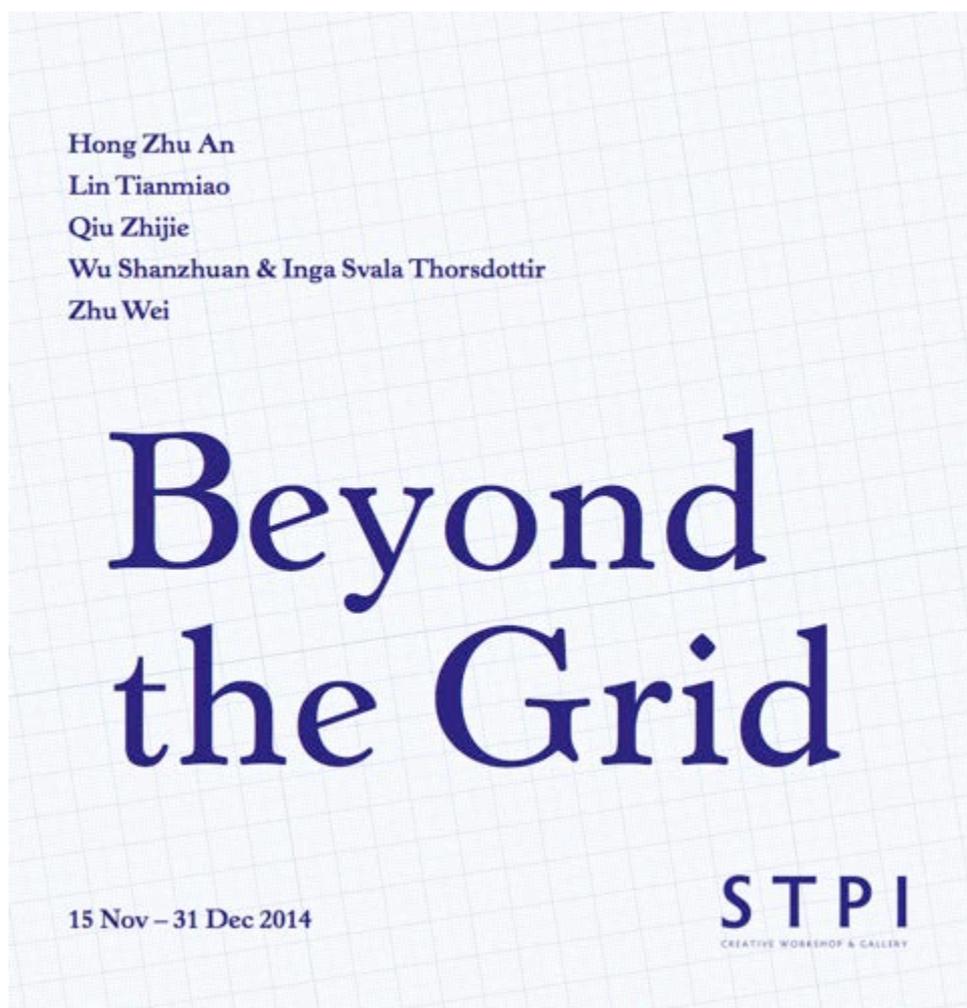


Media release

SIX INDIVIDUALS RE-DEFINE ‘CHINESE’ AESTHETIC WITH CREATIONS AT STPI



Market reports in recent years locate a surge in value of Chinese contemporary art:

Wu Guanzhong tops the list with staggering total of \$510 million. Zeng Fanzhi ranks #3 with grand volume of \$226 million; his works “The Last Supper” (2001) soaring to \$23.3 million and “Hospital Triptych No. 3” (1992) for \$14.6 million. Zhang Xiaogang rakes in total of \$104 million, with signature piece “Bloodline: Big Family No.3” (1995) breaking record at Sotheby’s Hong Kong at \$12 million.

