

PRESS RELEASE

"Qiu Zhijie: Archeology of Memory"

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Long March Space, Beijing

The Qiu Zhijie solo exhibition, "Archeology of Memory", will be held in 798 Long March Space on July 7, 2007. It will be the artist's first solo exhibition in Beijing since year 2004.

The exhibition is composed of a large-scale installation work entitled "Monuments" which the artist has worked on from 2006-2007.

From a spatial dimension, the work covers both public discourse and individual codes; temporally, it spans the re-examination of historical narratives to contemporary vocabulary. The artist has indefatigably carved words and sentences that haunt the collective and individual memory onto the concrete monuments – as if to solidify these memories into permanence. But, he then covers the epigraph with another layer of concrete, and continues this process – layer by layer – until the epigraph is sealed and every single layer is covered by another concrete layer. Finally, only simple, concrete, cube sculptures remain, their stained sides giving them the appearance of having been excavated from an archaeological dig themselves. Yet, it is difficult to associate these concrete cubes as containers of memory.

The work includes words, phrases, and sentences extracted from political ideas, newspaper headlines, revolutionary slogans, mottos, handwritings, pop song lyrics, private letters, and even unrecognizable computer codes, examining the movement and linkages between the concepts of public to private. Starting from public historical knowledge and history (commonly found in middle and high school textbooks), to a middle ground between individual experience and public knowledge, reaching individual and personal information, and finally, collapsing into unrecognizable codes that are too individualistic to understand yet become public image. This paradox proposes a complicated relationship between public memory and private memory. Through an examination of the

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different texts and the adoption of their writing styles, this installation can be considered an in depth study of calligraphic history and character graphology, which is the intersection of histories of individual pursuit and histories of ideology.

This “note book”-like installation is a careful study of historical symbols, sociological labels, aesthetics, and ideology. The corresponding rubbings not only serve as evidence to the existence of the inscriptions, but also daily lessons. They refer to inner, spiritual cultivation, as well as direct attention to the outside. Through this art work’s production and “writing” process, Qiu Zhijie has taken his identity as “Culture Producer” to the brink, or, as he says, he is “generalizing art”: he’s a material producer with special energy, an observer to phenomena and a traveler amidst the history of concepts.

The rubbings should provide proof of the sealed inscriptions, helping to calm anxieties provoked by these bulky concrete cubes. They may trigger skepticism, but without the rubbings, these concrete blocks would surely invoke disbelief. Following the current exhibition, Qiu Zhijie will use these blocks in the foundation of a tower, in a large-scale project titled “Constructing the Pagoda”.

Another series of photographs, “Group Photo,” which is part of Qiu Zhijie’s latest project “Photography Theater,” will also be exhibited with “Monuments”. The appearance and manner of different people presented under the unusual photographic method for group photography addresses the issues between the individual identity and public identity.

Qiu Zhijie, born in Zhangzhou, Fujian Province, graduated from the Printmaking Department of China National Academy of Fine Arts 1992. He has been one of the most active experimental artists since the 1990s. Qiu Zhijie takes on many different identities in the art world -- his works are made in different mediums and cover numerous issues. He is well known for his “re-use” of Chinese calligraphy and his new media work which presents Chinese concept in space-time. Qiu Zhijie has curated the influential exhibition “Post - Sensation” and initiated the earliest New Media Activity in China. In 2002, he joined Long

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March – A Walking Visual Display and served as the co-curator during Stage 1 and Artistic Director to Long March Space. Qiu Zhijie is a professor at the Total Art Studio - China Academy of Fine Art and Culture Research Center of China Academy of Fine Arts since year 2003, and proposed the concept of “Total Art” based on cultural research and concept-practice during artistic creation, curation and teaching. This exhibition may be his most notable presence in Long March Space, as an artist, to date.

His next exhibition in Long March Space will be “Long March Project – Why go to Tibet” a review of a project in which he led a team of students from the Total Art Studio of China National Academy of Fine Art in Tibet to complete a series of surveys and investigations.