



Ullens Center for  
Contemporary Art  
尤伦斯当代艺术中心

## Ullens Center for Contemporary Art Exhibitions 2015

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Press material also available for  
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### Great Hall Exhibitions

Liu Wei: Colors  
6 February – 13 April

Liu Wei (b. 1972, Beijing) is one of the most important artistic voices of his generation. Coming from the heated conceptual climate of the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou during the 1990s and a key member of the late 1990s “Post-Sense Sensibility” formation, Liu Wei has gone on in the past decade to pioneer an artistic language all his own. Based on a fastidious combination of elements abstract and concrete, Chinese and universal, his practice addresses the new ways of seeing and knowing made possible in contemporary China. Present throughout his practice is a unique sense of how juxtapositions of objects **and materials create meanings, and of how objects placed in space structure viewers’** experiences. This exhibition, Liu **Wei’s** largest institutional solo show to date, revolves around a grouping of major new paintings, sculptures, and videos which refer back to his fifteen years of mature output while also opening up interpretive pathways for works yet to come.

William Kentridge: Notes Toward a Model Opera

26 June – 30 August

Since William Kentridge (b. 1955, Johannesburg) first showed in the groundbreaking 2000 Shanghai Biennale, artists and critics throughout China have looked admiringly to his distinctive style of addressing social and historical themes through a particular formal, imagistic, and thematic language. Kentridge, for his part, has moved from an initial body of work addressing memory and history in his native South Africa through a wide-ranging set of meditations on themes including Enlightenment philosophy, revolutionary utopianism, and empiricist temporality.

“Notes Toward a Model Opera” is a constellation of key pieces spanning 25 years of William



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Kentridge's output, allowing viewers to understand the range and trajectory of both his artistic sensibility and humanistic concerns. From seminal early films and drawings featuring the semi-autobiographical figure of Soho Eckstein, the exhibition moves on to encompass major recent multimedia installations including *I am not Me, the Horse is not Mine*, *The Refusal of Time*, recent animations and paintings, and finally the titular project *Notes Toward a Model Opera*, a new work related to the particular aesthetics and ideals of socialist China. Originating at UCCA, the exhibition will subsequently travel to the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul, Sifang Art Museum, Nanjing, and other venues throughout the region. As Kentridge's largest exhibition in East Asia to date, this comprehensive overview offers a pathway to understanding his work particularly suited to the Chinese context and its unique experience of modernity.

David Diao

18 September – 15 November

David Diao (b. 1943, Chengdu) is a key figure in the history of conceptual painting during the second half of the twentieth century. This retrospective exhibition aims to elaborate and elucidate the thematic strands running through the last five decades of his oeuvre. Entering the New York art world in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, Diao first engaged, in his early work, the complex position of painting in the aftermath of the Abstract Expressionists and the formalist critical debates that followed them. Surprisingly, in the early 1980s he turned from process-based abstraction to a more conceptual way of working that incorporated text, iconography, and narrative subject matter as a means of addressing themes including the complex and varied histories of Modernism, the legacies of utopian political movements, the racially inflected tensions of identity politics, and the geopolitical poignancy of his own family story. Diao's unique aesthetic sensibility—manifest in his palette and surfaces as well as his historical and biographical interests—has undergirded a long career that is now attracting renewed interest from major institutions, critics, and curators around the world.

The artist's first full-scale retrospective, "David Diao" includes more than 90 works borrowed from public and private collections in North America, Europe, and Asia. The exhibition seeks to present Diao's work as a field of visual and conceptual adjacencies from

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which multivalent, unexpected connections can emerge. It spans all phases of Diao's career, from his early abstractions to a suite of paintings about his refugee years in 1950s Hong Kong, completed especially for the exhibition. Further groupings are dedicated to Diao's ongoing interest in the work and career of Barnett Newman; the complex and intertwined histories of Modernism and revolutionary politics in Europe, Russia, and the United States; the mutually determined relationship between identity politics, masculinity, and institutional critique as seen in works that explore his Chinese-American identity and his putative career shortcomings; and architecture and memory, particularly in relation to Diao's lost childhood home, the Da Hen Li House in Chengdu.

