

PRESS RELEASE**"Dong Jun: Exchanging Gazes"****2007.7.7 - 8.12****Long March Space, Beijing**

The term "Model" refers to a material or an object that is visually reproduced or observed. In art academies throughout China "models" are taken to be "educational materials", on par with plaster sculptures, wax fruit, or bottles – common props we find in academic still life paintings. Since entering the Xi'an Art Academy, artist Dong Jun has always taken a different perspective on these "educational materials," abandoning this simplistic two-dimensional perspective of the "model" as an object to be replicated, either through drawing or as the subjects of photography. Instead, his perspective seeks to uncover the model's subjectivity and self-expression. From Dong Jun's perspective, the "model" is a unique group that exists within society, and not just a carapace. When you are looking at him/her, he/she is also looking at you, and this relationship is actually the mutual investigation and exchange of perspective. It is the subjectivity and experiences that lay beneath the outer presence that Dong Jun seeks to record. The series, "Youth Models," is the latest portrait work by the artist, using a unique perspective to express the spiritual condition of Chinese youth. This type of confusion and its sudden disorientation is like an enchanting rainbow, a free but uncontrollable youth and its dilemmas is what the artist seeks to pursue.

The atmosphere in Beijing is rampant with dissatisfaction of contemporary art. In particular there is an overwhelming presence of photography and visually overloaded photo-montages that cynically combine Chinese symbols with a kitsch aesthetics to form a superficial social criticism. It is not just that Dong Jun lives and works in Xi'an, supposedly outside the artistic center, that he is able to outmaneuver these structural issues facing contemporary art. Rather, his continual work represents the reflective style of Xi'an artists, at the same time, it also presents an exceptional artistic perspective – the work is an example of the artist's working attitude and his artwork coming together. The work of Dong Jun comes from his contemplative working style, helping us to

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understand the relationship between the artist's unique perspective and the clamoring noise of the times.

Also exhibited is a documentary video the artist completed in 2004-2005 documenting an old model at Xi'an Art Academy.

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