen Fan, *Landscape – Commemorating Huang Binghong* (2008), neon lights installation, 222x302x70 cm, ed. of 5

Lately, Shen Fan has expanded his use of medium into neon lights installations, which pay homage to Huang Binghong (1845-1955) who was one of the first to paint almost abstract landscape paintings using traditional ink brush technique held in dark mono-chromes. The sculptural aspect of the neon lights installations shifts the tone of the work in a more minimalist direction, where figurative associations recede and the interplay of material, form, and gesture assumes primacy.

Shen Fan's works come across as visually pure and harmonious compositions devoid of any extravagant or superfluous elements. With rare radicalism, he always accomplishes compositions full of discipline, rigor and perfection. Shen Fan creates abstract paintings and installations that disregard representation or narrative. Instead, he emphasizes the clear expressive methodology of the process of production. While at first glance Shen's oeuvre seems bound to purely aesthetic issues in modernist discourse, references to actual locations like mountains and rivers are plentiful.

Shen Fan was born in 1952 in Jiangyin, Jiangsu province. He graduated from Shanghai Light Industry Institute, Fine Arts Department in 1986. He resides and works in Shanghai. Selected exhibitions include Shanghai Kaleidoscope, Royal Ontario Museum (ROM), Toronto, Canada (2008), HyperDesign, Shanghai Biennale 2006, Shanghai Art Museum (2006), Chinese Maximalism, Millenium Art Museum (Beijing, 2003), Shanghai Abstract Art Group Show, Liu Haisu Art Museum, (Shanghai, 2002), Metaphysics 2001, Shanghai Art Museum (2002) and Shen Fan – New Works, ShanghART Gallery (Shanghai, 2001).

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Zhang Enli, *Tree in Winter I* (2008), oil on canvas, 250x200 cm

Zhang Enli portrays every detail and gesture of everyday objects that often seem down played or neglected in conventional painting. His brushstrokes almost comes close to traditional Chinese ink painting where every stroke on the canvas articulates details that are significant to the whole. The transparent application of paint, and the immediacy of his gesture, are contrasted to the meticulously planning and inquiry that foregrounds every new series of paintings: Zhang Enli's mode of engagement entails photographically documenting his close environment. He then employs the photo's claim on the real to develop his examination of his surroundings, though in a more intuitive and fragmented manner on the canvas.

Zhang Enli's recent idiosyncratic series of paintings signify a mild but crucial resistance to the cult of innovation, transience and contingency. The positioning and depiction of modest everyday objects in his work extend to an extremely perceptive take on presence .

Offering little in the way of narrative and solace, the works are fascinating but can be difficult to approach. These simple portraits of commonplace interiors refuse easy engagement. The works have intentionally been stripped off all explanatory contexts.

Zhang Enli was born in Jilin Province, China, in 1965. He graduated from the Arts & Design Institute of Wuxi Technical University, Wuxi, in 1989. Today he lives and works in Shanghai. Up-coming solo-exhibition at ShanghART H-Space, Shanghai (September 2008). Recent exhibitions include Zhang Enli - Hauser & Wirth, Zürich, Switzerland (2007), Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK (2007), PRE-EMPTIVE, Kunsthalle Bern, Switzerland (2006), Armory Show 2006, NY, USA, Infinite Painting - Contemporary Painting and Global Realism, Villa Manin - Centre for Contemporary Art, Passariano, Codroipo (Udine), Italy (2006).

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Zhou Tiehais, *Lady Anne Carr* (2008), paintbrush, 100x79 cm



Zhou Tiehais, *Bamboo*, paintbrush, 180x180 cm

The key ingredients that drive Zhou Tiehais's unsettling yet amusing practice includes appropriating classical imagery, generating ironic projections, proclaiming laconic yet heartfelt discourse and actively subverting painterly craft. His work's power to amaze and provoke is the result of a host of strategies that mix antagonism with sincerity. He takes on the role of both artist and patron. He permits himself to 'play' with art's historical baggage by making paintings that are simultaneously self-aware and self-abnegating, virtuosic and pop all within a single canvas. He manipulates acclaimed magazine covers for his own purposes and articulates the notion of 'artistic agency' within current conditions of the art world and global economy. He makes self-promotional images that subvert the establishment notion of how artists should look and behave. In the "Placebo" series, Zhou Tiehais ironically replaces his subject's faces with a camel's head. Where "Placebo" takes the idea of cultural 'exchange' and appropriation between East and West, the "Tonic" series is an attempt to magnify Chinese traditional culture to a dizzying size.