#### Further Exhibitions

Michael Chow: Voice for My Father

24 January – 22 March

Nave and Long Gallery

An expressionist painter firmly rooted in Chinese tradition, Michael Chow (b. 1938, Shanghai) returned to making art in 2012 after a 50-year hiatus. Having grown up in a storied Shanghai household in the 1940s, Chow moved to London soon after the founding of the People's Republic to study art. After training at St. Martin's and showing his work in the London art scene of the 1960s, he went on to open the iconic MR CHOW restaurants, first in London, then New York and Los Angeles, where he lives today.

"Voice for My Father," Michael Chow's first exhibition in mainland China, includes three parallel bodies of work installed in two of UCCA's exhibition spaces. In the Nave are presented a suite of Chow's newest paintings, ecumenically employing materials as varied as gold leaf and raw eggs, and characterized by a unique balance between order and chaos, rigor and improvisation, freedom and control. A massive polyptych, nearly twenty meters long, is the centerpiece of this presentation. In the Long Gallery, more of Chow's paintings will be joined by his iconic portrait collection, which includes works by artists such as Andy Warhol, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Keith Haring, Julian Schnabel, Ed Ruscha, and Urs Fischer. Many of these portraits were acquired directly from these artists or given as gifts in



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recognition of friendship and collaboration with Chow over the years. Alongside these will be shown archival images of **Chow's father Zhou Xinfang (1895-1975)**, one of the most famous Beijing Opera artists of the twentieth century, positing a connection between the artistic endeavors of father and son. The exhibition, which will travel to the Power Station of Art in Shanghai later in the spring, is held simultaneously with major official celebrations commemorating the 120<sup>th</sup> **anniversary of Zhou Xinfang's birth**.

Zhao Gang: The Road to Serfdom

3 April – 31 May

Nave and Long Gallery

Zhao Gang (b. 1961, Beijing) was a member of **The Stars**, China's first experimental art collective, which emerged in the late 1970s. His later studies and travels took him to Germany and the United States, where he built a career as a painter distinctly conversant with both his Chinese precedents and Western contemporaries. Since returning to Beijing in the mid-2000s, Zhao's remarkably rich and diverse painterly practice has engaged themes including modern history, revolution, disease, nostalgia, sex, memory, and literati culture. In this exhibition, Zhao presents several new bodies of work based on extensive travels throughout China, in which he juxtaposes images of early twentieth century Chinese intellectuals who studied abroad and returned to China to join the cause of the motherland with images of major historical and political figures who shaped history globally during the same period, and finally with video and photographic footage taken during a recent exploratory road trip to the homes of these intellectuals. Accompanied by a major monograph, this exhibition continues and elaborates Zhao's **particular method of using painting to interrogate the past and the present it has created**.

The Chinese Photobook

10 April – 31 May

Central Gallery

This exhibition **explores China's modern history through the singular prism of the photobook**. Part of eminent photographer **Martin Parr's** (b. 1952, United Kingdom) ongoing research into the global history of the photobook as medium, this presentation is co-curated with Beijing/Amsterdam-based photographic collective **WassinkLundgren** and tied



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to the release of a major book by Aperture. Divided into six sections looking at historical periods including the late Empire and Republic, the Sino-Japanese War, the early years of **the People's Republic**, the later Mao era, the Reform and Opening period, and a special section of foreign-produced photo books about China, **"The Chinese Photobook"** combines a rare collection of original publications presented in vitrines with further materials mounted and projected on walls for more detailed viewing. It offers at once the genealogy of a particular artistic format in a particular geography, and an idiosyncratically compelling glimpse at a society in continued transition. The exhibition is co-produced by Aperture **Foundation and Recontres d'Arles**.

The Universal Stage

An Asian contemporary trilogy curated by Venus Lau

Central Gallery and Nave

Ming Wong

12 June – 9 August

Ming Wong (b. 1971, Singapore) takes film and its histories as the staging ground for explorations of language, representation, identity, and ideology. In works that refigure an expansive and ecumenical range of world cinema—from Wong Kar-wai to Rainer Werner Fassbinder—Wong uses his own versatile, virtuosic capacity for role-playing to construct new personas. He samples gestures and facial expressions from the big screen in order to **both expose film's mechanisms of artifice and to articulate a complex, transcultural subject position**.