– “Who Are The Top 30 Chinese Artists at Auction?” by Eileen Kinsella, artnet.com, 8 September 2014

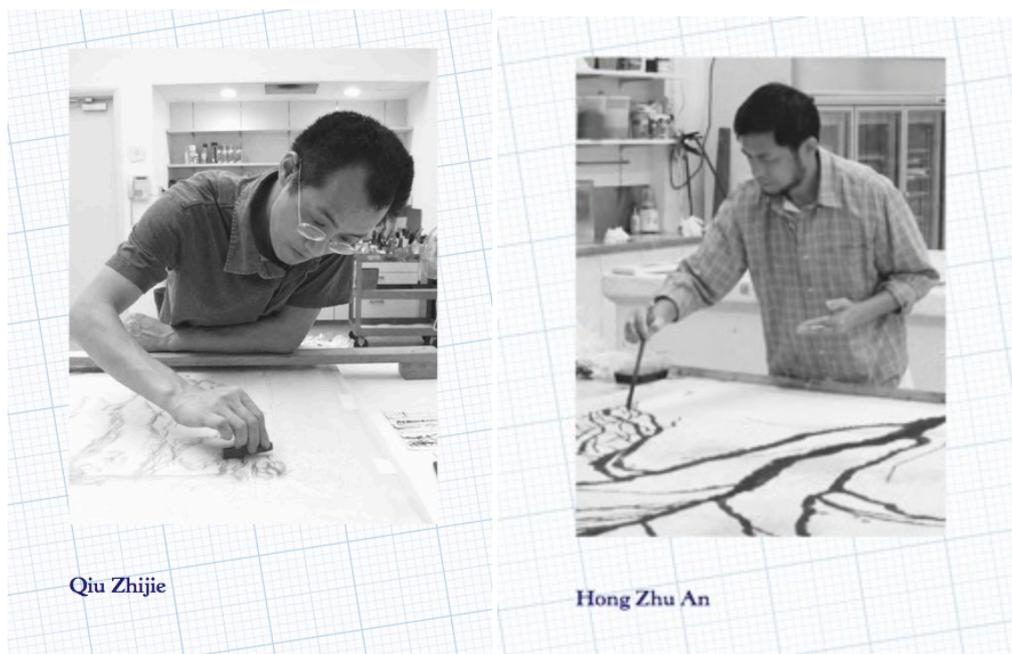
In the face of such erratic notions, what do we make of the torrent of Chinese art today?

Beyond the Grid participates in the dialogue through the lens of six solid artists who have paved extraordinary journeys, acknowledging their traditional roots and the socio-political conditions that surround them whilst propelling their visual expressivity towards internationalisation, away from the overtly subversive and satirical vocabularies present in the more defining styles of Political Pop and Cynical Realism – two commonly held impressions and expectations of contemporary Chinese aesthetic today.

Featuring distinct works on paper by Hong Zhu An, Lin Tianmiao, Qiu Zhijie, Zhu Wei and conceptualist duo Wu Shanzhuan & Inga Svala Thorsdottir, the exhibition looks at the ways in which these individuals challenge assumptions regarding authentic 'Chineseness' in art—in their creative oeuvre and explorations at STPI.

Known for exercising individualism outside the aesthetic grid or system, these artists demonstrate the end of a monolithic creative model in China with works at STPI illustrating unique artistic sensibilities and bold experimentations in paper and print methodologies. Enabled by the technical possibilities presented at STPI and spurred by the potentials of the medium, these artists achieve new directions, furthering nuanced tastes and expression beyond our expectations.

Exhibition until 31 December.



Artist talk with Qiu Zhijie | Sat 15 Nov 2:30 – 3:30pm

Artist talk & demonstration with Hong Zhu An | Sat 29 Nov 2:30 – 3:30pm

More information about each artist to follow.