Zhou Tiehais was born in 1966 in Shanghai, and attended the art school at the university there, where he also lives and works today. Solo-exhibitions include Another History, Shanghai Art Museum, Shanghai, Placebo, Hara Museum, Tokyo, Japan, and Zhou Tiehais, Kunsthall, Rotterdam, The Netherlands. Zhou Tiehais has exhibited extensively internationally at acclaimed institutions such as The Whitney Museum of American Art (New York), Tate Liverpool, Hamburger Kunsthalle, Deichtorhallen (Hamburg), Hamburger Bahnhof (Berlin) and the Mori Art Museum (Tokyo). Additionally, he participated in the 48th Venice Biennale, 5th Shanghai Biennale and 4th Gwangju Biennale.

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Zeng Fanzhi, *Untitled* (2008)

Zeng Fanzhi delivers an art that feels new, not in its premises but in its refined vitality. His late sublime paintings signify a shift in his focus from a formal concern with the representation of existential unsettlement to an interest in how we imagine ourselves interacting with nature. Still, in his newly developed landscape paintings, there is a notion of permanent escape – an attempt to inhabit the uninhabitable. These images are expressively abstract. Rendered in cool shades of pink, black and blue, they represent the tension of failed community and human loneliness. Within these large-scale images there is a notion of fragility and vulnerability; like an attempt to create a terrain of uncertainty that inhabits both characters and landscape depicted. The grand scale of the paintings lends them a certain suggestive and sublime appearance. When viewed, the paintings constantly seem to evolve and create new particular impressions. The images reflect a social reality that is made up of multiple signifying systems of which the landscape is just one.

Zeng Fanzhi was born in 1964 in Wuhan province and studied oil painting at the Wuhan Art Academy. Today he lives and works in Beijing. Recent solo-exhibitions include Tai Ping You Xiang, ShanghART Beijing (2008), Zeng Fanzhi, Musee d'art Moderne Saint-Etienne Metropole, France (2007), Zeng Fanzhi – Idealism, National Art Museum, Singapore (2007).

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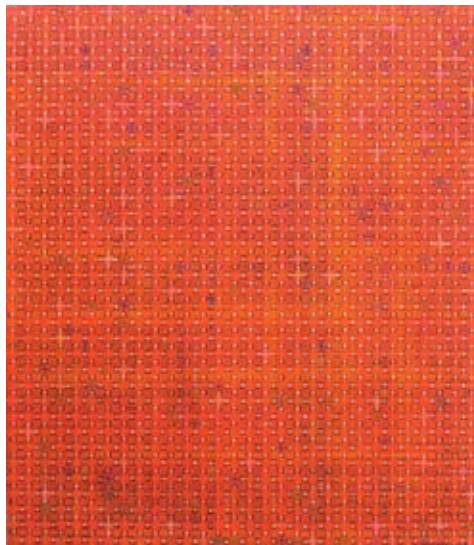
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Ding Yi, *Appearance of Crosses 2008-20* (2008), chalk, charcoal and pencil on canvas, 140x120 cm



Ding Yi, *Appearance of Crosses 2008-19* (2008), chalk, charcoal and pencil on canvas, 140x120 cm

Ding Yi's signature takes the form of a cross that is repeatedly and carefully constructed across surfaces. With this minimalist visual rhetoric, painting is not about illusion and the representation of objects. Instead, Ding Yi explores an abstract aesthetic through the systematic repetition and direct visual representation of the cross. Created by the layered intersection of vertical, horizontal and diagonal lines across the surface, the paintings encourage the process of perception. Viewed from a distance, everything gradually converges. But viewed up-close, the subtlety of lines and color are vibrantly present. The paintings simultaneously refer to themselves, as paintings per se, and the reality around them that has only been distilled into grids and check pattern.

The formal method of abstraction and the variations within the repetitive patterns makes his work an intriguing case for the relevance of abstract painting in contemporary art. The consistent formal element of the cross in the work embodies a complex interplay of precision and dynamics.

Ding Yi is today regarded as the forerunner of internationally acclaimed Chinese abstract artists. Recent solo-exhibitions include Appearance of Crosses 1989-2007, Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna (Mambo), Bologna, Italy (2008), Ding Yi – Recent Works, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, Germany (2008), and Paris (2007), Ding Yi, IKON Gallery, Birmingham, UK (2006). He has exhibited widely, such as at the Venice Biennale (1993), Yokohama Triennial (2001) and Guangzhou Biennale (2002).

Ding Yi was born in 1962 in Shanghai where he works and lives today. He graduated from Shanghai Arts and Crafts Institute in 1983 and Shanghai University, Fine Arts Department in 1990.

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Lu Chunsheng, *Tumu is coming soon-16* (2007), c-print, 68x90 cm, ed. of 8

Lu Chunsheng, *Tumu is coming soon-8* (2007), c-print, 68x90 cm, ed. of 8

Lu Chunsheng, *Tumu is coming soon-4* (2007), c-print, 68x90 cm, ed. of 8

Lu Chunsheng, *Tumu is coming soon-16* (2007), c-print, 68x90 cm, ed. of 8

Lu Chunsheng's recent photography and video works elaborate invented landscapes in a style that is both magical and hyper-real. At first glance these visual fictions often seem bizarre and absurd. Yet these dream-like places are also scattered with evidence of a more everyday reality. Within the borders of his impossible realms, Lu Chunsheng distributes bits and pieces of a familiar, more comprehensible reality. These are mystical spaces that have become oddly dominated by industrial architecture and abandoned factories. However apparently distant or lost in space and time, these mystic states have also been penetrated by contemporary personas where the magical meets the mundane.

