

EXOTIC STRANGER

CURATED BY BAO DONG



GALERIE PARIS-BEIJING

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Cai Lei | Chen Xiaoyun | Chen Yujun & Chen Yufan | Gong Jian | He Xiangyu | Jiang Zhi | Li Jinghu | Liu Qingyuan | Shi Qing | Song Kun | Weng Yunpeng | Xin Yunpeng | Xu Zhen | Yang Maoyuan

Group Show from March 12th to April 30th 2016

Opening on Saturday March 12th from 5 p.m to 9:00 p.m

Press Preview on Friday March 11th from 3pm to 5pm with the artists and the curator

Galerie Paris-Beijing is proud to announce *Exotic Stranger*, a group show curated by acclaimed independent curator Bao Dong. The exhibition brings together fourteen artists (mostly born in the 70's under the one-child policy) who are all active in the renewal of Chinese Contemporary Art Scene.

From the eyes of a curator coming from the same generation of the exhibited artists, *Exotic Stranger* gathers a bold and eclectic selection of works, ranging from video art to painting, photography and installation and attesting to the formal variety that characterizes the art scene in China today.

ON THE EDGE OF THE UNKNOWN

In *Stranger Shores*, a collection of critical essays, Nobel prize winner J.M. Coetzee, expresses his duality dilemma: being both South African born and son of Western descendants at once. Being aware of the western literature legacy without ignoring its literal local anchorage. How to carry on the inherent transcendence of literature without considering its political function? The author faces this dilemma with disillusion and detachment.

The title underlines the duality of the author: the multiple connotations of the word "Stranger" qualifying both what is "out of the ordinary", "unfamiliar" and what is "foreign", "unknown", reflects the author's double reference to both his studies and his own local interpretation.

J.M. Coetzee's identity dilemma can equally exist at all levels for Chinese contemporary artists. Even if Chinese contemporary art has been strongly influenced by overseas trends, its one-sided and outdated cultural images cannot overcome a reading based on Eastern symbols and with a political interpretation. This is why it has always been considered as different.

On the other hand, because of the influence that Western culture has had on Chinese contemporary art from the very beginning, it has always been reflected-on and broadcast inside a closed circle, without developing any sense of belonging within a larger part of Chinese Society.

Chinese Contemporary art was treated as a « stranger » by the West but also as « something coming from the outside » by the native's point of view.

In this context, many Chinese artists strive to link their work to the local experience while avoiding territoriality that would reduce their works to a kind of multiculturalism sample. Therefore, they avoid traditional eastern symbols and also reject the rigid political characteristics. Regarding the approach of the western public, the work of Chinese artists is perceived as something apart beyond the frame of reference of Multiculturalism. This is precisely where the power of Chinese culture and contemporary art lies.

BAO DONG

Born in 1979 in Anhui, China Lives
and works in Beijing, China

Art critic and independent curator Bao Dong successfully contributes to the recognition of a new generation of artists. He conceived one of the most significant exhibitions of the last decade in China : *ON / OFF : China's Young Artists in Concept and Practice*, at UCCA Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (2013).

He is a contributing editor of *LEAP magazine*, and guest writer for *cn.NYTtimes.com* as well as *cn.Artforum.com*.

He was awarded an *Asian Cultural Council (CCA)* fellowship grant in 2014, and selected to participate at the Independent *Vision Curatorial Award* of the prestigious *Independent Curator International (ICI)*.

In 2013, he conceived a publication with three other curators and critics: *Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art Studies*, an annual publication focused on research topics, archiving and exhibition studies of chinese contemporary art. He is a strong supporter of closer work between art professionals and non-profit art museum across China.

FEATURED ARTISTS

CAI LEI, born in 1983, Jilin, lives and works in Beijing, China

CHEN XIAOYUN, born in 1971, Hubei, lives and works in Beijing, China

CHEN YUJUN, born in 1976, Fujian, lives and works in Shanghai, Chine

CHEN YUFAN, born in 1973, Fujian, lives and works in Hangzhou, Chine

GONG JIAN, born in 1978, Hubei, lives and works in Hubei, Chine

HE XIANGYU, born in 1986, Liaoning, lives and works in Beijing, China

JIANG ZHI, born in 1971, Hunan, lives and works in Beijing, China

LI JINGHU, born in 1972, Guangdong, lives and works in Dongguan, Chine

LIU QINGYUAN, born in 1972, Sichuan, lives and works in Guangzhou, Chine

SHI QING, born in 1969, Inner-Mongolie, lives and works in Shanghai, Chine

SONG KUN, born in 1977, Inner-Mongolia, lives and works in Beijing, China

WENG YUNPENG, born in 1964, Jiangxi, lives and works in Shanghai, Chine

XIN YUNPENG, born in 1982, à Beijing, lives and works in Beijing, China

XU ZHEN, born in 1977, à Shanghai, lives and works in Shanghai, Chine

YANG MAOYUAN, born in 1966, Liaoning, lives and works in Beijing, China



CAI LEI

Cai Lei 's works explore with poetry the geometric notion of volume, placed mid - way between painting and installation, fragile and intimate, resulting from his constant research on the notions of space and time. The artist is known for recreating human figures with astonishing hyper-realism. His sculptures depict the human body with all its flaws by focusing on the surface texture and the brutal splendor of reality.

