



Huang Min



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Huang Min / Art Cologne



Ma Jun

Huang Min

PREVIEW

L. A. GALERIE, FRANKFURT
- Juan Davila, May 25 to July 21, 2007

EXHIBITIONS

- Oliver Boberg / Naoya Hatakeyama / Tajji Matsue:
Spectacular City, NRW Forum Düsseldorf, January 26 to May 6, 2007
- Peter Bialobrzeski: Die Liebe zum Licht, Museum Bochum,
January 20 to April 9, 2007
- Julian Faulhaber: Goethe Institut, Hong Kong, April to May, 2007
- Liu Ding: - Project Room, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, May, 2007
- Tiger, Universal Studios, Beijing, June 2007
- Products-Samples from the Transition,
Orange County Museum, Los Angeles, July, 2007
- Tracey Moffatt / Mabel Palacin: Bildschirmage oder das neue Bild.
100 Videos to think new about the world, Casino Luxembourg,
March 24 to June 17, 2007
- Juan Davila: Documenta XII, Kassel, June 16 to 23 September, 2007

ART FAIRS

- Quality Street fine art fair frankfurt, April 13 to 15, 2007
- Art Cologne, Köln, April 18 to 22, 2007
- DFoto 2007, San Sebastian, Spain, May 3 to 6, 2007

L. A. GALERIE, BEIJING

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L. A. Galerie Lothar Albrecht presents:

Ma Jun Huang Min

March 2 to May 12, 2007

you and your friends are cordially invited to the opening on Friday, March 2, from 7 p. m.

The artists are present.

In March and April, 2007, L. A. Galerie is showing the works of two young Chinese artists Huang Min (b. 1975) and Ma Jun (b. 1974). Both are graduates of the renowned Beijing Central Academy of Fine Arts, where Huang Min majored in Painting, while her partner Ma Jun studied Sculpture. China's artistic tradition plays an important role in both artists' works.

Ma Jun, who for his final work at the Academy in 2003 created a full-size luxury car from clay, used the traditional Chinese porcelain-making technique for the smaller objects of his "New China Series" (begun in 2005). The small TV sets, cassette recorders, cars, cola bottles and cans, and other model products of

Western affluent society, are made in Jindezhen. A center of Chinese porcelain production for more than 1000 years, Jindezhen in itself represents a symbol of Chinese art and culture. The glazes in the traditional colors, the floral patterns, the folkloristic subjects and the characteristic surfaces that make the objects appear like very valuable arts and crafts, therefore, are all familiar even to the Western viewer. This combination of the shapes and forms of "modern" Western products with traditional Chinese ways of production makes for hybrid objects. In an almost metaphorical way, the process of the models of industrial mass-production being fired and decorated in the traditional way exemplifies how a traditional pattern can cast over everything and turn it into something different. It



Ma Jun



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Ma Jun

also demonstrates, however, how arbitrarily these patterns can be utilized, as there no longer exists any meaningful interplay between object and decoration.

Ma Jun und Huang Min are part of a generation which already takes the effects of China's reforms and rapprochement to the West for granted. They face other questions than the generation before them, people such as Huang Min's teacher Liu Xiao-



Ma Jun

dong who were directly affected by the political upheavals beginning in the 1980s. Liu Xiaodong, one of China's most prominent contemporary artists, has

clearly been affected by his experience of Communist mass society breaking down into individuals whose fates and fortunes are suddenly up to themselves. In his neo-realistic paintings, consequently, the focus is on human individuality.

While her teacher portrays man as a single entity, bringing out personal moods and emotions, Huang Min rather looks at individuality from within a group context. The individual's chances for succeeding in a consumer society that values money more than anything else, and the feelings of alienation caused by the culture clash of East and West, irrespective of consumer goods being available all over the world, are central topics of her works. Both the gatherings of people painted on relatively large porcelain plates ("The People Series," 2005) and the watercolor albums, which serve as models for larger sized paintings ("Pieces," 2005/06), juxtapose collective action and individual experience. Single faces looking at the viewer



Ma Jun

can be distinguished from a crowd of people waiting; others stand out because they seem too big for the format of the picture, or because they are drawn in the manner of a caricature. Composed against the white background of the porcelain plates, the figures and groups of figures provide support for each other even though they are basically unrelated and seem to have met rather accidentally.

Huang Min's albums, drawn and watercolored onto traditional Chinese Xuan paper, are somewhat similar. Here she put together whole-body-portraits of "average" people removed, as it were, from everyday situations. The album "Pieces No. 2" for instance depicts differently dressed men in different standing positions; other albums examine walking, waiting, watching, sitting,



Huang Min

and praying. Often the situations that Huang Min is interested in are such where people are not actively doing anything, but rather waiting for something or on their way to someplace else, either in groups or as individuals. In "Pieces No. 9" we see the backs of people in contemporary, western clothing leaning over a railing and looking at a Chinese landscape drawn the traditional way in grey and black watercolors – a nostalgic view back into the past from a platform located in the present.

It might be debated how original these objects, Ma Jun's in particular, really are; in an interview Ma Jun explicitly linked his works to Claes Oldenburg and Pop Art. Western and also Russian art in general constitute a significant resource and inspiration for Chinese artists. What is more, the loss of traditional values and the onset of unrestrained consumerism are phenomena that the West experienced in the 1960s and 1970s, and which are now getting hold of China. Nevertheless, different problems and conditions prevail – art has held an official, political, affirmative status in China until today, and notions of "copy" versus "original" for one thing differ markedly. From a Western point of view, works of art originated in that context elude a universally valid interpretation.

Bettina Schmitt



Huang Min



Huang Min