Lu Chunsheng graduated from China National Academy of Fine Arts, Department of Sculpture. He has exhibited widely in China and abroad. He resides and works in Shanghai. Recent exhibitions include a solo-show 'The Materialists are all asleep' at The Red Mansion Foundation, London (UK, 2008). Lu Chunsheng participated at 10th International Istanbul Biennale (Turkey, 2007), 27th Bienal de Sao Paulo (Brazil, 2006), China Contemporary Art, Architecture and Visual Culture, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen (Rotterdam, 2006), The Thirteen: Chinese Video Now, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center (New York, 2006), Out of Sight, De Appel Foundation (Amsterdam, 2005).

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Sun Xun, *Requiem* (2007), animation film, 7,21', ed. of 6



Sun Xun, *Shock of Time* (2006), single channel video animation, 5,29', ed. of 6

Sun Xun's main oeuvre consists of a series of highly interrogative and impressive animated films, almost always held in black and white. In these, he explores how history is constructed and narrated. His recent animated films such as 'Magician's Lie' (2005), 'Mythos' (2006), and 'Requiem' (2007) all feature the same character, namely a magician, easily recognizable and always dressed with a tall hat. In these films, the viewer follows the protagonist's journey in search of another world, a better place to be. We witness the magician and his expedition through an apocalyptic world where the earth is set on fire in dramatic dream-like scenarios. Sun Xun also touches upon such themes as society's development and revolution, referencing paraphrases by Marx, Adorno, and Horkheimer.

Sun Xun was born in 1980 in Fuxin, China. Today he lives and works in Hangzhou. In 2005 he graduated from the Print-making Department of China Academy of Fine Arts. In 2005 he established Phi Animation Studio. Recent solo-exhibitions include *New China*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, USA (2008), *Coal Spell*, Platform China Project Space, Beijing (2008), *Mythos*, ShanghART F-Space, Shanghai (2007/2008). Recent group exhibitions and film festivals include *Refresh: Chinese Emerging Artists*, ARARIO, Beijing (2007/2008), *Art Did Not Have a Standard*, MoCA, Shanghai (2007), *China Power Station: Part II*, Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo, Norway (2007), 2008 Santa Cruz Film Festival, USA (2008), 54th International Short Film Festival Oberhausen, Germany (2008), 25th Torino Film Festival, Italy (2007), AURORA Film Festival, Norwich, UK (2007), 23rd International Berlin Short Film Festival, Germany (2007).

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Zhang Ding, *Great Era-3* (2007), c-print, 102x153 cm, ed. of 10

Zhang Ding's most recent film "Great Era" (2007) is a surrealistic Fellini-inspired voyage using Shanghai as its theatrical backdrop. The protagonist rides along staged tableaux with his bike (disguised as a horse) in scenes perfectly synchronized with the film's sound score.

Zhang Ding's interest in bizarre stories is also evident in his film installation "Pry" (2005-ongoing). Here, he explores the relationship between the viewer and the viewed, superiority and inferiority, exploiter and exploited. This is done with rare sensitivity and non-judgmental loyalty towards featured destinies, all of which share a common denominator of difference. These differences are manifested sexually, religiously and politically, and often with severe consequences to the protagonists. The installation, which also incorporates photographs, belongs to the tradition of socially conscious documentary film. Most touching and thought provoking is the story of a middle-aged transvestite including burlesque anecdotes about his homoerotic, at times excessive, experiences. His story reveals a life that society would criticize as degenerate. Yet, Zhang Ding presents it as a life lived with both joy and pain. The featured characters' narratives speak for themselves without resorting to stereotypical or condescending commentary. Zhang Ding's intention is almost celebratory in allowing the audience a rare glimpse into lives of human beings that have, against all odds, managed to maintain their pride and self-respect.

Zhang Ding was born in 1980 in Gansu. He resides and works in Shanghai. He graduated from North West Minority University, Oil Painting Department in 2003. He studied at China Academy of Fine Arts, New Media Art from 2003 to 2004. Recent exhibitions include Building Code Violations, Long March Space, Beijing (2008), China Power Station: Part II, Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo, Norway (2007), TOOLS, solo-exhibition, ShanghART Gallery, Shanghai (2007), Big City and A Lot of Ash – A Lot of Dust, BizArt Center, Shanghai (2005). Zhang Ding is currently Artist in Residence at Gallery Krinzinger, Vienna, Austria.

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