QIU ZHIJIE (b. 1969, Zhangzhou, Fujian Province)



Top left
Where is the capital of Madagascar?
2008
Cast cotton paper with screen print of cotton paper pulp, pigmented cotton pulp, pigment stain and screen printed gampi paper
200 x 153.7 x 4.4 cm

Top right
All the Bigness have their scars

Bottom left
City of Failure

Bottom right
Don't Worry Lake

2008
Lithography printed on STPI handmade paper with screen printed acrylic sheet
128 x 102.5 cm

“Qiu Zhujie is interesting for the diversity of his practice, and the way he combines writing and curatorial work with his own explorations as an artist. It is his ability to work together with others, often in directly collaborative ways that opens him and his work up to a degree of freedom that is unusual within Chinese contemporary art circles. Qiu has never limited himself to one medium or one approach. That is also what makes his work so dynamic.” –Karen Smith, art critic, in an interview with Sonia Kolesnikov Jessop

Known for his conceptual multimedia works—not least of them a method called “calli-photography” that fuses Chinese calligraphy with video works, installation and performance art—Qiu Zhijie is one of China’s most radical and experimental artists, as well as one of the most diverse. Informed by historical, social and academic issues of significant cultural import, Qiu’s creative expositions and fearless expansion in the boundaries of art has taken his works into the realms of social action, making him a significant force in Chinese art today.

“Qiu consistently questions the cultural foundations upon which contemporary China is understood and perceived, from both a national and international perspective. Concepts of time, cultural memory, the meaning and role of historical consciousness, the questioning of what constitutes the “contemporary”, all of these and more are important subjects to which Qiu uniquely investigates...”
– Long March Space Gallery

The works at STPI serve as a conceptual map to Qiu’s future installations and developments of the “Nanjing Yangtze River Bridge Suicide Intervention Project”—a project considered to be the largest sociological and artistic undertaking in the Chinese art world. Exploring universal and critical contemporary issues of freedom and destiny through geopolitical and psychological attachments to *Nanjing City*, Qiu stimulates the imagination and hope of a future by engaging with real stories, people, histories and the symbol of irony—*Nanjing Yangtze Bridge*.

“Reviewing Qiu’s career, its amazing to see how he has expanded upon his core concerns. From a painful as well as sentimental awareness of transience and fragility, Qiu has successfully created an art that is stimulated by this sense of finitude. His idiosyncratic researches have embarked on an archeology of the mind that promises to excavate not only knowledge and sensibility, but mystery and the possibilities that lie beyond.” – Chang Tsong-zung, curator and art critic

Selected solo exhibitions include *Déjà vu*, Hanart TZ Gallery, Hong Kong; *Brainstorming: Qiu Zhijie and Total Art Studio*, Guangdong Museum of Fine Art, Guangzhou; *A Suicidology of the Nanjing Yangzi River Bridge 3 – Breaking through the Ice*, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing; *The Shape of Time*, Chambers Fine Art, New York; *Invisibility: Qiu Zhijie*, Ethan Cohen Fine Arts, New York. Qiu has also been invited to the 8th Shanghai Biennale (2010), Shanghai World Expo (2010), 4th Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale (2009), 53rd Venice Biennale (2009), 2nd Moscow Biennale (2008), 2nd Yokohama Triennale (2005), 2nd Triennale of Chinese Art (2005), 5th Shanghai Biennial (2004), 25th Sao Paulo Biennale (2002), Gwangju Biennale (2002) and the First Chengdu Biennale (2001).

HONG ZHU AN (b. 1955, Shanghai)



Left
Transience, 2012
Paper pulp painting, acrylic and flocking
131.5 x 167.5 cm



Right
Calm, 2012
Paper pulp painting, acrylic and cotton thread
79.5 x 106.5 cm

Hong Zhu An's body of work conveys a modern sensibility anchored in the richness of Chinese ink and paper history, reflecting his own uprooted life in this age of globalization. While his visual language can be traced back to Chinese philosophical tradition, Hong has effectively broken away from classical Chinese painting's iconography throughout the course of his oeuvre.

"His art...embodies the physical and technical discipline, and mental rigour demanded by the Chinese ink tradition, while also articulating the freedom of the independent wanderer open to a variety of currents." – *Iola Lenzi*, art critic

The painter's works on paper at STPI display significant new developments in his artistic exploration, where he engages with the visual and tactile qualities of paper like never before. Shedding paper-as-support-surface, Hong brought forth paper pulp as *the* medium with which to paint instead. The resulting paintings (consisting the added presence of saturated and layered pigment) demonstrate his ability to reconcile Chinese ink and paper traditions with new expressions, creating a strong international aesthetic that transcends history, geography, language and cultural barriers.