Ming Wong's solo exhibition at UCCA, his first in Beijing, presents a selection of his films and photographs alongside a newly commissioned installation and performance. Wong's new creations stem from his recent ongoing research on the modernization of Cantonese opera and the history of science fiction in formerly Communist countries, resulting in his recombination of films including *Last Year at Marienbad* and *Solaris* with this Southern Chinese vein of theater. By linking these traditional modalities with the outdated futurism of science fiction, Wong's exhibition outlines a trajectory of utopian imagery through two separate but interrelated systems of cultural production.

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Korakrit Arunanondchai

21 August – 19 October

Influenced equally by an adolescence spent surrounded by Thai pop culture and an artistic training and career based in the U.S., Korakrit Arunanondchai's (b. 1986, Bangkok) practice mines globalized subjectivities for their underlying tensions. Rather than linger on geographically specific subject matter, he adopts denim—a fabric as universal as any in the world today—as a physical and symbolic means of intensifying these investigations. Originally a staple of the working class wardrobe which later became a universal sign of youth, the textile can be found across Arunanondchai's recent paintings, sculptures, videos, and performances, as well as in this, the artist's first solo show in China—a country known for its prodigious export (and, increasingly, consumption) of denim goods.

For his UCCA exhibition, Korakrit Arunanondchai shows a grouping of works including video, installation, and painting, expanding this presentation through on-site performance. Special treatment is given to his ongoing video trilogy, which collages fictive narratives with experiences taken from his family and artistic life, arranging them based on the interlocking themes of death, purgatory, and rebirth. The videos are a visual construction of the artist's thinking on memory, mortality, identity, and masculinity. The exhibition is produced in collaboration with MoMA PS1.

Haegue Yang

30 October – 3 January, 2016

Haegue Yang (b. 1971, Seoul) is known for sculptures that orchestrate a wide range of banal objects into complex, anthropomorphic compositions, suspending the functionality of everyday tools and accentuating their objecthood and spirituality. In perhaps her most famous body of work, Venetian blinds are arranged with a Sol Lewitt-like precision in which the dialectics of inside and outside constructed by windows are dissolved by the opacity of the choreographed blinds. These blinds form an architecture whose totality cannot be captured by a single gaze, reminding one the half open structure of a stage.

Haegue Yang's first solo exhibition in China will showcase one of the artist's major Venetian



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blind sculptures in the Nave, creating a new spatial dynamic in the form of a passage. These are accompanied by sonic figures inspired by Oskar Schlemmer's *Triadisches Ballett* (1922). The sculptural objects evoke Schlemmer's unique mode of costume design, which limited the dancers' bodies and turned them into puppets to externalize and solidify corporeal hindrance. "Spice Moon," a group of silkscreen works on paper made with spices, will be exhibited alongside these series, compounding audio and visual perception with an olfactory dimension.

#### New Directions

UCCA Young Artists Series

Long Gallery

In June 2015, UCCA will initiate "New Directions," an ongoing series of exhibitions by young Chinese artists to take place in the Long Gallery. Planned for an initial run of ten installments, "New Directions" will offer some of China's freshest artistic talents a platform to realize their first institutional solo exhibition and monographic publication. Expanding on UCCA's longstanding interest in emerging practices, pioneered by shows including "ON | OFF" (2013), "Breaking Forecast" (2009), and the "Curated By..." series (2010-2012), this project solidifies the Center's position as a catalyst for new artistic talent in China. "New Directions" aims to offer, through a constellation of distinct positions, an overall sense of the richness and complexity of new artistic practices in China today.

#### About the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art

The Ullens Center for Contemporary Art is an independent, not-for-profit art center serving a global Beijing public. Located at the heart of Beijing's 798 Art District, it was founded by the Belgian collectors Guy and Myriam Ullens and opened in November 2007. Through a diverse array of exhibitions with artists Chinese and international, established and emerging, as well as a wide range of public programs, UCCA aims to promote the continued development of the Chinese art scene, foster international exchange, and showcase the latest in art and culture to hundreds of thousands of visitors each year.

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