Cai Lei, *Ambiguity*, 2015, Acrylic on canvas, 340 x 240 cm



CHEN XIAOYUN

Photographer and multimedia artist Chen Xiaoyun struggles with China's tumultuous recent history and breath-taking modernization. For the series *The Flesh assimilates the world*, he stages ordinary scenes containing incongruous elements. The ambiguity comes from the association between the nudity of his characters adopting a submissive position with an object symbolizing labour, physical effort, linked to everyday experiences.

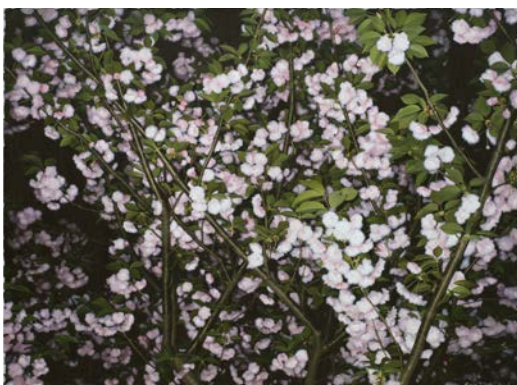
Chen Xiaoyun, *Contacting with Self - Chaos*, 2013, Inkjet Print, , 150 x 120 cm



CHEN YUJUN & CHEN YUFAN

Both considered as major actors of the chinese independent artistic scene, the Chen Brothers work on the notion of space and territoriality with a reference to their cultural heritage. The multidisciplinary approach of their artistic practice leads them to the creation of ambitious structures, made of recycled materials and theatrical sceneries, strongly influenced by the architecture of their native province of Fujian.

Chen Yujun & Chen Yufan, *Temporary architecture n°03*, 2011, Mixed Media, 200 x 110 x 26 cm



GONG JIAN

His intimist paintings are inspired by familiar places of his daily life. In *Observation of a grey tree* and *Portrait of a tree*, the same subject has been painted during two different moments of its leaving cycle : autumn and spring.

Based on Michel Foucault's analysis of a painting by Edouard Manet pointing at " what the viewer cannot see", the artist decided to develop his practice starting with the question " How to look at things? " He chose then to use a flash to take photos of his subjects at nighttime. The light and colours obtained within one thousandth of a second belong indeed to a vision of reality that is yet unknown to us.

Gong Jian, *Portrait of a tree*, 2016, Acrylic on canvas, 111,5 x 150 cm



HE XIANGYU

Leading figure of a new generation of conceptual artists, He Xiangyu explores a large range of media expressing his point of view on social and cultural issues. His ambitious installations reveal the provocative nature of his works, as the *Cola project* (2009) a huge post-apocalyptic landscape of a black matter made of coal-like crystals. This material is the residue of a long extraction process: over the course of a year the artist boiled down 127 tons of Coca Cola, criticizing the effects of western consumerism on contemporary China.

He Xiangyu, *Wisdom Tower (A Pretty Girl)*, 2013, Mixed Media, 2 x 2 x 7 cm



JIANG ZHI

Multi-faced artist, Jiang Zhi manipulates images combining reality and hi-tech digital technologies to create works that revisit our notions of time and instant moment.

Conceived after a painful loss, his photographic series *Love Letters* help him to express his feeling of grief through the flowers, a symbol of beauty and love, consumed by the flame, metaphor of our ephemerality.

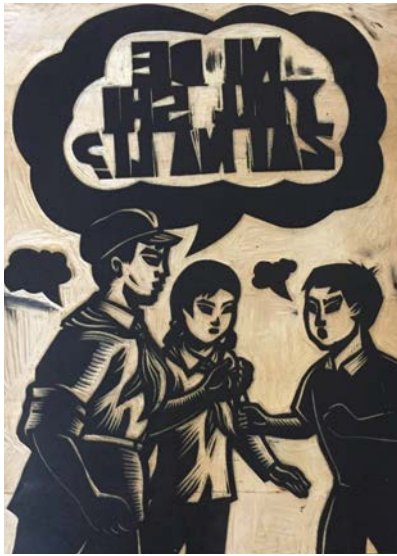
Jiang Zhi, *Love Letters n°28*, 2014, Archival Inkjet Print, 106 x 80 cm



LI JINGHU

The *Rainbow* series of Li Jinghu deals with questions of mass production and obsolescence. He uses every-day objects found in the highly industrialized region of the Pearl River Delta. This joyful symbol is a tribute to the workers of this province also known as the “World Factory” and a caustic critic of China’s blind development.