Trained at the Shanghai Art and Craft Institute, Hong has been a full time artist in Australia and Singapore since 1993. Based in Singapore now for over a decade, he has received numerous accolades throughout his career, including the UOB Painting of the Year 'Grand Award'. His works have been collected by major institutions such as the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Princeton University Art Museum and the Singapore Art Museum.

LIN TIANMIAO (b. 1961, Taiyuan, Shanxi Province)

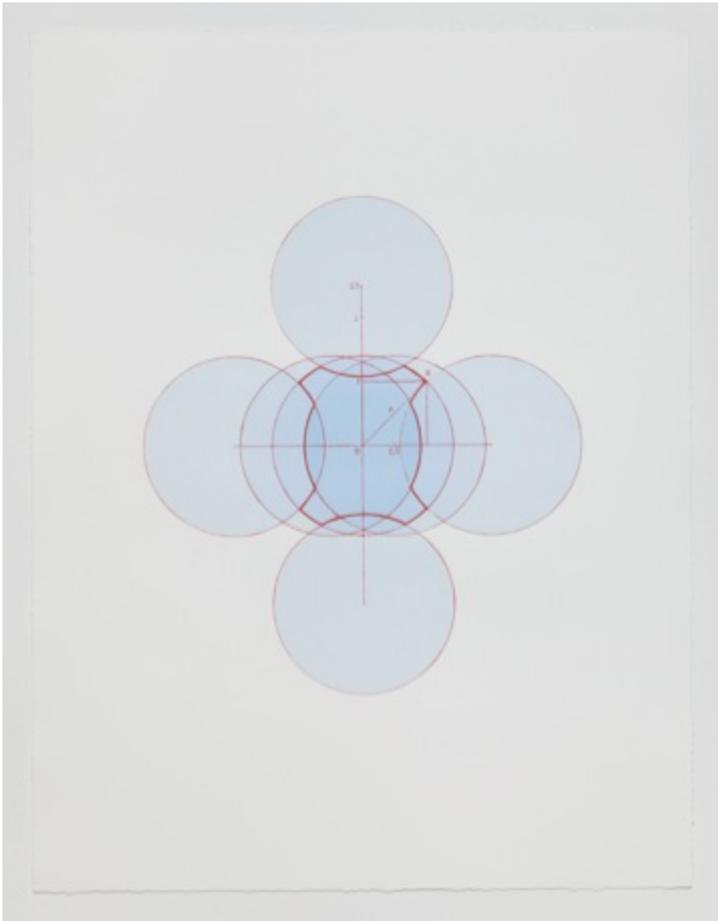


Seeing Shadows, 2008
Lithography, embossing, hole punches, acrylic paint, silver pencil
107.3 x 301 cm

As China's foremost female artist, Lin Tianmiao has developed an important, singular voice in the Chinese contemporary art realm with a visual vocabulary unique to her. Throughout her practice, she has incorporated a variety of mediums and craft-based methods such as weaving, sewing and embroidery in her approach on the female body. Most notable to her name are installations and sculptures encompassing everyday objects, individually hand-wound in cotton or silk threads, and transformed to express a deeply personal reflection on memory and experience. Her art speaks from a gendered perspective yet it effectively evokes a shared human experience – transcending boundaries of gender, race, nationality and the feminist label.

At STPI, the artist works with metaphors of vision and sight to explore power play, politics and the changing cultural landscape of China in two series of works on paper and mixed media. *Seeing Shadows* makes an appearance in this exhibition as an ode to the loss and destruction of traditional Chinese hutong houses, one of which the artist herself occupied in Beijing, after her return from New York in 1995.

