

PRESS RELEASE

"Unknown and Anonymous"

Li Tianbing, Jiang Jiwei, Guo Fengyi, Wang Wenhai, Wang Jinsong

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Long March Space, Beijing

The "Unknown" section of Unknown and Anonymous is made up of a sculpture created in a small village in Hebei as a piece of mass-produced merchandise - a fake antique. The work was meant to cater to people's imagination of ancient China, but it is a misinterpretation, imitations of a hodgepodge of ancient Chinese and Buddhist imagery. The statue itself is supposed to represent Buddha, but the body of Buddha is in the form of a female nude covered with the marks of acupuncture - a very contemporary representation of the image of "China" that lies within the collective's imagination.

The work that represents the "Anonymous" portion of the exhibition consists of a classical style ink painting of a partially nude female. Dressed in a red halter with blue print linen trousers, her clothes are those of a village girl, but the model herself is a refined urban woman. She reclines on a classical daybed and holds a round-style fan idly by her side - these two elements even further demonstrate the exertion of Chinese cultural symbols. Through research, it is apparent that this work was made by a highly-skilled traditional painter, but the piece itself is commercial, falling outside of the literati community because of the model's erotic nudity. It was made for a flea market in Beijing, thus its creator chose to remain anonymous.

The curator Lu Jie purchased these two works from Beijing's Panjiayuan flea market for foreign tourists and exhibits them at the Long March Space to explore a topic that is a one of the core issues of the Long March project - authorship. Works by unknown and anonymous artists flood our visual culture and are constantly consumed by the market. Contemporary artists are also part

Address: 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Rd, Chaoyang District, Beijing

Mailing: Long March Space. Mailbox 8530, Beijing. P.R. China 100015

地址：北京市朝阳区酒仙桥路4号798艺术区 | 邮址：北京市8503信箱长征空间 邮编 100015

of the market system, but at the same time, they carry the heavy burden of being responsible for reconstructing culture. Artists/market systems/exhibition systems, unknown/anonymous/collective: these two sets can be explored merely as contrasts, but the relationship contained within and between the sets have profound meaning in China's visual culture. In this exhibition especially, we display works created under all different authorship circumstances in order to explore the relationship that lies between artists, the market, and exhibition systems. In China's historical and revolutionary traditions, there are many masterpieces with collective, unknown, and anonymous creators, and they are a main element in public discourse. With The Power of the Public Realm exhibition, the Long March Space continues to function as a space in which we can reflect on contemporary art and visual culture.

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