Li Jinghu, *Rainbow*, 2009, Second-hand objects, Various sizes



LIU QINGYUAN

In *Topic* series (2008), Liu Qingyuan resumes the old tradition of Chinese woodcutting used for propaganda during the communist Regime. He twists the original imagery of socialism-realism and combining them with the contemporary aesthetics of Manga and comics. The artist is interested in the impact that advertising methods and communication systems have on the population.

Liu Qinyuan, *Serie TOPIC*, 2008, Woodcut original plates, 62,5 x 46,5 cm



SHI QING

Shi Qing is known for his reinterpretation of old tales of Chinese popular tradition through performance, installation and new media. The novel becomes the starting point of a questioning on China social issues such as the legacy of socialism, consumerism, environment or energy. *Electricity Controls Shanghai* (2006) is emblematic of Qing's reflection on the economic development of his country: a mixed-media installation comprising a bicycle sprouting neon rods, symbol of Chinese people producing energy and wealth.

Shi Qing, *Wuhan Climate*, 2014, Mixed media, Various sizes



SONG KUN

Born just after Mao's death, Song Kun grew up with the rise of consumerism, subjectivity and individualism that characterized the 80's and their constant confrontation between two opposite systems.

In 2006, she adopts the approach of a blogger producing one work a day during an entire year. *It's my life* reports the story of a young woman in China, full of sincerity and frustration, nourished by daily life experiences. Today, Song Kun articulates a new visual language to express concerns that are less overtly political than those of their predecessors, becoming a symbol of a new kind of artist in China, intellectual, urban and free from conventions.

Song Kun, *Dance on Knife*, 2011, Oil on canvas, 46 x 65 cm



WENG YUNPENG

From the perspective of an independent intellectual, Weng Yunpeng holds a narrative point of view on many sensitive issues in today Chinese society: politics, education, value outlook, identity within the context of the Country's open-door policy started more than three decades ago. In *a Random Narrative of China* (2009), the words pronounced by mechanical voice system are aimed to touch a deeper layer of significance. Despite their deconstruction and profound social criticism, the images reveal the artist's sympathetic awareness towards human society.

Weng Yunpeng, *A Random Narrative of China*, 2009, Vidéo, 8"15'



XIN YUNPENG

Xin Yunpeng goes against all conventions and the commonly accepted notion of Art. His ethnic belonging to the Muslim Minority of Uyghurs has a strong influence on his works, imbued with social criticism, yet not bereft of a certain poetry. In his videos he likes to play with the viewer's perceptions and understanding of what appears to be a familiar experience: the use of a fictional techniques allows him to control the notion of space and temporality.

Xin Yunpeng, *20130329*, 2013, Video, 27"



XU ZHEN

His irreverent and provocative practice tackles socio-political taboos of contemporary China and undermines the Western preconceptions on Chinese art and its market.

In 2009, he demonstrates once again its capacity to reinvent itself with the creation of *MadIn Company*, a pluri-disciplinary cultural company devoted to art creation, production, promotion, support and curation.

Most recently, he worked on the confrontation between classical masterpieces of Western and Eastern statuary, like the famous sculpture *Eternity* representing the union between the *Winged Victory of Samothrace* and a famous *Bodhisattva*, currently on display in the permanent collection of the Foundation Louis Vuitton.

Xu Zhen, *Small Change*, 2011 - 2014, One Renminbi Banknotes, 20 x 50 x 17 cm



YANG MAOYUAN

Yang Maoyuan is particularly interested in the concept of the "sphere", considered as a symbol of harmony and perfect representation of reality in the Western culture.

His knowledge in taxidermy techniques helps him to create a fascinating bestiary: sheep, camels and horses, lose their original form and become strange figures recalling spherical balloons.

The obsessive use of the sphere, associated with the action of blowing, is interpreted as a metaphor of life: the ultimate substantial form of our universe and the original source of all beings.

Yang Maoyuan, *Camel n°2*, 2014, Mixed media, 270 x 190 x 190 cm

High definition images are available on demand.
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We remain at your entire disposal should you need any further high-images or any interviews request.

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IT'S FUNNY BECAUSE IT'S TRUE

Cai Dongdong | Ghost of a dream | Myeongbeom Kim | Gao Lei | Simon Nicaise | Bertrand Planes | Mehmet Ali Uysal

Until February, 27th 2016

UPCOMING EVENTS

MIAO XIAOCHUN

GRAMMAR

Saturday, May 7th - Saturday, July 2nd 2016

ART PARIS - ART FAIR

Chul-Hyun Ahn | Jae-Hyo Lee | Myeongbeom Kim | Seon - Ghi Bahk | Wonseoung Won | Yang Yongliang

Thursday, March 31st - Sunday, April 3rd 2016