

ULLENS CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ART 尤伦斯当代艺术中心

CURATED BY WANG XINGWEI: SPECIFICITY

July 21, 2012. Beijing, China

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**Curated by Wang Xingwei:
Specificity**

Media/UCCA Members

/VIP Preview:
July 21

Exhibition dates:
July 22 – August 30,
2012

Exhibition Space:
UCCA Long Gallery

Press material also available for
download from the UCCA website

FINAL INSTALLMENT IN “CURATED BY...” SERIES TO PRESENT SEVEN EMERGING PAINTERS CHOSEN BY WANG XINGWEI.

The Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) is delighted to announce its upcoming exhibition *Curated by Wang Xingwei: Specificity* (press conference, July 21, 16:00), selected artists include: Liu Weijian, Wang Xingjie, Wen Ling, Xia Guanglong, Zhan Yingxiang, Zhang Shujian, and Zhang Wuyun. In the final installment of the long-running “Curated By...” exhibition series, the work of these seven young artists, selected by one of China’s most interesting and intelligent painters, is showcased together for the first time.

Wang Xingwei, whose own major retrospective will open at UCCA in spring 2013, has assembled a group exhibition of seven artists whose works address, from different perspectives, the fraught relationship between (realist) painting and the reality it is tasked with depicting. Many of the artists hail from Wang’s home region in northeast China, and he has identified four thematic approaches visible in the exhibition, which he describes as “the elimination of ranking, irreplaceability, an unknown condition, and a sense of reality.”

From a generation and background sympathetic to the discovery of painting as an awakening, Wang Xingwei draws together a shared acuity of observation, where time is captive and individual experience paramount. The artists, born between 1969 and 1987, include figures such as Wen

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Ling, known for his underground pen-on-paper comics and DIY publications and Wang Xingjie, the curator's younger brother, alongside several painters who have never before shown in a museum setting. Together the works express moments of clarity and confusion, exploring the balance between concrete and impermanent in a rapidly shifting world – a dichotomy described by Zhan Yingxiang as 'instants of illogical estrangement, vivid moments of clarity'. In the fifteenth and final instantiation of the "Curated By..." exhibition program, this show sees the most artists ever represented together in the series, as well as a curatorial approach that balances both collective voice and a diversity of perspectives from a shared locale.

The exhibition is accompanied by an eponymous new book by writer and LEAP senior editor Guo Juan. Published by UCCA Books, it includes an extended essay on each of the seven participating artists. In the same spirit of exploring the relationship between depiction and reality as the exhibition itself, these essays look at the daily lives and situations of the artists as deep background for their creative endeavors. Based on extensive on-site research, Guo Juan's essayistic portraits form a compelling document of individual lives and works.

Exhibition sponsored by Bloomberg.

Related Programs

Children's Art Workshop: 'Photos' with Pens

Time: Saturday, August 11, 10:00-11:30
Venue: UCCA La Suite
Guests: Wen Ling and Zhang Shujian (UCCA exhibiting artists)
Language: In Chinese only

smart Artists' Talk Series: Solo and Ensemble – Personal Voice in a Group Show

Time: Sunday, August 26, 14:00-15:30

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Venue: UCCA Auditorium
Guests: Wang Xingwei (curator), Guo Juan (LEAP editor), Wen Ling and Zhang Shujian (UCCA exhibiting artists)
Language: Chinese with English translation

About the "Curated By..." Series

Initiated in July 2008 by former UCCA Director Jérôme Sans, the UCCA "Curated By..." series invites established Chinese artists to recommend emerging talents and curate exhibitions for them. The series helps to forge connections between artists of various ages working at different stages of their careers, and provides valuable exposure and exhibition opportunities for young Chinese artists, particularly those who have never held a solo exhibition before. This will be the 15th and final "Curated By..." in the series. Bloomberg initiated sponsorship of the series since 2011.

About Wang Xingwei

Wang Xingwei (b. 1969, Shenyang, Liaoning) graduated from the art department of Shenyang Normal University. Concentrating on developing his own critical sense of shape, color and form, Wang Xingwei freed himself from the standardized approach taught in the academies. Through an experimental exploration of the canons of art history and painting, an original voice emerged that was sincere, humorous and sometimes subversive. In his paintings, social, cultural and art-historical references are subtly imbedded in a non-linear visual language of personal symbols and associations. Unconcerned with conforming to any specifically "contemporary" stylistic identity or market constraints, Wang Xingwei continues to deconstruct preconceived notions surrounding how works of art should be read and understood, creating new interpretive possibilities. He currently lives and works in Beijing. Selected group and solo shows include the *Biennale d'art Contemporain de Lyon* in Lyon, France (1997), the *1st Guangzhou Triennial*, Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou (2002), *Thirty Years of Chinese Contemporary Art 1979-2009*, Minsheng Art Museum, Shanghai (2010) and *The State of Things*, Brussels/Beijing, at the National Art Museum of China, Beijing (2010), curated by Fan Di'an, Ai Weiwei, Luc Tuymans and Philippe Pirotte. A

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major retrospective of his work to date will appear at UCCA in 2013.

