

Chinese Relativity: Part 2

A selection of Contemporary Chinese Painting and Photography

Tuesday, November 20th – Saturday, December 22, 2007

Cai Guo-Qiang, Wei Dong, Zang Fazhi, Zhang Huan, Fang Lijun, Feng Mengbo, Wang Qingsong, He Sen, Yang Shaobin, Zhang Xiaogang, Su Xinping, Wang Yaqiang

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Stux Gallery is pleased to present *Chinese Relativity: Part 2*, a follow up to the highly successful *Chinese Relativity: Part 1* exhibition that took place one year ago at our gallery.

Part 2, which showcases a selection of well established figures of the Contemporary Chinese Art scene, focuses primarily on the individual in relation to group socio-politics. The show addresses several influences upon the selected artists, including: geographic location, surrounding cultural influences, the movement from academia to popular culture, reverence for history, the disavowal of iconography and the manner in which material can convey political intent.

The world's increasing interest in the Contemporary Chinese art scene has always been understood in conjunction with notable episodes of political upheaval; starting with the death of Mao Tse-tung in 1978 and including the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Developing their practices at this time, in art academies with a strong focus upon technical disciplines, the imprint of academic social-realism is visible in the work of both Chinese artists who later remained in their native country and in the work of those who spurned the repression of Mao's cultural revolution through geographic relocation. Regardless of their working environment, the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989 further exacerbated the Chinese art community to seek out alternative spaces – mental and physical – in which to produce their work, thus leading to a greater exchange of ideas between Mainland China and the West as shown in the works of **Cai Guo-Qiang, Wei Dong and Zhang Xiaogang**.

The 1990's saw China shift toward an open market economy and the emergence of Political Pop as a popular trend among painters in China. Here Western Pop and American cultural iconography mingled with earlier forms of Chinese visual propaganda creating potent juxtapositions. The irreverence these artists displayed in ironically cheerful palates soon allowed for the inclusion of symbols from everyday life, (**Feng Mengbo, Su Xinping, Fang Lijun**) Neo-Reality and Neo-Figuration (**Yang Shaobin, Zhang Fazhi, He Sen**), and a broadening of iconoclasm towards Chinese history. Also during this period, the use of experimental media, such as performance and installation art, originally banned in China, grew in popularity. Similarly there was a notable surge in the use of photography (**Zhang Huan, Wang Qingsong, Wang Yaqiang**). Thus, this group of artists were able to declare a new political boldness and an explicit personal and social awareness.

Severe political turmoil has always had a powerful relative effect on the practices of artists. The above group is notable for their openness and inclusiveness in locating places to work, methodologies to experiment with, imagery to dissolve and repurpose due to the profoundly narrow surroundings their careers began in. The motto of Soviet socialist realism – “Art for the people” – has been modified by this selection of artists, to art that locates the individual person within the group, whatever space they might inhabit.

For further information please contact the gallery at Joshua@stuxgallery.com