Selected exhibitions include *Est-ce permis? (Est-ce possible?)*, Galerie Lelong, Paris (2013); California-Pacific Triennial, Orange County Museum of Art, California (2013); *Bound Unbound*, Asia Society Museum, New York (2012); *The Same*, Beijing Center for the Arts, Beijing (2011); *Mother's!!!*, Long March Space, Beijing (2008); *Multiplex: Directions in Art, 1970 to Now*, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York (2008); and *Global Feminisms*, Brooklyn Museum, New York (2007). Her works are part of notable public collections such as The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York; Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing; Fukuoka Art Museum, Japan; Singapore Art Museum, and White Rabbit Gallery, Sydney.



Seven Circles Little Fat Flesh (Stone Plate plus Screen print), 2013
Lithography, screen print, stonehenge
cotton paper
73 x 55.5 cm

Critically acclaimed conceptualist duo Wu Shanzhuan and Inga Svala Thorsdottir have been working and exhibiting collaboratively since 1991, producing witty installations, sculptures and photographs. At STPI, the artists develop their evolving humanist ideology and concepts on print and paper—including a set of thirty prints that visually document their entire oeuvre. Wu Shanzhuan is one of the leading figures of the 1980s pre-Tiananmen Square generation of Chinese Conceptualists, and Inga Svala Thorsdottir started Thor's Daughter Pulverizing Service in 1993 reducing all things back to its powder form. In 1991, Thorsdottir documented Wu urinating into a replica of Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain* to restore the urinal back to its original purpose, hence the establishment of the constitution *Thing's Right(s)* in 1994.

Wu and Thorsdottir have exhibited widely with solo exhibitions such as *What a Form: A Reportage*, OCT Contemporary Art Terminal, Shenzhen (2013); *kuo xuan*, Long March Space, Beijing (2011); *Thing's Right(s) 09 The More*, Wu Shanzhuan, Red Humour International & Inga Svala Thorsdottir, Thor's Daughter's Pulverization Service, Shanghai Gallery of Art, Three on the Bund, Shanghai (2009); *Thing's Right(s) - New York, 2001*, Making Your Own Nationality, Ethan Cohen Fine Arts, New York (2001).

ZHU WEI (b. 1966, Beijing)



Left

New Pictures of the Strikingly Bizarre #10

2004

Soft ground etching, stencil with relief inking and chine collè on STPI handmade cotton and kozo paper, printed from 1 shaped copper plate
50.8 x 41 cm

Right

New Pictures of the Strikingly Bizarre #13

2004

Soft ground etching with Chiri bark paper chine collè on STPI handmade cotton paper, printed from 1 shaped copper plate
50.8 x 41 cm

Zhu Wei is one of China's most recognisable contemporary artists during the post-Tiananmen period. The first mainland Chinese artist to be invited to STPI's Visiting Artist Programme (VAP), Zhu Wei demonstrated artistry by pushing boundaries through the creation of large-scale woodblocks that suit the imposing scale and expansive nature of his art. As much as his art is "the product of this age"—that is, political pop or cynicism—and therefore remains "a member of the family", the political complex is not the focus. Instead, his distinctive, monumental figures reflect humanity, turning collective unconsciousness into a personal viewpoint.

Notable collections include the Shanghai Art Museum, Shanghai; Guangdong Art Museum, Guangdong; Guangzhou Art Museum, Guangzhou; Chongqing Art Museum, Chongqing; Nanjing Art Museum, Nanjing, Shenzhen Art Museum, Shenzhen; Nanjing Red Canon Art Museum, Nanjing; Asian Art Archive, Hong Kong; Asian Art Museum, San Francisco; Gateway Foundation, USA and The David Museum and Cultural Center, Massachusetts.

All images courtesy of the artist and STPI.

ABOUT STPI

STPI is an internationally renowned space in Singapore for conceptual developments in contemporary art practice in print and paper. STPI's Creative Workshop offers a dynamic residency programme for leading artists from around the world to experiment and push the boundaries of artistic creation with alternative methods and materials. STPI's critically acclaimed programme, gallery and exceptional workshop expertise make STPI one of the best international destinations for contemporary arts in Asia.

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