About the Artists

Liu Weijian (b. 1981, Changsha) graduated in 2005 from the Oil Painting Department of Shanghai Normal University, Shanghai. With the immediacy of a passing car, Liu Weijian's work lingers in empty rooms, street corners, roadsides, and temporal spaces. People are absent, but objects of the everyday – machines, trucks, cars, chairs, tires – form a picture of function and utility. Personal, human stories are present in the residue of activity. What exchange took place on two chairs, and what passed by the two stones? In some ways Liu Weijian presents a new kind of landscape painting – balanced and reflective, inhabited by individuals who have just exited, leaving clues for us to read in carefully rendered details. Selected past exhibitions include *Future Landscapes* at the Duolun Museum of Modern Art, Shanghai (2006), *China Power Station: Part II* at the Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo, Norway (2007), a solo exhibition *Liu Weijian*, at ShangHART Gallery, Shanghai (2009), *Thirty Years of Chinese Contemporary Art 1979-2009* at the Minsheng Art Museum, Shanghai (2010), and *Re-Novation & Collateral Effects* at Galerie Dix9, Paris, France (2012).

Wang Xingjie (b. 1971, Shenyang) graduated in 2005 from the Oil Painting Department of Shanghai Normal University, Shanghai. Resisting sentimentality, Wang Xingjie paints with a vivid honesty, as his faces and objects are formed with broad, textured brushstrokes. A bar of soap sits in a plastic holder, its waxy edges and malleable surface gleaming like butter. It looks real to us not because it is photographic, but because the softened corners fuse with the dish, giving an exact sense of how it might feel to touch it – a still life which recalls movement and use in the most mundane and static of places. Like Wang Xingwei, Wang Xingjie spent time focusing on the classics of art historical portraiture (subjects were often caught in a lucid moment of transition) and object studies, using painting as a way to process individuals, interactions, and surfaces. Selected past exhibitions include *Little Report - Northeast Artists Show* at the China Art and Archives Warehouse, CAAW, Beijing (2000) and the solo exhibition *Deliberate* at Gaodi Gallery, Beijing (2010).

Wen Ling (b. 1976, Beijing) graduated in 2000 from the Printmaking

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Department of the Central Academy of Fine Arts. Through portraiture, painting, photography, and graphic illustration, Wen Ling occupies a space between childlike naïveté and idealized visions of adult life. Figures are often rendered in simple forms, wide-eyed and existing in a nebulous world of color and familial interactions. In a series titled *One Day in My Life*, the artist's habitual activities are animated in lo-fi detail. At points, the grave reality of ailing relatives and relationship dynamics appear as comic observations, scrawled with reckless abandon like notes to self. Selected past exhibitions include *One to One* at Chambers Fine Art Gallery, New York (2004); *N12* at the Gallery of Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing (2004); *Infantization* at the Shanghai Art Museum (2007); and *Looking for me* at the Minsheng Center for Contemporary Art, Shanghai (2008). Wen Ling also founded China's first, photo blog, *Ziboy.com* in 2001, which continues to enjoy a cult following.

Xia Guanglong (b. 1978, Haicheng) graduated in 2001 from Fushun Normal University. Figures often gaze off canvas or face away from the viewer in Xia Guanglong's work, involved in a happening obscured just enough to be curious, even magnetic. Maintaining a sense of detachment but careful observation, he tells parts of a wider story with intimate fragments. Details included in the work are carriers of narrative and subtext – the top of trousers ever so slightly loose, a shadow on the neck – activating an associative power which lingers beyond what is immediately visible. This is Xia Guanglong's first exhibition.

Zhan Yingxiang (b. 1969, Shenyang) graduated in 1991 from Liaoning Normal University. The urban environment of daily route and ritual does not always offer so proverbial a backdrop to move in and out of. Sites and landmarks passed each day cease to be noticed or have meaning, reducing our familiarity and comfort to alienation. Zhan Yingxiang breaks the city down to a series of standard elements, fragmented and unmemorable in their repetition. Dreams and illusions that pervade romantic city ideals are stripped away, revealing the dim features of a particular experience shared by many but belonging to no one. This is Zhan Yingxiang's first exhibition.

Zhang Shujian (B. 1987, Changsha) graduated in 2010 from the Oil Painting department of the Central Academy of Fine Arts. Fascinated by the human form,

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Zhang Shujian explores intricate facets of the body and expression, particularly the ambiguity of reading and misreading. With painterly integrity he questions, what is it that makes us people? The skin? The eyes? How are we different from animals, or even biological specimens? When we look at each other we see only parts of a whole, filling in the unknowns with expectation and imagination. His work reveals a studied look at closeness, distance, and the space between which allows for understanding of who we are and what is it that makes it so. Selected past exhibitions include *Self Portrait at C-Space, Beijing (2010)*, *Look into the Mirror at Canvas International Art, Amsterdam, Holland (2011)*, and *Painting: Jin Shangyi and Zhang Shujian, Taikang Space, Beijing (2012)*.

Zhang Wuyun (b. 1981, Shenyang) graduated in 2001 from the Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts. It is not immediately obvious what resonates in Zhang Wuyun's work, which often features bleak, empty, or non-specific landscapes, as if scattered with minutiae from someone else's memories. Elements of light and dark, space and object are perfectly balanced, but offset by the notion that with a slight shift – even a light breeze – the situation could change. This reflexive detail and sensitivity to nuance and transformation lend the work its own consciousness. We are urged to consider the psychology of particular spaces and focus on overlooked, if troubling, components of a given environment. Selected past exhibitions include *Memory at Art Channel Gallery, Beijing (2011)* and *You Are My Landscape at O100001 Gallery, Beijing (2011)*. In 2007 he received "Art China – National Fine Arts Exhibition Award".

About UCCA

The Ullens Center for Contemporary Art is a not-for-profit art center in Beijing, located at the heart of the 798 Art District. As a platform for contemporary art linking China and the world, UCCA offers around 15 exhibitions a year and over 500 public programs including art talks, film screenings, performances, workshops and public festivals. The international center maintains a special focus on recent developments and historical movements in Chinese contemporary culture, showcasing the latest in art and design and fostering international exchange.
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