

Press Release

Zurich, 25 September 2007

A POINT IN THE RED – CONTEMPORARY CHINESE PAINTING
LI Tianbing, LIU Wei, REN Hui, SHI Zeping, ZHAO Gang

curated by Ric Rossi

18 October – 22 November 2007

Despite the variety of the styles encountered in this exhibition, the artists who have been chosen for it share concerns for the future of China, whose capitalist, post-Mao society has embraced a culture of materialism. They comment about the social changes without judging too harshly, but the very fact that they bring it up tells us that there is a real concern about what will happen next. While no one can predict the prospects as yet before us, it is clear from the works in the show that China, its past achievements and present potential, looms large in the imaginations of the painters at hand.

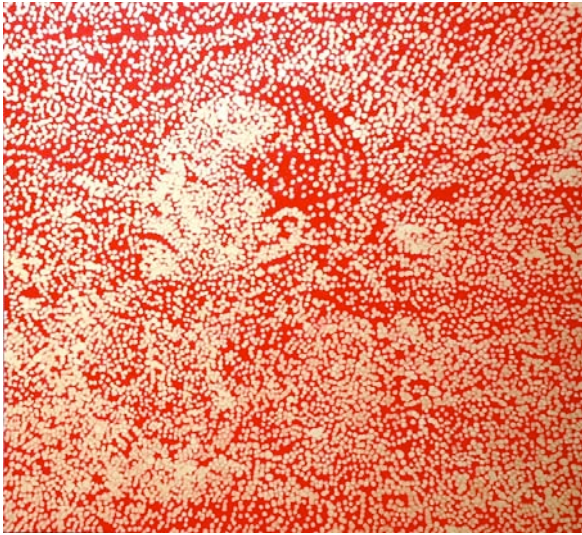


Arbre I, 2002, 200 x 200 cm, oil on canvas

LI Tianbing

*1974 in Guilin; lives and works in Paris

Tianbing Li, who is the youngest of the four artists in this show, resides in Paris after having been educated at the Ecole supérieure des Beaux-Arts. Like many artists of his generation, he addresses both Western and Asian issues, on both technical and thematic levels. Many of his series allude to the increasingly commercial, material aspects of a changing Chinese society. His lovely landscapes with bright colors suddenly transform themselves into sceneries of corrupted, polluted and decaying elements. All at once we are introduced to Li's philosophy, which is Asian in its sense of continuous change. In his 'Arbres' and 'Nature Morte' series he makes references to traditional Chinese motifs while criticizing our increasingly globalized consumer culture.



The Sun is Too Bright – Swim, 2007, 200 x 220 cm, oil on canvas

REN Hui

*1957 in Nanjing; lives and works in Songzhuang

Ren Hui began as a poet and writer, but in 1991 he decided to become a full-time artist. He has exhibited in Germany and America, as well as Beijing. His oil-on-canvas portraits, completed by his use of white drops in groups of greater and lesser density, show us the bare outlines of a face. The sharp psychological description implied in his art is his forte. In one painting we find a face of a youth, a young child really; in another, we see the portrait of a man blowing into what looks like a piece of glass. In both cases, white drops arranged in clusters create the features of the figures.

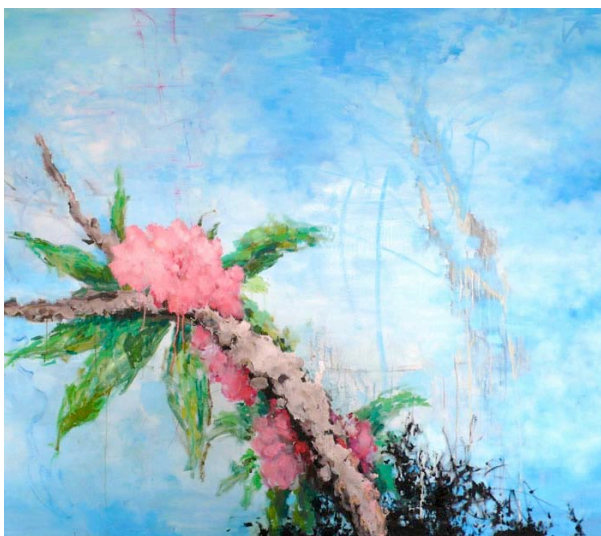


Untitled (Detail), 2007, 4 x 155 x 80 cm, oil on canvas

SHI Zeping

*1963 in Nanjing; lives and works in Songzhuang

Shi Zeping studied at the Tianjin Academy of Art. He has shown mostly in Beijing with a couple of early appearances in exhibitions in Nanjing and, more recently, Shangdong, Shanghai, and Hong Kong. His contribution to the show, which consists of three children, dressed in uniform and sitting on top of one another is an ironic version of patriotism. In each group of three, one of the youths holds a red flag. The theme is serious, but also, like much of the work in this show, absurd. Shi connects with the jaded cynicism many must feel on seeing the flag of communism raised in a contemporary society that is now deeply capitalistic.



Flowers, 2007, 150 x 170 cm, oil on canvas

LIU Wei

*1965 in Beijing; lives and works in Beijing

Liu Wei, who is a leading artist in the Songzhuang group, took his bachelor's degree from the printmaking department in the Central Academy of Fine Arts. Wei played an important role in the Cynical Realism movement, reminding us of the absurdities of historical China. He sees life in China without the idealist's preconception; his rough style and corrosive content, in which familiar icons such as babies and Chairman Mao are described, show an artist at odds with his experience in China. Indeed, his provocative manner of painting attacks the self-satisfied bureaucracy of modern and contemporary China.



The Couple, 2007, 130 x 150 cm, oil on canvas

ZHAO Gang

*1961 in Beijing; lives and works in Beijing

Zhao is the youngest member of the original Star group and left China at a very young age, moving first to Holland, where he studied at the academy of fine art in Maastricht, and then to America, where he was a student at Vassar College and Bard College. Zhao has recently returned to Beijing. He has changed direction in style from his early abstract works to an art that is figurative and politically aware. His interpretations of a young Mao with his wife, a formal wedding, or a white-faced woman asleep in a bed of flowers on either side of her show him to be a powerful narrative painter interested in portraying both a historical and imaginary China.

The artists Liu Wei und Zhao Gang will be present at the opening reception:

Opening Reception: Thursday, 18 October 2007, 6–9 pm

Exhibition dates: 18 October 2007 – 22 November 2007

Opening hours: Monday to Friday 11 am–6.30 pm, Saturday 12am–4pm or by appointment

For information or additional images for press please contact:

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Press release text and images may be downloaded at:

<http://www.kashyahildebrand.org/zurich/press/pointinthered>

Upcoming exhibition: 29.11.–12.01.2008: Henrik Löning – *Shadows*