

PRESS RELEASE

"Another Look"

Yu Hong, Jiang Jie

Curator: Zhai Yongming

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Long March Space, Beijing

Yu Hong and Jiang Jie are not merely representatives of Chinese female artists, but rather leading contemporary Chinese artists. At a time when the Chinese political economy is changing shape, and the entire world is focused on contemporary Chinese art, the persistence and depth of works by Jiang Jie and Yu Hong provides an alternative on the contemporary art map.

The name of the exhibition "Another Look", comes from the phrase "the moonlight casts the lilies in *another look* of red," describing the unique characteristics developed from an alternative artistic model of the works by Jiang Jie and Yu Hong. "Another Look" also means the inseparableness of life, whether in form or in language. Jiang Jie and Yu Hong do not restrict their imagination and expressive power to giving form only to a concept or process, a characteristic which is lacking in a period when contemporary art aims to "dazzling and confuse."

Of the 4 works on silk by Yu Hong, although the material is simplistic and speaks of the ordinary, the method of expression is still clear and delicate. On the thin silk, the brush strokes seem to float, which, along with the method for hanging and the colors of its base, only serves to enhance its ephemeral quality. Similar to the expression of traditional ink paintings, Yu Hong uses an elegant feeling of movement to express the lofty world of mortals and the experience of ethereality which all living things must absorb.

In the "Her" series, which she has been engaged with in recent years, Yu Hong

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has gone away from the narrative of the individual, and investigated the daily lives of all women. In the process of turning her focus from an individual experience to a collective experience, she focuses on another gaze; that of the sight of the "viewed subject." In the "She" series, the images painted are those already selected by the artist, it is the gaze of "another look." The photographs have been expanded and put on the margins of the artist's work because it is not the focus of the artist, increasing its individuality. Juxtaposition is a method which Yu Hong has been using in recent years, "the growth of a nation is juxtaposed alongside with the growth of an individual, the uncharacteristic political life is juxtaposed alongside ordinary life of the individual, the greater historical narrative is juxtaposed alongside the delicate personal moment, and the weight of history is juxtaposed alongside the powerlessness of the individual." But their presentation here is an attempt to separate out the artist's experience from that of the individual's and juxtapose them, refocusing them onto a consideration of a type of "reality" born from another experience, that of the varying descriptions and historical choices of different people and groups. From the photographs of these ordinary girls, one can see the overlapping of historical memory and personal experience. With the popularity of the television show "Super-Girl", we see the result of the victory of ordinary people's gaze over that of the artist. Through her focus on reality, Yu Hong raises questions for contemporary art. In the cycle of individual versus collective, Yu Hong has again returned to the narration of the individual, but what is expressed and radiated out is the historical gaze of the ordinary people.

Jiang Jie's new work is an extension of her work "Swimming Dragon" and "Places the Emperor as Never Been," which she has been carrying out in recent years. The dragon, once a sign of an ethnicity has already disappeared, leaving behind only its scales: in this case, colored ceramic roof tiles. The color yellow, once a symbol of the power of the emperor, has been changed to pink, representing women. Is the "Another Look" of Jiang Jie's tiles telling us of an imperial palace story in modern times or a modern woman's thoughts? The artist herself is at times both consciously and subconsciously ambivalent and inconsistent. Likewise, the audience can also consciously and unconsciously make their own mis-readings and imaginations. In the end, all questions regarding the meaning of the work are melted away by the work's display.

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Ceramic tiles covered in polystyrene wrap radiate the theme of “fragile,” only this time there is also an element of irony. Ceramic roof tiles, something which are quite sturdy and thick have been meticulously covered in a “protective” wrap, in the end, only to appear more fragile. The live performance, the sound of tearing, and the image of broken tiles makes this entire process seem even more surprising.

Interacting with the exhibition is Jiang Jie’s work which she has been doing for some time, the baby. In the process of making the works, she has forgone the traditional remnants of sculpture, and emphasized a process of repetition. With a glossy paint coating, much like the exterior of shiny new automobiles, the statues emit a type of commercialism. These statues are then placed onto the roof tiles. Its meaning and its opposing metaphor both have to do with the rise of a technological age. One clue lies in the title of the work, “Playground Era,” indicating that Jiang Jie is interested in the entertainment of the masses under the new Chinese economic renaissance. Although both linked and distanced from traditional sculpture, Jiang Jie’s work shows a positive and active use of new mediums.

The display of works by both artists together shows the ability of artists to respond to society and its problems in the rapid changes of today. It also shows both artists’ sensitivity and ability to respond to their environments.